



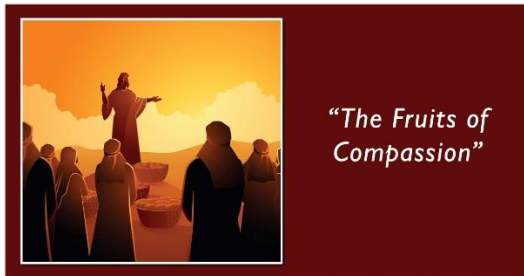
Wesley Wellington

75 Taranaki Street
www.wesleychurch.org.nz

Sunday 17 September 2023

Pentecost 16

Haere mai ki tēnei Whare Karakia
Welcome to this House of Prayer



Living God's Love – Acting for the Common Good

We are a multi-racial Christian community:
Methodist in affiliation – Ecumenical in intention
Diverse in theology – Inclusive in outreach.

Kia ora koutou katoa — Talofa Lava
Malo e lelei — Bula Vinaka Greetings to you all!

**Order of Service
10am Congregation**

Sunday 17 September 2023

Pentecost 16

**Leader: Philip Garside Organist: Colin Scarf
Guitar: Heather Garside**

Welcome & Introduction

Call to Worship: *The Blessing of Assembling To Worship*

We come together each week in a regular rhythm of worship.
**In the company of friends we gather
to meet with God our Parent again.**

We sing words of praise and thanksgiving for all God the Son has done.
**We offer up words of petition
for what we hope God the Spirit will do.**

We read and reflect on the scriptures listening for what God has to say.
**We come knowing the blessing
of assembling together to worship today. Amen.**

Lighting the candle

Today we light the Christ Candle
in honour of the One who brings light to the world.
Lord bring light to all who are in places of darkness.

Today we light the Christ Candle
in honour of the One who brings the gift of abundant life.
Lord protect all whose lives are threatened by violence and famine.

Today we light the Christ Candle
in honour of the One who redeems the world.
Lord deliver the world from evil, and us from complacency.

Today we light the Christ Candle
in honour of the One who revealed the Father
and sent the Spirit to be our Advocate.
May our worship today be pleasing to the Triune God. Amen.

Opening Prayer

God of the Land of Living Skies, your enlightened labour has given us the bounties of the earth.

You have fashioned all life.

You provide nourishment for all, with generosity.

Exultant are we with you in our lives,
for we would be downtrodden without you.

We praise your magnificent works,
in our comings and our goings,
in our reflections and thoughts.

Humbly, we ask you to enlighten and inspire us
in living with respect in creation.

We glorify you, Sustainer of Life.

Be with us always, as you are our hope and salvation. **Amen.**

Hymn: Immortal, invisible, God only wise

Words: Walter C Smith (adapted). Hymns & Psalms 9. St Denio

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.
2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might—
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
3. To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but nought changeth thee.
4. O Great One of glory, O Great One of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

5. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.

Prayer of Approach & Words of Assurance

The Truth that Sets Us Free

It's not just any truth that sets us free
but the truth contained within your word,
which if we faithfully follow will free
us from the bondage of erroneous beliefs.

**The error of thinking we can be totally self-reliant
and have no need for the blessings of God.
It is not just our bodies that need refreshing,
our souls need to be fed by the word of God.**

The error of thinking our ways are always right
and we have no need for divine instruction.
Our damaged world shows our lack of judgment,
that the choices we make are often not good.

**The error of thinking we are in complete control,
that the earth is ours to dominate and exploit.
Disease epidemics and other natural disasters
prove beyond doubt how vulnerable we are.**

God help us embrace the truth that frees us
from the deceptions of human arrogance.
Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin,
but when the Son makes us free we are free indeed. **Amen.**

Words of Assurance

The God of infinite love has forgiven us.
Through God's grace, we begin again,
as it has ever been, and as it will ever be. Amen.

Introducing the Theme / Story Time

Hymn: Saviour, I Heard Thy Voice Gently Say

Words & Music: David Burt. Arr Chris Norton and Rosemary Russell. No 5 *Servant Songs* 1987.

Refrain:

Saviour, I heard thy voice gently say:
Seek you my face, come, walk, child, with me;
Lord Jesus Christ, thy face will I seek,
My heart replies in worship to thee.

Hear, O my Lord, when I call with my voice,
have mercy upon me and answer my cry
In your sweet presence my heart will rejoice,
to our tender call my heart will reply.

Refrain:

Hide not thy face from me, oh Lord
and turn not thy servant in anger away;
My constant help thou hast been till today
so do not forsake me or leave me, oh God.

Refrain:

In your great mercy teach me your way
and out of your paths let me never depart.
Wait on the Lord, be of courage, I say,
and his loving kindness shall strengthen your heart.

Refrain:

Readings

Romans 14:1-12. (*The Message Bible*. By Eugene Peterson)

Cultivating Good Relationships

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there

are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for *God's* sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:

“As I live and breathe,” God says, “every knee will bow before me; Every tongue will tell the honest truth that I and only I am God.”

So mind your own business. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

Matthew 18:21-35. (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

Forgiveness

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Sermon/Reflection: The Fruits of Compassion

A song to listen to: Sung by Festival Singers:

Sunset Poem, (Eli's Prayer) from Dylan Thomas' radio play Under Milk Wood

Every morning when I wake,
Dear Lord, a little prayer I make,
O please do keep Thy lovely eye
On all poor creatures born to die.

And every evening at sundown
I ask a blessing on the town,
For whether we last the night or no
I'm sure is always touch-and-go.

We are not wholly bad or good
Who live our lives under Milk Wood,
And Thou, I know, wilt be the first
To see our best side, not our worst.

O let us see another day!
Bless us all this night, I pray,
And to the sun we all will bow
And say, goodbye – but just for now!

Song: Love is Your Way

Music: Per Harling. Words: Shirley Erena Murray. No 95. Hope is Our Song.

1. Love is your way, love is your nature,
blessing each creature, lighting each day;
grace is your sign, gift of forgiveness,
chalice that changes water to wine:

Refrain:

God, in your grace, God in your mercy,
turn us to you to transform the world,
turn us to you to transform the world.

2. Pathways we choose, undeserved freedom,
earth as our kingdom, still we abuse;
much we have done, gross human error,
misuse of power darkens the sun:
3. Terror and tears, wounds without healing,
hearts without feeling mirror our fears;
life without trust, greed and high prices,
conflict and crisis grind us to dust:
4. Let us stand still, look at each other,
sister and brother thwarting your will;
teach us good care, grace to seek pardon,
reclaim your garden, riches to share:

Community Time

Sharing the Peace

Let's greet each other saying: "God's peace be with you."

Notices

Sharing Joys, Things we are Grateful for, Sorrows & Concerns

Prayers of Intercession

To the bidding "...and in your mercy" would you please respond "**hear our prayer.**"

Lord's Prayer

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tou Ingoa
Kia tae mai tou rangatira-tanga.
Kia meatia tau e pai
ai ki runga i te whenua,
kia rite ano ki to te rangi.
Homai ki a mātou aianeī
he taro mā mātou mo tēnei ra.
Murua o mātou hara
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i o te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whaka-waia;
Engari whaka-orangia mātou, i te kino:
Nou hoki te rangatira-tanga,
te kaha,
me te kororia,
Ake, ake, ake.
Āmine.

Offering

(We also acknowledge offerings made by automatic payment and online banking)

Blessing of Offering (said together)

**God, we are committed to living our lives for you,
giving of our time and talents for you,
giving of our substance to you.
May these offerings we give to you
further the mission you have us do.
We thank you for all you give to us.
Bless the little we give back to you. Amen.**

Hymn: Song of faith that sings forever. FFS 57.

(Words: Shirley Erena Murray. Music: Colin Gibson. Tune: Abbeyfield.)

1. Song of faith that sings forever
through God's people, ages long,
Word that holds the world together
when our hearts take up the song
always, always somewhere sounding,

though the source we do not see,
counterpoint to all despairing,
it is hope that sets the key.

2. Song of faith in exultation,
rising through the vaults of prayer,
tune of simple celebration
offered up in open air,
song in chapel and cathedral,
descant to our daily tone,
song from sickbed or in prison:
faith must often sing alone.
3. And when life would overwhelm us,
when there seems no song to sing,
hear the constant voice of courage
out of fear and suffering:
all who've loved and trusted Jesus,
all who lift us to be strong,
endless, endless are the voices
of the faith that makes the song.

Sending forth / Benediction

The light of God is shining on us and on everyone in this world,
not just today but every day. Go from here today in hope and in love,
taking with you the promise of a better tomorrow
and the conviction of faith to make it happen.
May God bless and keep you until we meet again.

The Grace

**Kia tau ki a tātou katoa,
te atawhai o to tātou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga
ki te Wairua Tapu. Amine**

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Liturgy for this service was sourced from:

Let Us Pray, Janet Nelson, HarperCollins 1999;
Prayers for Southern People, Joy Kingsbury-Aitken, Philip Garside Publishing 2023;
Gathering Pentecost 2, United Church of Canada 2023.

The book mentioned in the sermon is:

Purple Hands, by Barbara Walker, Philip Garside Publishing 2020

To keep up-to-date with services and news, visit the parish website:

<https://wesleychurch.org.nz/>

And the 10am Congregation's Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/wesleywellington.methodistchurch.10am>

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