

St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Napier.

'Partners in God's Mission of Love'

'We celebrate life in Christ. Join us on the journey'

Sunday 10th March, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Lent

10am Service *led by Rev Keith Rowe*

Music led by Pam Clare

Let there be light in our darkened world.

May Christ-love shine wherever the hope of the poor is denied,
wherever violence banishes peace,
wherever division destroys community.

May the light of Christ burn in our hearts, in this church,
and in the deeds of good people of every faith and every culture.

Gathering Prayer:

We live in stormy and dangerous times:
ancient markers are destroyed,
peace is scorned and the earth is in pain.

Our ancestors in faith also faced difficult times
and in their times of uncertainty, they recalled the goodness of God.

Our psalm for today is Psalm 107, an affirmation of God-love,
Even when hope burns low.

Give thanks to the Lord of goodness, for God is lasting love.

**Let those saved by God tell their story: how the Lord snatched
them from the oppressor's might, gathering them from east and
west, from north and south.**

They wandered through wasteland, trekked over sands, finding no city, no home.

Weak from hunger and thirst, their lives were fading away.

Then they cried out to God, who snatched them from danger, leading them up a straight road to a place they could settle.

There were some confined in darkness, chained by suffering, burdened by their misery, they fell with no one to help.

Then they cried out, and God snatched them from danger, shattering their fetters, banishing the darkness.

Sailors went down to the sea, traders on merchant ships, and saw all the works of the Lord, all the wonders of the deep. A storm whipped up the waves, high as the rolling clouds, low as the fathomless depths. Even seafarers trembled, lurching, reeling and helpless.

Then they cried out and God snatched them from danger, hushing the wind, stilling the waters. They rejoiced in the calm as God brought them to port.

God turns desert to flowing water, dry land to fertile valleys, and gives this place to the hungry where they build their city. They sow crops, plant vines, and gather the harvest.

With God's blessing they prosper; people and cattle increase. God lifts up the poor, shepherding them like flocks.

Let the wise listen and wonder at God's great love.

(Adapted from 'The Psalter', 1995.)

***Hymn: Praise with joy the world's Creator**

Iona Community, Scotland; Tune: Praise my soul. (tune160 CH4)

Praise with joy the world's Creator,
God of justice, love and peace,
Source and end of human knowledge,
Force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory
Power to rescue and release.

Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,
Frees the captive, finds the lost,
Heals the sick, upsets religion,
Fearless both of state and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us,
Liberating truth from pride,
Forging bonds where race or gender,
Age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure
Foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
One God in community,
Calling Christians to embody
Oneness and diversity.
Thus, the world may yet believe,
When shown Christ's vibrant unity.

Welcome and Notices:

Readings:

Ephesians 2: 1-10.

A first step on the Christian Way is to recognise that life is a gift to be enjoyed and lived well. The second step is to acknowledge that Jesus is our clue to the meaning and purpose of human living. So, we explore the Way he pioneered and we seek to weave his Way into our lives and into the society that is our home. Our society teaches us to emphasise what we have achieved through our own unaided efforts. Paul places the emphasis on God's grace – a deep down awareness that life is a gift from God-love long before it is our achievement.

John 3: 14-21.

Few people want to be judged and found wanting. But most of us are ready to judge others with a harshness we would not like to be applied to ourselves. Every society develops standards and laws by which citizens are judged, the guilty punished and the innocent rewarded. According to John, those who follow the Jesus Way are learning to give up harsh judgement of others and instead are learning to live within the light and love of Jesus who understood, accepted and befriended those who had made mistakes.

***Hymn: Spirit of love, you move within creation**

(Tune: O perfect love, WOV 526ii)

Spirit of love, you move within creation,
drawing the threads to colour and design:
life into life, you knit our true salvation,
come, work with us, and weave us into one.

Though we have frayed the fabric of your making,
tearing away from all that you intend,
yet, to be whole, humanity is aching
come, work with us, and weave us into one.

Great loom of God, where history is woven,
you are the frame that holds us to the truth,
Christ is the theme, the pattern you have given –
come, work with us, and weave us into one.

Sermon: *Beyond death?*

***Hymn: For deeper love we share the bread**

(Tune: O Waly Waly)

For deeper love we share the bread,
I won't be fed till all are fed,
Till every soul has home and bed,
The rest of us can't move ahead.

For deeper love we share the wine,
I cannot taste the love divine,
Till every soul has walked the line,
And you've had yours like I've had mine.

Now Mary sings her birthing song,
Till every voice can sing along,
And voices weak will rise up strong
Her choir is one where all belong.

No one is saved till all are healed
As Jesus on the mount revealed
Your life and mine forever sealed
Just like the lilies of the field.

We follow where the Christ has led
to table that for all is spread
And no one's sitting at the head
But deeper love in wine and bread.

The Peace

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. The words, ‘The peace of God be with you...’ are appropriate.)

The Offering:

(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 we offer our prayers
for our world:**

Let us hold in love...

The prayer of Jesus:

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.**

(Please Stand)

The Great Thanksgiving

The Love of God surrounds us, empowers us and beckons us.

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,

present in every one we meet and wherever we are.

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

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 open our eyes to the needs of our world,

You remind us 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 made new,

who walked the human journey bearing the pain of human struggle.

We recall with gratitude his care for the poor, his vision of what life could become.

We give thanks that not even death, violence and greed, could diminish his hopes for humanity.

His love lives on in the compassion and courage of people everywhere.

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 creation's promise will be fulfilled.

Therefore, with the whole creation;

with all your people gathered across time and space,

with those, of many faiths and many cultures,

with all who are 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.

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.

(please sit)

Breaking of the bread

Christ is the bread of life,

Bringer of healing and wholeness.

Christ is the cup of hope,

Wellspring of resurrection life.

(We gather at the table in groups of about 15. Having received the bread and wine, each group will wait for a brief blessing.)

***Hymn: Nothing is lost on the breath of God**

(words: Colin Gibson; Tune: Greenlane)

Nothing is lost on the breath of God,

nothing is lost forever,

God's breath is love,

and that love will remain,

holding the world forever.

No feather too light,
no hair too fine,
no flower too brief in its glory,
no drop in the ocean,
no dust in the air,
but is counted and told in God's story.

Nothing is lost to the eyes of God,
nothing is lost forever,
God sees with love,
and that love will remain,
holding the world forever.

No journey too far,
no distance too great,
no valley of darkness too blinding;
no creature too humble,
no child too small for God to be seeking and finding.

Nothing is lost to the heart of God,
nothing is lost for ever;
God's heart is love,
and that love will remain,
holding the world forever.

No impulse of love,
no office of care,
no moment of life in its fullness;
no beginning too late,
no ending too soon,
but is gathered and known in its goodness.

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Affirmation of Faith

As we go, let us confess the faith within which we live, the belief that

gives direction to our living:

Do you believe in God, the author of life?

We live within the love of God, creative energy at the heart of life, river of life in which we live and move and have our being.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the true and living way?

We live within the way of Jesus. We are allowing his compassion, his forgiving love and his generous hospitality to grow in us.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, God present within the human family?

We live within the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit we are held together in community and in care for one another.

Amen.

The Blessing:

The blessings of God,

The blessings of good neighbours and friends,

The blessing of those we love and cherish,

The blessing of sea and sky,

Be with each of us this week.

Give thanks to the God of goodness,

For God is lasting love.

THIS WEEK'S NOTICES

Helping Today

Greeters: Marion Fell & Ella Haigh

Offering: Janice Tucker

Bible Reader: Richard Loan

Music: Pam Clare

Flowers: Alison & Bill Hancock

Grounds: Paul Hentschel

Helping next week 17th March 2024

Greeters: Christine Woodward & Rika Hentschel

Offering: Helen McClymont

Bible Readers: Meg Sillay

Music: Pam Clare

Flowers: Marian Eagle

Grounds: Mike & Bev Coghill

Prayer Focus:

Let us pray for: -

- * Ministry among us: **Pastoral Care Team**
- * 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 Directory

We are in the process of bringing out a newly updated directory. Can you please let us know if you have changed numbers or address in recent times. A lot of people no longer have their landlines and now have mobile phones instead. Please contact Bridget at the church office (06) 835 5359 or stpaulsnapier@gmail.com confirming the information you would like included in the directory. Many thanks.

Milk Container Tops – (Message from Kerry Marshall)

Recent changes to recycling mean we can't put our milk bottle tops out in

the weekly collection. I've checked with the Environment Centre and they are not taking them at present but hope to do so. Please keep saving the tops and I'll let you know when you can put them in our recycling bucket.

Fellowship and Fun

The March gathering of **Care and Share** will be combining with the **Pastoral Care Group** to host an afternoon of fellowship and fun. This special event will be **in the Church Lounge at 2pm on Friday 22nd March**. We plan to sing **Easter hymns** and other favourites. This replaces the usual Monday group that would normally have been on Monday, 18th March. If you would like to attend, please place the **RSVP slip** at the bottom of your invitation into the **return box in the foyer**. All are welcome. We would love to see you there. 🎵☕

Bible Readings for Monday 11th March to Saturday 16th March 2024

Monday, March 11, 2024:

Psalm 107:1-16; Exodus 15:22-27; Hebrews 3:1-6

Tuesday, March 12, 2024:

Psalm 107:1-16; Numbers 20:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Wednesday, March 13, 2024:

Psalm 107:1-16; Isaiah 60:15-22; John 8:12-20

Thursday, March 14, 2024:

Psalm 51:1-12; Isaiah 30:15-18; Hebrews 4:1-13

Friday, March 15, 2024:

Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 30:1-10; Hebrews 4:14-5:4

Saturday, March 16, 2024:

Psalm 51:1-12; Habakkuk 3:2-13; John 12:1-11