



24 December 2017

## Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ

*“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”*

**Musicians:** Marie Cannon KK      Clyde Foster KAEO  
**Readers:** Bob Tayler KK      tba KAEO

*As we gather each Sunday we pray God's blessing over our buildings: thanks for the good that has happened through the week and cleansing for anything that is troublesome. In the coming week may the Spirit touch all who come into our church home.*



Being family, we watch out for, and care for, one another.

## Plugging in

I am not alone at all, I thought. I was never alone at all. And that, of course, is the message of Christmas. We are never alone. Not when the night is darkest, the world seemingly most indifferent. For this is still the time God chooses.

Taylor Caldwell

## Gathering with the Saints

### Partner Story from the Pacific

Milika Tovi knows what it is like to survive a major cyclone. Along with other residents of the Ha'apai Islands, she endured the worst storm to make landfall in Tonga. More severe weather patterns are a product of climate change. Pacific peoples have taken to the world stage, urging much deeper action to keep the temperature rise below 1.5 degrees celsius. The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) has been an important player educating its people about climate change, helping with resettlement, and talking about its impact outside the region. In the same way, PCC is bringing together Pacific churches to look at gender based violence, self-determination for New Caledonia (Kanakya), Tahiti (Maohi Nui) and West Papua as matters of faith. The Christmas Appeal will support PCC in its work across the “Oceania” continent.

### Lighting the Advent Candles

In the lighting of this fourth Advent candle we make space within ourselves to hear and engage with the voices of those we might otherwise miss but with whom we are connected by our common humanity.

We remember also the voice of God's messenger, Mary, the mother of Jesus, calling us to be bearers of love in a troubled world.

*Light the candles*

WE LIGHT THE CANDLE FOR LOVE. MAY IT LIGHT THE WAY FOR US AS WE MAKE HOPE OUR STORY.

**Hymn** *Tell out my soul* WOV109

### Karakia/Prayer

*During the leader's words, you are invited to hold your hands together as in prayer, and during the response slowly open them turning the palms upward.*

Sometimes we have ideas of how things should be, and we do not want to know of other options.

God of wonders,  
HELP US TO REVEAL YOUR PROMISE IN OUR WORLD.

Sometimes we think that whatever we want must be God's will, and we close ourselves to God's plans.

God of patience,  
HELP US TO REVEAL YOUR PROMISE IN OUR WORLD.

Sometimes we think that God can only be found in certain places, or in certain ways.

God of no limits,  
HELP US TO REVEAL YOUR PROMISE IN OUR WORLD.

Sometimes we cannot believe the things that are asked of us, and assume we must be misunderstanding.

God of surprises,  
HELP US TO REVEAL YOUR PROMISE IN OUR WORLD.

Sometimes we hear God calling us, and we let go of all of those things that hold us back and, like Mary, we say nothing is impossible with God.

God of wonders,  
HELP US TO REVEAL YOUR PROMISE IN OUR WORLD. AMEN.

### **Symbol of God's Presence**

**Hymn** *O come, all ye faithful* WOV228 [Bob's Choice]

## **Clarifying our Purpose**

### **Conversation with the Word**

#### **Reading** Luke 1:26-38

In contrast to her cousin Elizabeth and husband Zechariah, who are identified as faithful and right with God, Mary starts off with no special qualities. She's simply identified as a virgin, as a yet-to-marry young woman. An ordinary, country girl, her life moving along the quiet path towards marriage and family.

Wonders happen anywhere and it seems to whoever – centres of power and distant corners, with past merits or with none (yet). But wonders that will change the world, bring God's kind of transformation, in fact come from the ordinary, from the margins, from ones not expected.

And God's blessings are strange, really strange. Mary is perplexed – no meek and mild “okay, whatever”. For this will not involved the accepted kind of blessings, then and now. That is, it's not about good life – being acceptable to others, having enough to live on and live well, good health, comfort. God's blessings are strange always. For Mary, a baby out of wedlock and a child who will be executed as a criminal.

Strange but genuine blessings that will bring change, God's way.

God's intent here is to draw us in to what God is doing. Draw Mary in, and in turn draw us in.

To make God's story of transformation the story of our life also. To be part of it. To be a participant in kingdom ways becoming world's ways.

Saying “yes” to possibilities.

Barbara Brown Taylor has commented: you can say no to the life being held out in front of you, “but you can rest assured that no angels will trouble you ever again.” No new hopes or challenges or opportunities. Just same old same old.

And another message here: no matter how hopeless things may appear - “the state of our warring world or the state of our broken lives” can be healed. (Kimberly Bracken Long)

It's already been happening: we have a record of it in the impact of Jesus. The holy keeps breaking in and transforming, breaking in and healing.

We believe the future belongs to God.

How do you define or describe true peace?

What is our role in the midst of what God is doing?

What is the deep hope of your congregation on this last Sunday in Advent?

**Hymn** *God surprises earth with heaven*

## Conversations around the Table

### The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

#### Prayer from Korea

Who do I say that you are? I don't know.  
But what I know,  
You – Good News to the captives and the poor.  
Liberator of the oppressed, friend of Minjung,  
suffering people, under repression,  
attentive ear to the silenced,  
healer of the tortured, advocate of the lowest,  
hope of the desperate, homeland of the exiled.  
Who do I say that you are? I don't know.  
But what I know,  
You – Flower of freedom in the valley of repression.  
Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God.

Seong Won Park, Presbyterian Church of Korea.

*...prayer book prayers...*

#### Prayer from Japan (together)

Eternal God,  
We say good morning to you.  
Hallowed be your name.  
Early in the morning, before we begin our work, we praise your glory.  
Renew our bodies as fresh as the morning flowers.  
Open our inner eyes, as the sun casts new light upon the darkness  
which prevailed over the night.  
Deliver us from all captivity.  
Give us wings of freedom like the birds in the sky,  
to begin a new journey.  
Restore justice and freedom, as a mighty stream  
running continuously as day follows day.  
We thank you for the gift of this morning,  
and a new day to work with you.

Masao Takenaka, first president of the Asian Christian Art Association, Japan.

#### Lord's Prayer

## Love the World as God Loves

### Serving in the Week Ahead - Offering

#### Blessing

Go in peace,  
and may the Holy God surprise you on the way,  
Christ Jesus be your company,  
and the Spirit life up your life.

Kia tau/The grace

*... May the God of new beginnings*

Robyn McPhail 24.12.2017

**NOTICES FOR TODAY – 24 DECEMBER 2017**

Parish email: [admin@kkup.org.nz](mailto:admin@kkup.org.nz)

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Ministry Leadership Team: Bev Barke, Alan Robinson, and Robyn

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KK Pastoral: Jessica Scott 09 407 5555 [jomscott2@gmail.com](mailto:jomscott2@gmail.com)

**ROSTERED FOR NEXT SUNDAY 31 DECEMBER 2017**

Organist: Kato Akau'ola KK Clyde Foster Kaeo

Readers: Jan Gough KK tba Kaeo

Door and tea: Jan and Rilla Flowers: Margot and Ros

**LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

**COMMUNION SERVICES:** Today Sunday 24 December at 4.00pm at Ted Robinson Chapel; Friday 29 December at 11am at Kauri Lodge

**UNION CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

**Christmas Eve** 24 December 9.00pm at Cornerstone, Kerikeri

**Christmas Day** 25 December 9.15am at Cornerstone, Kerikeri

10.30am at Wesleydale Memorial Church, Kaeo

**SUNDAY SERVICES IN THE COMING WEEKS**

The regular schedule: 9.30am at Kerikeri

11.15am at Kaeo

**CAR BOOT SALES:** 13 and 26 January 7.30am-12noon at Cornerstone. Contact person: Mary 021722938 or 4071117

**HOPE CHURCH:** the group who shared the services with us on Sunday 26 November will be trying out a trial arrangement to hold their regular services at Cornerstone. They will arrive quietly (no piano playing in the Hall!) between 10.30 and 11am and begin their service at 11am. Our morning tea and singing is finished in the Hall prior to their expected cuppa time of 12.30pm and they will arrange all the stacking away of the chairs.

It is a trial for five Sundays, 28 January till the end of February. Feedback will be welcome, to see if we can establish a system that works well for both groups and speaks clearly to the wider community of our faith in the action of partnership and respect. As the song puts it "they will know we are Christians by our love".

If this becomes an ongoing arrangement, it is understood that there will be some Sundays when we will need the whole venue right through the morning, e.g. special celebrations or annual meetings.

When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.

Rumi, 13<sup>th</sup> century