

**ST COLUMBAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**HAVELOCK NORTH**  
**PENTECOST 13 – 30 AUGUST 2020**

*The season of Pentecost is the longest of the Christian year. The church lives and grows in the power of the Holy Spirit. Liturgical colour: 'Green' for growth.*

**WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD**

**Introit** (*please stand as the Holy Bible is carried into the Church*)

**Lighting the Christ Candle:**

We light the Christ candle to acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ – the Light of the world - the light of life that is in all people.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overcome it. *John1 :1-4*

**Greeting and Welcome:**

**Notices:**

**Children's Prayer:**

**Theme:** Nec Tamen Consumeatur – The Idea of The Holy - Listening to God through our environment.

**Call To Worship:** (*Based on Psalm 105: 1 – 6*)

<sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name,  
make known God's deeds among the peoples.

<sup>2</sup> **Sing to God, sing praises to our God;**  
**tell of all God's wonderful works.**

<sup>3</sup> Glory in God's holy name;  
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

<sup>4</sup> **Seek the LORD and his strength;**  
**seek his presence continually.**

<sup>5</sup> Remember the wonderful works God has done,  
God's miracles, and the judgments God has uttered,

<sup>6</sup> **O offspring of his servant Abraham,**  
**children of Jacob, his chosen ones.**

Let all the people of God give thanks  
and worship in the holy place.

**Approach to God :**

Creator God, You have created all things good. Nothing is beyond Your reach or Your redemption. You are the God of the whole universe, of all of creation and yet You are mindful of us. You call on us to reveal Your presence and to speak of Your faithfulness, from generation to generation. Wherever we gather, You are there among us. You were there before we arrived and will be there when we leave. Your presence makes every space a sacred space. You delight in our praise, and rejoice in all Your people, who find a way to acknowledge Your presence, in our world and in our lives. May our worship bring us back to You, and increase our awareness of Your beating heart at the centre of life, calming our fears and restoring our souls, knowing ourselves beloved of God, united with all Your creatures, in heaven and on earth. **Amen.**

**We Sing: 'Love divine, all loves excelling' CH4 519**

**WE ARE RENEWED BY GOD'S GRACE**

**Prayer of Confession:**

We confess to God that often our eyes are so downcast, that we fail to discern God's presence all around. We confess that, even when God's presence is startling, we can be so wrapped up in ourselves that we fail to notice. We confess that we have missed opportunities, to witness to the presence of God at work in our lives and in the lives of others. We confess that we rarely live up to the marks of being Christian, by grasping too tightly all that we have, and by excluding others from our tightly drawn circle.

**Forgive us, O God. Lift up our eyes to see You everywhere. Draw us out of ourselves, to discern Your presence all around. Give us boldness to proclaim Your works. Release us from the boundaries we set ourselves, free us to love and welcome others in Your name. Call us anew, in the light of Your forgiveness, to draw attention to You in all of life. Amen.**

**Words of Assurance:**

Through the abundance of God's mercy and forgiving love, we are empowered to be disciples, to reach out to others, to offer the words and deeds of hope in a struggling world. God's blessings are poured over you and me for this service.

**Praise and thanks be to God!**

**The Peace:**

*We share a sign of peace with those around us.*

The peace of Christ be with you.

**Peace be with you.**

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD**

**Prayer of Preparation:**

For the word of God in Scripture,

For the word of God among us,

For the word of God within us.

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**The First Reading:**

**Exodus 3:1-15 Moses at the burning bush**

<sup>1</sup>Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' <sup>5</sup>Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' <sup>6</sup>He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' <sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' <sup>12</sup>He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain. <sup>13</sup>But Moses said to God, 'If I come

to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.” ’ <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”: This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Second Reading:**

**Romans 12:9-21    Marks of the true Christian**

<sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup>love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. <sup>11</sup>Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ <sup>20</sup>No, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**Thanks be to God.**

**We Sing: ‘Be still, for the presence of the Lord’ CH4: 189**

## The Gospel Reading:

### **Matthew 16:21-28 Jesus foretells his death and resurrection**

<sup>21</sup>From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

<sup>24</sup>Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup>For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

<sup>27</sup>'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup>Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ, The Word.**

Reflection: *The Rev Wayne Toleafoa*

**FSHS**

**Nec Tamen Consumeatur – The Idea of The Holy - Listening to God through our environment.**

The motto of the Presbyterian churches throughout the world (including Aotearoa New Zealand) is, 'Nec Tamen Consumeatur', Latin for , 'It was not consumed' – referring to the burning bush in Exodus 3:2. Let me recap the story, which I believe is enlightening for our times.

*Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, **yet it was not consumed.***

One of the most fascinating stories in the whole Bible. It is about a man (Moses) encountering 'The Holy' and the indescribable – through a

burning bush. It is an experience which I believe many people have – although they might not use Biblical language to describe that encounter. I hope I can explain that better as we go through this brief reflection.

In 1917, a German philosopher and theologian called Rudolf Otto published an important book called, 'The Idea of the Holy'. It's a book that's influenced a good number of theologians from both Protestant and Catholic churches –including theologians such as Lutherans Karl Barth and Paul Tillich in the 1950s and Richard Rohr, a contemporary Catholic scholar and mystic who has become very popular in our time.

In his important book, Otto conceptualized the feelings that people typically have when they have encountered the Holy.

Among the feelings people experienced were, a sense of 'awe'- feelings of 'terror and dread' - along with feelings of 'fascination and attraction'- all at the same moment.

Otto, in his book, categorizes these feelings and helps us to understand our own religious experience and the religious experience of others. 'The Holy' he referred to as, "The Numinous" or "The Mysterium". The feelings of awe and dread he called the 'tremendum'. And he called the feelings of attraction - 'fascinans'. By describing these facets of a 'holy encounter' Otto has taken the craziness out of what is a very common and sane experience.

I think we all experience the 'numinous' or 'the holy' in everyday life – but in different degrees. We experience 'the holy' more significantly in moments when we have a heightened awareness of the life around us like, when we're in a small kayak at sea, or watching a sunset, or looking at an awesome mountain range, or admiring a bright flower arrangement in church, or watching the birth of a new baby. There's a sense of awe and attraction and a heightened respect for all of life.

In the Exodus story, Moses climbs Mt Horeb (already considered a sacred mountain) and feels himself drawn toward the spectacle of bush on the mountainside, that is burning but is not consumed. He feels compelled to remove his shoes, as he feels the terror and the fascination of entering the sphere of the Holy. He realises that he is standing on holy ground or living in a moment that will transform his life forever.

There, in that burning bush, Moses encounters God, or a messenger from God (an angel). Moses feels a sense of the 'Foreverness' of God, as he asks God what his (God's) name is. And God answers, 'I AM'. This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations' (*Exodus 3: 15*)

As I thought of this experience and the 'Foreverness' of God some thoughts came into my mind, which helped me to capture the sense of the 'Foreverness' of God. Maybe my random thoughts will be useful to you too. 'I AM'

I AM

Before and after the Big Bang

I AM

Before and after the dinosaur

I AM

Before and after the everlasting hills

I AM

Before and after the melting of the Ice Cap

I AM

Before and after the forming of the oceans

I AM

Before and after the oldest and the mightiest kauri tree

I AM

Before and after the heavens and the earth

I AM

Before and after the COVID-19 pandemic

I AM

'This is my name forever and this is my title for all generations'.

**You might like to think of momentous moments in your life that you will never forget. Moments where you have felt the Foreverness of God – and felt humbled by it.**

**Today, the story of Moses and the burning bush suggests that if we want to hear the voice of God , or if we want to see the signs of God's presence, we need to look to our environment. Listen to what nature is telling us. Or what God is telling us through nature.**

Sometimes the voice of God is not pleasant. Can you hear the voice of God in the images of an ancient sea turtle choking on a plastic bag? Can

you hear the voice of God when you see a river choked with chemical waste? Or hear the voice of God in the pungent smell of smoke from factories?

I think most New Zealanders are pretty good at listening to our environment. We appreciate the beauty of these islands we live in. We appreciate the bush and the mountains. We appreciate the two oceans that are on either side of us and we appreciate the great Southern Ocean below us.

Anyone who goes tramping in the NZ mountains falls in love with the NZ environment. And it is a kind of spiritual experience. It is as if God is saying: "I AM the indescribable feeling that you have, as you look upon the mountains and the bush. I AM the indescribable feeling you have when you look out at the vast oceans and the endless skies above. I AM the indescribable feeling you have as you look upon the beauty and intricacy of the mountain flowers and the majestic Kauri. I AM the indescribable feeling that is within you when you stand in awe of life! I AM!

Hopefully, we capture some of that sense of awe when we come to worship – but we will certainly capture it in our New Zealand environment. The good news is that there are many people listening to what the environment is telling us. We have within our parish – the St Columba's Havelock North Environmental Group – or 'SCHNEG' for short. SCHNEG is listening to what the environment is telling us – and our environment is telling us that we need to take greater care of our oceans and our native trees, birds and plants.

Our environment is telling us there is too much pollution into our rivers. Too much plastic going into our oceans and into our landfill. Further north of here, the Pacific Islands like Tuvalu and the Tokelau Islands are worried about the rising sea-levels that are eating away at their land. If the levels continue to rise, they will have to relocate to new places including NZ and Australia.

Listening to the environment is very much like listening to the voice of God or looking for the signs of God's presence.

Jesus in Mathew 6: 26 -28 clearly demonstrated how he saw the signs of God's presence in nature: " Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life. "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these'.



May we be as blessed as Moses and see God's burning presence in the creation around us. May it lead us to seek the liberation of all people and lead us to a Promised Land where all will find a home in God's love.

FSHS Amen

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

**We Sing:** 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' CH4 167

**A Retiring Offering:** *Can be made at the door on the way out.*

As God has blessed our lives with abundant love and gifts, let us bring our offerings to this holy place, seeking to help others, to offer comfort and hope.

**Prayer of Dedication:**

Lord of all mercy and compassion, bless these gifts lovingly offered and bless the gift we make of our selves. Help us to use these gifts for ministries of hope, love and justice, let your Spirit flow through your church and into our community, our nation, and our world, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Man for others. **Amen.**

*For other ways of giving, please see notices.*

**Prayers of the people:**

Let us take a moment to be still in the presence of God.

*A short time of silence*

Let us pray for the church and for the world, giving thanks for God's goodness.

As we pray, let us remember that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit intercedes for us in groans too deep for words. And God who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, who prays in accordance with God's will. (*Romans 8: 26-27*)

God You love all that You have made, the world and all its creatures. Your love gathers and enfolds all things. Your heart breaks when any part of Your creation suffers. So God, as our awareness grows of You present all around, may we be so attuned that we weep where You weep, and our hearts break where Yours is broken.

We offer back this complex, crazy world. Like children, we offer our broken lives asking that You mend and heal us.

Parent God, in love, You don't do as we ask, but You will kneel beside us and patiently show us how to make things better. You unearth the wisdom that creates the healing of the world – the wisdom of love and justice. You affirm us and give us each a unique part to play in changing the world, in ushering in Your justice and Your peace. So, God, we prepare to roll up our sleeves - and work alongside You.

In a short time of silence, let us pray for friends and people we know, who need our prayers today...we name them in the silence, and lift them up to you...

### *A short silence*

We pray for world leaders, that they too may be filled with Your wisdom and love and Your healing power. We pray that their eyes, and our eyes, may be opened to the need to find new ways forward, and the possibilities that abound for honouring all creation, and for building nations where all are valued, where all matter, where the economy is modelled on Your divine economy, where all are fed, and where there is no want, and no unnecessary suffering.

We pray for all who live in fear today, and for those whose fears have been realised – those who mourn loved ones, those who see no light of dawn after darkness. We pray too for those who have given up hoping for different, or for better. May we hold out hope and faith enough for the world, and may we live in love.

God awaken us to Your truth and Your light, to all the opportunities we have of emerging from darkness, fuelled by new energy to make our world, our church and our neighbourhood beacons of hope, that is realised in our serving You, by serving one another. May Your kingdom come, and Your will be done O God.

Let say together the prayer which Christ has taught us.

**Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is 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 forever. Amen.**

**We Sing: 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise' CH4: 132**

### **Blessing:**

God promised to be with Moses, and we are here to witness to the fulfilment of that promise. From generation to generation, the God of Israel is also the God of the community of St Columba's and all Christian

communities. The God of the burning bush is waiting even now to encounter you, to call you, challenge you, and change you. Go out to be sustained and surprised by the love of God.

**We go in the name of Christ.**

**Sung Three-fold “Amen”**

**Exit of the Holy Bible** (*Please stand as the Bible is carried from the Church*)

**Acknowledgements:**

*The Abingdon Worship Annual* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B.J. Beu, Copyright © Abingdon Press. Contributions by the Rev Nancy C Townley, 30 August 2020.

*Weekly Worship* – Church of Scotland – thanks to Rev Liz Crumlish, Path of Renewal Coordinator, for her thoughts on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 2020.

## **NOTICES FOR SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2020**

**WE ARE CURRENTLY IN COVID ALERT LEVEL 2:**

- **If you feel unwell, please stay home and contact your doctor.**
- **Contact tracing – please scan the QR code and/or keep track of your movements outside your bubble.**
- **Social distancing – please stay 1m apart in the church and 2m in shops.**
- **Face masks if possible.**
- **Hygiene – hand sanitiser is available in the foyer.**
- **No morning tea after the service.**
- **Retiring offering.**
- **Stay seated while singing.**

## **CALENDAR**

|             |        |  |
|-------------|--------|--|
| Today       | 3.00pm | Faith and Reason Discussion Group          |
| Tuesday 1   | 9.30am | Badminton & table tennis, St Andrew's hall |
| Tuesday 1   | 7.30pm | Elders meeting, Millar Room                |
| Wednesday 2 | 2.00pm | Prayer Group, 36 Simla Ave                 |
| Wednesday 2 | 7.30pm | Indoor Bowls, Summerset, Te Mata Rd        |

|            |         |                       |
|------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Thursday 3 | 9.30am  | 'mainly music', foyer |
| Saturday 5 | 9.00am  | Mini market           |
| Sunday 6   | 10.00am | Sunday Service        |

**CHURCH OFFICE OPEN:**

Church Office Hours: Monday to Friday 0900 – 1200

Please feel free to contact the office for any enquiries (877 8096 or [info@schn.org.nz](mailto:info@schn.org.nz)), or Rev Wayne directly (0211038144).

**DONATIONS/FREEWILL OFFERING:**

Please consider making donations/freewill offering online, or by automatic payment:

Havelock North Presbyterian Church - Westpac Account 03 0658 0005625 000.

**CONSTRUCTION OF BOREHOLES IN GHANA:**

We invite you to make a donation and directly help villagers in Apendwa, Ghana improve their living conditions.

*Direct Credit to St Columba's: 03 0658 0005625 00*

*Particulars: Ghana*

*Reference: Your name*

Put your contribution in the weekly collection in a separate envelope clearly marked with your name and Ghana or drop off to the office or put into the donation box in the foyer.

Thank you for all the contributions already received. We are close to the \$3,000 mark!

**JOYFUL NOISE SINGERS:**

Rehearsing on Wednesdays, 7.00pm – 8.00pm.

**MINI MARKET:**

**Jams/Preserves:** Contributions of white and brown sugar, malt and white vinegar and sultanas would be greatly appreciated.

**Cash donations:** If you prefer to donate cash instead, please hand in at the office or put in the offering bag in an envelope marked 'Mini Market'.

**Cake stall:** Please leave your contributions in the office or bring it to the cake stall on Saturday morning before 9.00am. If you need your contribution to be collected, please ring Elma (02102773099). Thank you for your contributions.

**FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE:**

You are invited to write your favourite hymn(s) on the list in the foyer or ring the office.

**FAITH AND REASON DISCUSSION GROUP:**

The group meets today at 3.00pm at 50 Tauroa Rd – PLEASE NOTE: CHANGE OF VENUE.

**HASTINGS CHORAL PRESENTS:**

Perfect Nostalgia – a light opera selection on Sunday 6 September at 2.00 pm at Taukura Rudolph Steiner School Hall. Information on the notice board in the foyer.

**ROSTER: Sunday 6 September 2020**

**Minister's Elder:** Anne Keown

**Elders:** Greg Rowe, Elma Pienaar

**Door duty:** Phil Carter, John Bark, David McDonald

**Organist:** Stephanie Mueller

**Sound:** Mike Earle

**Power Point:** Sally Russell

**Bible reading:** Craig Kilgour

**Morning tea:** Sally Russell, Mike Earle, Kathleen Rowe, Keith Rowe - To be advised

**Children:** Elma Pienaar

**Flower arrangements:** Vivien Taylor