



29 December 2019
Christmas 1

Thinking Allowed – Thinking Aloud Allowed

Worship Leader: Rev Dr Robyn McPhail
Musicians: Marie Cannon - KK Clyde Foster - Kaeo
Readers: Jenny Phillips - KK tba - Kaeo

Here each Sunday we pray God's blessing over our buildings: thanks for the good that has happened through the week and cleansing for anything troublesome. May the Spirit touch all who come into our church and into our homes.

Being family, we watch out for, and care for, one another.



Tātou tātou e

Settling in

Gathering with the Saints

The birth of Jesus is a new birth of mercy in the world.

Walter Brueggemann

Carol *Child in a manger* WOV241

Prayer

On that not so silent night,
 you came to us, Mothering God,
 like a night nurse
 on the pediatric floor,
 to gather us in your arms
 and swaddle us in your hope.

On that not so silent night,
 you came to us, Child of humanity,
 to be cradled with the lost,
 to share a stable with outsiders,
 to confront the bullies who
 threaten our children.

On that not so silent night,
 you came to us, Spirit of joy,
 to lift us up and carry us to salvation,
 to help us persist in praising God,
 to share our lives with us.

Let's take a moment with our own selves, letting ourselves be fully who we are and as we are in the presence of God. Feel the support and encouragement of those around to let be. Remember you are loved, you are formed in God's image.

Therefore in this holy place we can put aside all that holds us back from being who we can become....

Be with us in all the nights and days to come,
 God in Community, Holy in One
 AMEN

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Symbol of God's Presence

Hymn *Love is your way* [Jenny's choice]

Clarifying our Purpose

Conversation with the Word

Reading Matthew 2:13-23

Reflection [Jesus was a Refugee](#)

When the Magi, otherwise known as the wise men, called on Herod they asked: “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?”

Imagine the gasps, the fright, and not a little dismay when these experts in astrology ask this question. A new king born?

Herod feels threatened. He consults his own wise men and finds that Bethlehem is the place where the problem will surface. That’s where the king is to be born, a king to replace him and his family dynasty.

Hope breeds hostility – the hope of a new future threatens the present scheme of things. When the primary purpose is to retain political power, there is no regard for the common good. Herod’s approach, which is shared by all who seek to hold power at any cost, is diametrically opposed to God’s. Power that comes from the source and spirit of life – from God – breaks in and brings life and well-being, otherwise known as salvation.

In the face of such a threat, Herod and his kind have no qualms about sanctioning genocide. Openly here in this narrative, often subtly by disadvantaging, by arguing exclusion, by hardening hearts. Holding power still rules the world, even in our proud democratic country.

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire said that “Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.” The birth of Jesus is much more than a passing children’s pageant. It asks much of us, it challenges us, in particular, to live the life of compassion wherever we are and however significant or insignificant we think our lives might be. By doing that, we are putting into action God’s intrusive peace and doing so within a world where force and violence take centre-stage. We are being subversive as Jesus has always been, right from his birth, as it is told here in Matthew’s gospel.

The birth of Jesus is a new birth of mercy in the world. The fearful world of Pharaoh/Herod dreads mercy. But, says the story, mercy will have its way. Neither Herod of the empire nor the raw power of death will stop the future given in God’s good mercy.

Walter Brueggemann

So here in this narrative God is not so much a God on high, as down and dirty in the world of politics and power. God will suffer rather than use force. God will be in the midst of the people to be the power that enables us to be life in ourselves and to give life to others.

Conversations around the Table

Offering Carol *Star-child, earth-child*

Continuing the Conversation

1. Why do you think the church tells this tragic story right in the midst of Christmas joy?
2. When have you had to change plans, to re-route your itinerary, to make a new life in a new place?
3. How do you respond to Freire’s challenge that we cannot be neutral in the conflict between the powerful and the powerless?
4. In what ways is God calling you to courage in this new year?

The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine

A Prayer for Jerusalem

O God of Sarah and Abraham,
our tears are mixed with yours,
weeping for the cities in the world.

NEXT SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 2020 (marking Epiphany 6 January)

Musicians: Marie Cannon – KK Clyde Foster – Kaeo

Readers: Jenny Phillips – KK tba – Kaeo

Door and Tea: Christina and Rilla – KK

Communion Prep: Michelle and Akisi – KK

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR EPIPHANY

Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7,10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

CHRISTMAS APPEAL: GIVE WATER GIVE LIFE

Contributions can still be made to this year's Christian World Service Christmas appeal. Place your donation with the offering the appeal envelope, or a clearly marked envelope, or go online to christmasappeal.org.nz

WATER

CAR BOOT SALES: next sale on 11 January at 7.30am-12noon at Cornerstone.

Contact: Mary 021 722 938 or carboot@kkup.org.nz

HOSTING AT CORNERSTONE: Regular hosting will take a break from 25 December to 5 January. People will be on site on occasion, but not the usual guaranteed hours of 10am-2pm. Contact: email cornerstone@kkup.org.nz, leave a message on 09 4078250 (option 3), or text/phone 02102476280.

PŌWHIRI/POROPOROAKE – Celebration of Farewell and Welcome on Saturday 11 January 2020 9.30am at Te Patunga Marae [585 Pupuke Mangapa Road, Kaeo](#) Gather at marae entrance for the Wero, Karanga, then Karakia and Mihi in the Wharehui. Service of Communion, Baptism and Confirmation in the Whare Karakia. Spit-roast dinner (Hākari) to conclude. Contributions of kai or towards the koha welcomed. *Car-pooling: Cornerstone by 8.30am Kaeo Church by 9am*

THANK YOU AND FAREWELL – Celebration of Community (Robyn's last service) Sunday 12 January 2020 10.30am at Cornerstone–Whare Karakia o Manako. Combined Parish Service 10.30am. Shared Lunch 11.30am. Formalities 12.45pm.

NOTICE FROM PARISH COUNCIL: Anybody who would like to give a farewell cash donation towards Robyn and Neil's new home, please either drop into the Office at Cornerstone or pay on-line with reference "minister gift" to 01-0382-0012129-000 account name "Kaeo-Kerikeri Union Parish"