

HOON HAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Welcome to today's service, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, 29th March 2020






Hello Everyone,

Welcome to our first on-line service! We don't know how long this will be required and it's less-than-ideal but let's make the best of it and enjoy the flexibility this format allows.

A suggested approach is to find a quiet space and work your way through the Order of Service at your own pace. Where possible it follows our normal structure but obviously without a worship leader and other features (e.g. live music, All Age Teaching, etc.). Each song/hymn has a YouTube link and please use your own Bible for the readings. I will generally work from the NIV (unless otherwise cited) and the message will be posted on a separate video link available through the church website. There are no Power Point slides with the message today but perhaps in the weeks to come these will be provided.

Blessings, *Michael*

To zoom in on any part of this document, hold down the Control Key and use the mouse roller, or you can use buttons on the toolbar.

Clicking the icon   alongside songs & message will open in YouTube, and  in 'Bible Gateway'. After viewing, click the 'Back' screen to return to this document.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God and Heavenly Father,

We come before you in a time of global crisis. But as we do, we are reminded you are God of the Nations; 'The LORD blesses each nation that worships only him. He blesses his chosen ones.' (Psalm 33:12, CEV).

Despite our current situation, we celebrate your goodness and offer our worship. We come in quiet confidence that no situation is outside your control, nor need we fear or panic; but rather trust in your total care and provision.

We choose now to set aside the affairs of our world and come to you in worship.

We long to be together as your Church but understand that is not physically possible at the present time. Help us to be patient.

We humbly ask that your power and presence calm our fears and anxieties, and please be with us each one, as we engage with your Word, in prayer, and in song.

In Jesus' name and to your glory through the power of the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

Focusing Psalm: Psalm 46:1-11

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging. *Selah*
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
- ⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
- ¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

Points to note:

(This Psalm was written by the Sons of Korah (temple assistants) and its theme is God's constant help, refuge, security, and peace.)

The earth giving way (vs. 2) is something we have all felt with the earthquakes in Canterbury, but even in the face of utter destruction the Psalmist maintained confidence in God's ability to save.

Throughout history cities and even civilisations have been established around rivers. A nearby fresh water source makes habitation and agriculture possible.


Interestingly, Jerusalem – the City of God – had no major river but the Psalmist likened God's ever-flowing provision to being like a river (vs. 4 & 5). Living away from that source and provision (e.g. idolatry) made the city vulnerable to enemies, and in the case of Jerusalem, being sacked and the people taken into captivity in Babylon (586 BC).

Verse 7 is repeated in verse 11 and the repetition underscores God's promise and provision.

We know the first line of verse 10 well. Our world is full of unrelenting distraction and often loud noise. Stillness and silence allow space for God to enter into our quiet.

Selah is a Hebrew word which adds emphasis and praise to the points (an intensifier).

Critics often 'blame' God for starting wars; but these are always a manifestation of sin, greed, and selfish desire. God brings peace and final victory (v.9)

 **Listening:** Crown him with many crowns: *This is a stirring rendition of a favourite hymn with full orchestration – enjoy!*

OUR PRAYER OF CONFESSION & INTERCESSION

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the privilege of praying for others. Firstly, however, we pause to consider the things in our lives that could hinder our prayers. We name them before you – the wilful and unintentional sins and the sins of neglect (pause and name what comes to mind). Forgive us; cleanse us and wash us clean. Thank you that through the Lord Jesus and his righteousness we can come before you, confess our sins and shortcomings, and pray with confidence, according to your will and know that you hear us.

We pray for a world in crisis and ask that the Coronavirus be contained and lives spared. For those who are ill; please heal them. Thank you for those working to provide care and relief. May your grace protect and keep them and your healing power work through their skills. We pray for churches worldwide that they will be creative and effective in reaching out to their communities. May every leader be given insight and wisdom as they lead, and encourage others to serve, and show practical love. This pandemic shatters the idol of self-sufficiency and all the things in our lives that are attractive but can never save us. How easily we ignore your ways and pursue our own lives and agendas. Lord, have mercy on everyone affected by this virus and may much good come ultimately out of this situation.

We pray for our own nation and government. May all in authority and leadership; the Prime Minister, MPs, mayors, city councillors, and other decision makers be led by your Spirit even if they are unaware of it. May their decisions genuinely help and serve others. Give them your mind and surround them with godly people who will exercise integrity

and work for justice, morality, freedom, and peace. Help them to esteem you, not dismiss you. May the present situation bring about a new spirit of unity in our nation.

We bring before you the needs of people in our wider Hoon Hay neighbourhood and community. Lord, you know every home and heart and we pray that in your mercy, the spiritual blockages and blindness that ensnare so many will be broken in Jesus' name. May our efforts to reach this community be empowered by your Spirit. Turn the hearts of fathers toward their children and families toward you. May this church be a lighthouse of faith, hope, and love. We pray for our vision, ideas and programmes and trust you will lead us where best to put our energy, money, and time.

And finally, we pray for those in our parish who are hurting physically, emotionally, and mentally; for those recovering from illness or facing an uncertain prognosis (we may want to name specific people here). Please extend your grace, mercy and healing touch to all those who need it.


So much to pray for, Lord, but you are adequate for every need. It is your name we pray – and believe for these things.

Amen

 **Listening:** 'Lord have Mercy'

This is a modern song based on a prayer used in worship for centuries. It proclaims the good news that God's mercy is available to all who confess their need for it and receive it in faith.


Readings: Genesis 1: 20-31 

Colossians 2: 6-15 


Message: 'Anchored in Christ'

Part 3 – Identity  and notes 


A Time of quiet reflection

Song: 'Bless the Lord' ('10,000 reasons') 

This lovely song of worship is based on Psalm 103. The lyrics express the need for constant praise to God for all that He is, from our first breath to our last. As it was for the Psalmists who often faced uncertainty and affliction, we too, should be a worshipping people.

Hymn: 'It is well with my soul' 

Another old favourite. This is a powerful version complete with inspirational graphics.

Song: 'I stand amazed - how marvellous, how wonderful' 

And one more... I couldn't resist this – one we know so well at Hoon Hay! This is a contemporary version of a song with profound lyrics and promises for us at this time of crisis. God bless you this week!

Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14):

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa
Te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki, a Ihu Karaiti
Me te aroha o te Atua
Me te whiwhingatahitanga
Ki te wairua tapu
Ake, ake, ake

Amine

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.

Amen

CHURCH NOTICES

All church services are cancelled until further notice. All other activities and gatherings on are also cancelled. Please keep yourself informed and connected by checking the church [website](#). New notices will be posted there regularly.

Parish Council (PC) was to meet on Wednesday of this past week but after the Level 3 announcement on Monday, the meeting was cancelled. However, a PC member will contact everyone on our database to see if assistance is needed. If you haven't yet been contacted, you will shortly. Meanwhile, if there are urgent needs let us know and please keep in touch with each other. As always, heed all official advice from the Government and Ministry of Health re the Covid-19 pandemic.

Continue to share celebrations and milestones (an email to the church office). These will then be mentioned in the following week's notices.

Please maintain regular giving during this time. If you need help with banking contact the Church Office by email.