

St Paul's Presbyterian Church

'Partners in God's Mission of Love'
'We celebrate life in Christ. Join us on the journey'

10:00 am Service led by Rev Keith Rowe
Music led by Pam Clare
3rd Sunday in Lent, Holy Communion
Sunday 12th March, 2023

How good it is for God's people to live in unity: how good it would be, if the whole human family were to receive God's gift of unity.

Amen

We light candles to remind us of Jesus, light of the world, our pathway into a world of peace and generosity.

Better to light a candle than to curse life's darkness,
better to follow the Way of Jesus than to wallow in uncertainty,
Better to be silent before the mystery of life
than to chatter the hours away with shallow words.
(a period of silence)

***Hymn: O God whose first creative word.**

(Tune Melita; 'Eternal Father strong to save.')

**O God whose first creative word set universes into place,
who stretched across the whirling void infinities of time and space.
O speak to our chaotic day a word of ordered grace, we pray.**

**O Christ who came, the living word, proclaiming love's redeeming power,
who drained the tempters bitter cup and triumphed in earth's darkest
hour,
O speak to our despair and pain a word that kindles hope and gain.**

**O Spirit, ever present word, God's agent of transforming grace,
who seeks to enter every heart with light its darkness to replace,
O speak within the hearts we raise a joyful word of faith and praise.**

(Judith Fetter, Voices United 322)

Gathering Prayer:

From a world shaped by grasping and accumulation,
we come to recall the way of Jesus,
who because he dwelt in God - love,
did not seek power over others
but lived as a servant of humanity.

**In the stillness of this place and as people of the Jesus way
we open ourselves to the presence of Spirit.
May we be held together as a single family in Christ.**

From a world cruelly divided by wealth and culture, religion and politics,
we come to drink from the well of Divine love for every person,
recalling the healing and hospitable love that shaped the being of Jesus.

**In the stillness of this place and as people of the Jesus way
We open ourselves to the presence of Spirit.
May the seamless love of Jesus soak into our being.**

From a world awash with words and explanations, plans and ambitions,
we come to explore again the stories and deeds of Jesus,
resting in the grace filled silence of Divine love,
losing ourselves in truth beyond words, love beyond explanation.

**In the stillness of this place and as people of the Jesus way
we open ourselves to the presence of Spirit.
In the gentle silence we listen afresh for whispers of grace.**

Amen, may we receive these gifts in our worship hour.

Welcome and Notices:

Readings for the third Sunday in Lent:

Exodus 17: 1-7

This is a tragic tale of how, while on a life changing journey in search of a new way of living – in search of a just, peaceful, caring society, the Israelites lapse into quarrelling, and complaints against the leadership of the prophet Moses and his dream of a new society. It is like a parable of how humans lose the plot, choosing to argue over nonsense rather than to unite around a central dream of what could be. Perhaps it is like twenty-first century people refusing to recognise the effect of human greed upon the environment and the climate. Why do we scrap over nonsense and ignore the main game? Why do we continue with outworn disputes when a new future beckons?

John 4: 5-15, 27

Jesus spends time with a Samaritan woman and discusses important matters with her. The disciples are puzzled as to why Jesus should spend time alone with a many times married woman who also happens to be a distrusted Samaritan. They fail to grasp he is the servant of what could be – a world where traditional enemies, like Samaritans, are welcomed and where women and men share together in managing and nourishing society. How come many in our day, like the first disciples, are still arguing over yesterday's questions, while failing to see the new ways of living Jesus pointed to in his teaching and ultimately in his dying.

***Hymn: Mother Earth our Mother birthing.**

*(Tune: Praise my soul, the King of heaven, CH4:
160.)*

The author of this hymn is an Australian Biblical scholar who, in his writing, and teaching has sought to discern what it means to follow Jesus in a way that respects the beauty and fragility of creation – seeking for a 'green' Jesus.

**Mother Earth, our mother birthing
ev'ry creature on the land
Jesus too was flesh and breathing,
kin to every greening plant.
Celebrate with all creation:
God's within the web of life.
Sister Air, our sister lifting
ev'ry creature born with wing;**

Jesus shared the breath of forests,
breath that makes our spirits sing.
Celebrate with all creation:
God's within the web of life.

Brother Water, brother pulsing
deep through ev'ry vein and sea,
Jesus drank the very raindrops
for our wine and in our tea.
Celebrate with all creation:
God's within the web of life.

Father Fire, our father burning
with the sacred urge to live.
Jesus' death completes the cycle,
bringing life beyond the grave.
Celebrate with all creation:
God's within the web of life.

Words: Norman Habel 1999

Sermon: The meal of memory and of hope.

*Hymn: Dear weaver of our life's design (*Tune: Repton, CH4,485.*)

Dear weaver of our lives' design
whose patterns all obey,
with skilful fingers gently guide
the sturdy threads that will survive
the tangle of our days.
Take up the fabric of our lives
with hands that gently hold;
bind in the ragged edge that care
would sunder and that pain would tear,
and mend our rav'ling souls.
Let eyes that in the plainest cloth
a hidden beauty see;
discern in us our richest hues,
show us the patterns we may use
to set our spirits free.

Words, Nancy C Dorian

Offering:

Today, we share in the meal of the Jesus way.

We share bread and wine, food of the poor of Jesus' day,
a mere fragment of what is needed to sustain life,
a reminder of those who live without what we take for granted.

In this meal we reach forward to what might be as we pray:

Sung, firmly

**Our Father in heaven –
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

‘May the Christ-Kingdom come, may God- love be enacted among us:

May the time come when all food is shared,

when no person is diminished by the greed of a neighbour.’

There is enough food for all, we need to learn how to share it.

We many as we are, are one body in Christ.

We breathe the same air; we enjoy the same sunshine,

We share the hope of a peaceful and just future for all humanity.

The peace of God be with you.

And also with you.

(greet those around you with the words, ‘**The peace of God be with you....**’ are appropriate.)

(The offering, along with bread and wine, is brought forward.)

Loving God, through your goodness
we have this bread and wine to offer,

which earth has given and human hands have made.

Made one in Christ and one with each other
**we offer these gifts and with them ourselves
to be People of God-love in a needy world.**

(Stand.)

The Great Thanksgiving

The Love of God be with you,

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give God thanks and praise.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is always right in all times and places

to give thanks to God, Holy wisdom and Eternal love.

Holy and life-giving God,

we offer thanks and praise

in wonder and awe,

in delight and astonishment

for you are creative love within every corner of the universe.

**Your love is in the air we breathe, in the hands that hold us, the peace
shaped dreams that call us.**

We give thanks for creative love at the heart of our evolving cosmos.

We walk through the beauties of creation and even in times when nature seems
to be angry, we see signs of your love.

In the struggles and joys of those we meet, we find hints of your presence.

Touched by goodness and imagination, we sense the whisper of your love.

You pester us with the needs of our world,

You remind that every person matters,

that every loving deed, every love shaped prayer,

contributes to the building of your world.

We give thanks for Jesus in whose spirit all things are being made new,
who walked the human journey bearing the pain of human struggle,
weaving love and forgiveness into his community.

We recall with gratitude his care for the poor, his dream of a time when the
human family would live in peace and harmony.

We recall his death at the hands of those who fearing his devotion to love's
pathway, killed him lest they lose their power and privilege.

**We give thanks that not even death, violence and greed,
could diminish his love for his neighbours and his hopes for humanity.
His love lives on in the deeds of people everywhere.**

We give thanks for God-Spirit, in us and around us.

As she once brooded over the waters of the deep,

Your Spirit now holds creation together within a single web of creative love,
drawing us toward a time when humanity will have learned to live together as a
single family.

Therefore, with the whole creation.

with all your people gathered across time and space,

with all those, of many faiths and many cultures,

who across the centuries have been servants of love and builders of peace,

with all the wonder of creation,

with galaxies in an expanding cosmos,

with everything visible and invisible,

imagined and not yet dreamed,

we join in creation's praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of enduring love,

Heaven and earth are full of your grace.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is Jesus who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

With grateful hearts we give thanks for Jesus,
who feasted with sinners, befriended the lonely
and is present with us in this simple meal.

On the night before he died, on the evening of betrayal,
Jesus took bread, broke it, and said:

“This is my body which is for you.

Do this to remember me.”

In the same way, also the cup after supper saying:

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this whenever you drink it, to remember me.”

Send your Holy Spirit, O God that these gifts may be for us.
reminders of your gift of new creation in Christ.

Shape us into one body; press us into one wine,
bake us into one bread - the bread of life and cup of liberation -
so, we too may become servants of your new creation.

(sit)

Breaking of the bread

Christ is the bread of life,
Bringer of healing and wholeness.

Christ is the cup of hope,
sign of a future worth living toward.

(Bread and wine is shared –the following words are appropriate as we serve our
neighbour: **“Jesus is the bread of life.”/ “Jesus is hope for the world.”**)

Pray after communion.

God of enduring love, Father, Mother, Friend of us all

We give you thanks and praise.

That when we were still far off

You met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love,

Gave us grace and opened us to a new future.

May we who share Christ’s body live his risen life.

we who drink his cup bring life to others.

we whom the spirit lights give light to the world.

Anchor us in this hope that has grasped us,

so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

***Hymn:** *Tune: Niagara, (Together in Song #530.)*

Now let us from this table rise.
renewed in body, mind, and soul.
with Christ we die and rise again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.
To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care.
the work that Christ began to do.
we humble pledge ourselves to share.

Then grant us grace, Companion-God,
to choose again the pilgrim way
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

Words: Fred Kaan.

We extinguish the candles that through this hour have been reminders of the
ever-present love and mercy of God.
We extinguish candles but the love we celebrate continues to burn within each
one of us.
Our acts of love become the smile of God in a wounded world.

As we go,
Let us recall the way of Jesus: **The Blessing:**

Blessed are those who know their need
the grace of heaven surrounds us.

Blessed are those who weep
our tears are being wiped away.

Blessed are the humble
we are close to the sacred earth.

Blessed are those who hunger for earth's oneness
we see signs of what we seek.

Blessed are the forgiving
we are being freed from slavery to past hurts.

Blessed are the clear in heart
we live within the Living Presence.

Blessed are the peacemakers
we are born of God and serve God.

THIS WEEK'S NOTICES

Helping Today

Greeters: Anne Loan & Marian Eagle

Offering: Janice Tucker

Bible Reader: Anne Loan

Flowers: Alison Hancock

Grounds: Paul Hentschel

Helping next week 19th March 2023

Greeters: Penny Marshall & Jill McConnochie

Offering: Helen McClymont

Bible Reader: Meg Sillay

Flowers: Rae Wildbore & Helen Dunnett

Grounds: Mike & Bev Coghill

Prayer Focus: Let us pray for: -

- * Ministry among us: **Prison Ministry**
- * Partners in God's Mission of Love: **Napier Food Bank**
- * Partners in the Napier Inner City: **St John's Cathedral**
- * Parishes in our Presbytery: **Knox Ahuriri**

Parish Lunch Announcement

Jill regrets that for various reasons the Parish Lunch Group will **not** meet this month.

Upcoming services

Sunday March 19th *Ruth Sandiford Phelan (Rev)*, one of the hospital chaplains, will take our service.

Wednesday March 22nd Lenten Service hosted by *St Paul's Church* at 7pm.

Sunday March 26th there will be a joint Hawke's Bay Presbyterian Churches service at *St Andrew's Hastings*.

Sunday April 2nd, Palm Sunday service led by *Rev Keith Rowe* at *St Paul's Church* at 10am.

Thursday April 6th, Maundy Thursday, we are invited to join *Trinity Methodist* at 7pm.

Friday April 7th, Good Friday service at *Trinity Methodist* at 9.30am.

Sunday April 9th, Easter Sunday, *Rev Anne Thomson* will begin her month at St Paul's.

Retiring Offering

The retiring offering for Child Sponsorship of Save the Children & World Vision will be collected today.

Message from Napier Food Bank/Nourished for Nil

Nourished for Nil are very low on instant coffee and instant meals such as risotto and cuppa soup. Due to Cyclone Gabrielle, we are receiving a lot of requests for detergent / cleaning products, XLO cloths etc, so while it is not food: we would appreciate any such items. Many Thanks, Jane.

Napier Civic Choir – Concert Series

Napier Civic Choir will be performing the first of their 2023 concert series on Saturday 1st April at 7.30pm and Sunday 2nd April at 2.30pm. The concert is called *Carmina Burana* featuring two pianos, timpani and percussion and will take place here at St Paul's Church. Tickets are Adults \$35, Tertiary Students \$10, Supergold Card \$32 and 17 years and under are free.

Bible Readings for Mon 13th March – Sat 18th March

Monday, March 13, 2023:

Psalm 81; Genesis 24:1-27; 2 John 1:1-13

Tuesday, March 14, 2023:

Psalm 81; Genesis 29:1-14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Wednesday, March 15, 2023:

Psalm 81; Jeremiah 2:4-13; John 7:14-31, 37-39

Thursday, March 16, 2023:

Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:10-21; Ephesians 4:25-32

Friday, March 17, 2023:

Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:22-31; Ephesians 5:1-9

Saturday, March 18, 2023:

Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:32-34; John 1:1-9