



SAINTS A & A

A New Church Emerging



Northcote

Aotearoa New Zealand

Birkenhead

19th Sunday after Pentecost
11 October 2020

Officiating, Greg Morgan

Welcome and lighting the candle

Call to worship (based on Psalm 23, by Joanna Harader)

In the darkest valley,
at the banquet table;
in the hard work of life,
at the moments of ease;
in our day-to-day reality,
at times set aside -
like this time, now -
for worship, for listening, for paying attention;
with every step we take:
goodness and mercy follow us;
our cups overflow.

Prayer of approach (from lifeinliturgy.wordpress.com)

God ...

You who have created us and sustain us: we come with
thanksgiving for these moments when we can ease the pace of
our lives and listen for your voice.

Create a spirit within us that truly draws us toward you and
toward our brothers and sisters; a spirit deep, perceptive, gentle
and bold.

Clear our minds, open our hearts and touch us with your presence and your power. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord:

**O God who is like a nurturing father or mother,
who resides in divine spaces near and far,
come and make your name holy among us.**

**May your realm of peace and justice be evermore
established in your world,
and may your purposes be fulfilled.**

**Grant us what we need for today physically, emotionally,
spiritually, relationally.**

**Forgive us for what we have done to or neglected to do for
others,
as we are also called to forgive those who have engaged in
such acts against us.**

**Help us to resist the temptation to give into fear, hatred,
and scapegoating
which harms your creation and makes idols of our own
prejudices,
and liberate us from thoughts and actions that demean and
dehumanize that which you love.**

**A transformed reality for which we have ongoing hope,
the power that you show in unconventional and
unexpected ways,
and the glory that you are ever shining through what you
have made
are always and forever yours. Amen.**

(Paraphrase of the Lord's prayer by Jeff Nelson)

Opening hymn*Carolyn Winfrey Gillette*

Tune: Regent Square ('Angels from the realms of glory')

God with joy we look around us
 At your world's diversity.
 Folk of every kind surround us
 And you call your church to see;
 All are made in your own image!
 All are people whom you love.

In the times we've hurt each other,
 Lord, we've hurt the ones you bless.
 Hating sister, cursing brother,
 We've denied what you express;
 All are made in your own image!
 All are people whom you love!

God, you sent a Saviour to us,
 Breaking walls that would divide.
 By your Spirit, now work through us
 As we witness side by side;
 All are made in your own image!
 All are people whom you love!

Hear a word of grace

Meister Eckhart wrote:

God is the newest thing there is, the youngest thing there is.
 God is the beginning and if we are united to God, we become
 new again.

[Silence]

Hymn

Shirley Erena Murray and Colin Gibson

AA 113

Our life has its seasons, and God has the reasons
 why spring follows winter, and new leaves grow,
 for there's a connection with our resurrection
 that flowers will bud after frost and snow.

Refrain: So there's never a time to stop believing,
 there's never a time for hope to die,
 there's never a time to stop loving,
 these three things go on.

There's a time to be planting, a time to be plucking,
 a time to be laughing, a time to weep,
 a time to be building, a time to be breaking,
 a time to be waking, a time to sleep.

Refrain

There's a time to be hurting, a time to be healing,
 a time to be saving, a time to spend,
 a time to be grieving, a time to be dancing,
 a time for beginning, a time to end.

Refrain

Readings

Philippians 4: 4-13

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is

anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Matthew 22: 1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

Sermon

At the end of the sermon, a prayer by Rev. William Sloane Coffin:

**May God give you the grace never to sell yourself short;
 Grace to risk something big for something good; and
 Grace to remember the world is now
 too dangerous for anything but the truth and
 too small for anything but love. Amen.**

Hymn

TIS 648 – **but AURELIA is a better tune**

Help us accept each other
 as Christ accepted us;
 teach us as sister, brother,
 each person to embrace.
 Be present, Lord, among us
 and bring us to believe:
 we are *ourselves* accepted
 and meant to love and live.

Let your acceptance change us
 so that we may be moved
 in living situations
 to do the truth in love;
 to practice your acceptance
 until we know by heart
 the table of forgiveness
 and laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters
 with all who are in need,
 who hunger for acceptance,
 for justice and for bread,
 we need new eyes for seeing,
 new hands for holding on:
 renew us with your Spirit;
 Lord, free us, make us one!

Community time for sharing

Prayers for the world

Let us pray:

In this day God has made, **let us choose to rejoice and be glad in it.**

To be grateful for the abundance in life, for creation and for these islands that are our home.

And to acknowledge that the resources of the world and our own society are not shared fairly.

Not the land, not access to enough food and clean water, not the chance for education, not health care and medicine, not the right to vote, not the space to be heard, not the opportunity to work enough to earn what is sufficient for a family to live on without stress.

So many examples of not enough in a world of plenty.

We give thanks for all who are working for justice through policy and at the frontline, in caring vocations or leadership, in sharing and through action that takes many forms.

We are grateful for all who build hope and inspire change: the parents, carers, workers, friends, whānau, grandparents, young people, sufferers who share their stories, risk-takers, advocates, activists, scientists and artists.

So many expressions of love into the world.

We pray for politicians standing in our election this month, and for voters and all who need us to understand the issues presented by each referendum.

We give thanks for our democracy and pray for it as an enabler of inclusiveness.

We now make space to hear God's speaking to us....

[Silence]

Through prayer we affirm life creative, life abundant, life free.
We commit to the way of Jesus as our path. Amen.

Offering

Dedication

**God ever present, accept these and all gifts offered in love.
 Direct them to where they can do good and towards the
 need they can best help to meet.**

**We bless all who are connected with the gifts offered and
 received through this community.
 In the name of the Christ, Amen.**

Final hymn

Miriam Therese Winter © Medical Mission Sisters 1994

Tune: Blessed Assurance

Blessed be God who caused us to be,
 called us to flourish, created us free,
 present wherever goodness is found,
 setting us firmly on holy ground.
 Sing unto God a jubilant song,
 praising the One to whom we belong.
 Sing of the future and of the past,
 Love ever present, holding us fast.

Blessed be those who under duress,
 greet us like manna in our wilderness,
 fill us with hope when courage is gone,
 give us the strength for carrying on.
 Sing unto God a jubilant song,
 praising the One to whom we belong.
 Sing of the future and of the past,
 Love ever present, holding us fast.

Blessed are all who here upon earth,

nurture a vision and bring it to birth,
 live by the creed we boldly embrace:
 blessed assurance, amazing grace.
 Sing unto God a jubilant song,
 praising the One to whom we belong.
 Sing of the future and of the past,
 Love ever present, holding us fast.

Going forth

The blessed assurance is ours - **ours to share.**
 The blessed assurance is everyone's - **ours to respect.**

We accept this blessing and the privilege to reveal God's
 blessing into a world that needs its blessed *re-assurance* in big
 ways and small.

God is calling always. Here is our time to choose.

'And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will
 guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' So it is.

**The grace of our lord Jesus Christ,
 the love of God
 and the community of the Holy Spirit be with us all.**

Threefold Amen.