

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 *Dorothy Finlayson*
Sixth Sunday of Easter, 14th May, 2023

Call to Worship:

***Hymn: O God of Earth and Space** *Words: Jane Parker Huber; tune 53, Leoni*

**O God of earth and space / of sea and fire and air, / your providence
surrounds us here / and everywhere - / in fruit and grain and tree, / in
shelter from the cold, / in cooling breezes, flowing wells, / now as of old.**

**Where faithfulness is shown, / where love and truth abound, / where
beauty graces human life, / there you are found. / Inspirer of all thought!
/ Creative force of art! / The melody on every tongue, / in every heart!**

**Wherever freedom reigns, / where sin is overthrown, / where justice,
fused with mercy, rules / there you are known. / Give us the courage clear
/ to make the earth a home / for all to live in harmony / in Christ's
shalom.**

**Your word commands response / and summons us to life. / We follow,
strengthened by your grace, / in calm or strife. / Our ever-present help,
our challenge and our prod, / we praise you now and to life's end, /
Eternal God.**

As we gather let us light candles, symbols of life, tokens of Jesus - light of the
world and of direction in times of darkness.

(a time of silence)

Gathering Prayer:

Each of our lives is but a small fragment, a whispered instance in the vast
immensity of the cosmos.

Yet each of us is of ultimate significance, wondrously shaped by divine love, with tasks to do, love to share, a destiny to fulfil.

**We have our part to play in evolution's dance,
We have our part to play in history's fulfilment.**

Over the aeons God's creative love has been shaping creation;
Like a skilled artist weaving colour and shape into a harmonious whole.

**Like a magnet drawing life towards fulfilment,
Like a great net holding all things together.**

From the beginning difference, disagreement, discord has been present.
Many forms of life have come and gone, beauty has been damaged and chaos has reigned.

**We know there is pain within creation.
We experience it, we contribute to it.**

We who are called human have the gift of imagination,
We look ahead, we dream of what might be, we have skills to build the new.

**We dream of harmony and sharing, of justice and peace,
tolerance and understanding – candle lights to guide us into the future.**

To us has been gifted the energy and the vision to weave understanding and compassion into a world trembling on the edge of chaos.

**We praise God, creative energy within a wonderfully evolving universe.
We praise God that each of us contributes to the building of a world shaped by love.
Amen.**

Hymn: God Who Gives to Life *Tune: Austrian Hymn (WOV 374(i))

God who gives to life its goodness,
God creator of all joy,

God who gives to us our freedom,
God who blesses tool and toy:
teach us now to laugh and praise you,
deep within, your praises sing
till the whole creation dances
for the goodness of its king.

God who fills the earth with beauty,
God who binds each friend to friend,
God who names us co-creators
God who wills that chaos end:
grant us now creative spirits,
minds responsive to your mind,
hearts and wills your reign extending
all our acts by love refined.

W. Farquharson

Welcome and Notices:

Prayer for the day:

God of harmony, builder of unity,
teach us how to live in community.
Grant to us a welcoming and hospitable spirit,
that we may contribute to the unity of the human family
and so fulfill our destiny as servants of your love.

Bible Readings:

Exodus 3: 1-15

This reading is among the ‘golden’ passages in the Hebrew Bible. The image of a burning bush is at the heart of the symbol chosen to represent the Presbyterian tradition – a people sensitive to the call of God, heard in silence and responded to in love and obedience.

Acts 17:22-29

Paul speaks to the Athenians of a presence, an energy, God, ‘in whom we live and move and have our being.’ We may spend our life in search of God but Paul assures his hearers that God who they seek is not far from each of us.

***Hymn: There's a wideness in God's mercy**

Tune: Omni Die (WOV 72i)

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.

There's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.

There is room for every person
In God's world of love and peace.
There's a task for every child
In a world still being built.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our mind.
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

But we make God's love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we build a god of judgement
With a zeal God will not own.

If our love were but more faithful,
we would trust the path of Jesus,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving
for the goodness of our Lord.

Frederick William Faber (with a few tweaks)

Sermon: "Moses in a universal context"

A time of reflection

***Hymn: All praise to our redeeming Lord**

Tune: Lucius (WOV 367ii)

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
Who joins us by His grace
And bids us, each to each restored,
Together seek His face.

He bids us build each other up;
And gathered into one,
To our high calling's glorious hope,
We hand in hand go on.

The gift which he on one bestows
We all delight to prove:
The grace through every vessel flows,
In purest streams of love.

Even now we think and speak the same,
And cordially agree;
Concentrated all through Jesus' name,
In perfect harmony.

And if our fellowship below
In Jesus be so sweet,
What heights of rapture shall we know
When round His throne meet?

Charles Wesley

Prayers for the World:

Followed by The Lord's Prayer sung (WOV 676)

**Our Father in heaven,
Holy be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day 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, amen, amen, amen;
amen, amen, amen, amen.**

Offering:

Life is a gift to be treasured and shared.
There are good times and tough times,
times damaged by discordant notes
and times held together in harmony and beauty.
Our way through life does not remain the same,
change surrounds us and brings both challenge and possibility.
There are years of strength and years of weakness,
years of certainty and years of doubt.
It is all part of life and it is worth the effort to live it to the end
and not give up till it is accomplished.

In our work, in our homes, in our families and as volunteers in the community:
**May the gifts we bring, the gifts we are, the gifts we seek,
become our daily contribution to the healing of the world.**

*Hymn: O God of Bethel

Tune: Salzburg (WOV 49)

O God of Bethel, by whose hand
your people still are fed;
Who through this earthly pilgrimage
Have all our forebears led:

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
before your throne of grace:
God of our people, be the God
Of each succeeding race.
Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
For all our needs provide.

O spread your covering wings around,
till all our wanderings cease,
and at our Father's loved abode
our souls arrive in peace!

Philip Doddridge

We extinguish the candles that through this hour have been reminders of the ever-present love and mercy of God.
The flames we extinguish continue to burn within each of us, symbols and signs of God's presence in our needy world.
The light and love of God's presence burns like a bush in the wilderness, like water for the thirsty, hope for the needy.

Blessing:

THIS WEEK'S NOTICES

Helping Today

Greeters: Lynne & Murray Arnold

Offering: Helen McClymont

Bible Reader: Marion Fell

Music: Dorothy Finlayson

Flowers: Marian Eagle

Grounds: Bruce Tucker

Helping next week Sunday 21st May 2023

Greeters: Margaret Greig

Offering: Sylvia Low

Bible Reader: Kerry Marshall

Music: Pam Clare

Flowers: Eleanor Holmes & Yvonne Dickson

Grounds: Lynne & Murray Arnold

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**

Care and Share

The next gathering is in the Church lounge tomorrow on **Monday 15th May, 2023 at 1.30pm**. We look forward to welcoming everyone. It is a very relaxed afternoon with fun and fellowship and always a cuppa. The sales table may have something interesting for you to buy. Dorothy Finlayson 8431266.

Combined Pentecost Service and an Invitation to Sing

A Combined Presbyterian Church Service will be held at **St Columba's, Havelock North, on Sunday 28th May at 4.00pm** to celebrate Pentecost. All are invited. Each parish has been asked to contribute an item to the service and St Andrew's has invited St Paul's to join with them to sing one to two hymns that are known to us, *'Blow Through the Valleys and Sing in the Rimu'*, and/or *"Spirit of the Living God"*. Contact Pam, pamclare@xtra.co.nz, or 021 103 726.

June Newsletter contributions

In the coming week, please forward any items or contributions to Bridget in the office stpaulsnapier@gmail.com or Pam pamclare@xtra.co.nz by Monday 22nd May at the latest. Many thanks.

Bible Readings for Monday 15th May to Saturday 20th May 2023

Monday, May 15, 2023:

Psalm 93; Genesis 9:8-17; Acts 27:39-44

Tuesday, May 16, 2023:

Psalm 93; Deuteronomy 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:8-12

Wednesday, May 17, 2023:

Psalm 93; Deuteronomy 31:1-13; John 16:16-24

Thursday, May 18, 2023: Ascension of the Lord

Friday, May 19, 2023:

Psalm 93; 2 Kings 2:1-12; Ephesians 2:1-7

Saturday, May 20, 2023:

Psalm 93; 2 Kings 2:13-15; John 8:21-30