

# Creationist 2.0

Sunday 28 August 2022

## Creating is Hopeful

### Call to Worship

*Psalm 112*

Praise the LORD!

**How joyful are those who fear the LORD  
and delight in obeying his commands.**

Light shines in the darkness for the godly.

**They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.**

Those who are righteous will be long remembered.

**They do not fear bad news;  
they confidently trust the LORD to care for them.**

They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly.

**They share freely and give generously to those in need.  
Their good deeds will be remembered forever.**

## Glory be to God the Father

*Horatius Bonar*

Glory be to God the Father,

Glory be to God the Son,

Glory be to God the Spirit,

God Almighty, Three in One!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Glory be to him alone.

Glory be to him who loved us,

Washed us from all sin and stain!

Glory be to him who bought us,

Made us kings with him to reign!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Praise the Lamb that once was slain!

Glory to the King of angels,

Glory to the church's King,

Glory to the King of nations;

Heav'n and earth your praises bring!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
To the King of glory sing!

"Glory, blessing, praise eternal!"  
Thus the choir of angels sings.  
"Honour, glory, power, dominion!"  
Thus its praise creation brings.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Praise the mighty King of kings!

### Prayer of Adoration

*Stef Jeschke*

You are the sound that elates and permeates me.  
You are the gentleness that subdues and captivates me.  
You are the source of strength from which I create and act.  
You are the silence that hears and defines me.  
You are the pillar of light that carries and illuminates me.  
You are the soul companion who completes and accompanies me.  
You are the depth that recognises and animates me.  
You are the lover who accepts and understands my being.  
You are the meaning in which I live and love.  
You are the goal that reaches and completes me.

In all this being, You dwell at my side;  
catching me before I fall;  
You give me peace where there was none before.  
You give Yourself to me  
for no reason at all;  
You let me be what I am.

### Reflection – What is Church

What is church?

### Notices

Thinking about the future Part 2  
Reporting back to Presbytery  
Thinking about how Waitaki Presbyterian Parish can move into the future.  
Tuesday 6 September, 2pm.

## The Peace

### How great is our God

*Chris Tomlin*

The splendour of a king, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice  
He wraps Himself in light and darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His voice

How great is our God  
Sing with me how great is our God  
And all will see  
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands and time is in His hands  
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end  
The Godhead Three in One, Father, Spirit and Son  
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, worthy of all praise  
My heart will sing how great is our God

### Reading            John 21:1-3

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

### Reading            Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

### Message            Creating is Hopeful

Are you a glass half full person? Or a glass half empty person? My best friend and I are complete opposite ends of the spectrum. They are definitely the glass

half empty and would far prefer to assume the worst until proved otherwise than take a chance on not being disappointed early. I, on the other hand and full on half full. Actually, the glass could have the merest drop in the bottom and I would instantly be planning what I could do with it. I far prefer to assume the best and enjoy the living daylights out of it until proven otherwise. Why waste an opportunity to enjoy life?

You could be forgiven for thinking that optimism and pessimism, defined as glass half full or half empty, seems to be an excellent way for thinking about hope. Obviously, the optimist is filled with hope and the pessimist, well, not so much. To be fair, the idea of optimism is related to hope but it is not the same thing.

I want you to put on your imaginary for a moment and find yourself with Peter and Thomas and Nathanael. They have seen that Jesus has risen from the dead, but there is still an air of unreality about it all. So you go back to what you know, the reality of fishing, casting nets, pulling them in. The rhythm of familiar work gives you room to think, to process what has been going on. But, after a full night's work you have caught nothing at all. Your body is weary and your heart is full of disappointment. Nothing is going right and you can't understand all the events of the past few days. You are caught between wanting to break something and just sitting down and crying. Everything you had hoped for, longed for, put your whole effort into over the last 3 years seems to have crashed down around you. Yes, it seems like Jesus is walking around doing things, but what does that even mean? And what about the wonderful future you were sure was coming, where everyone was happy and things were going just right?

Sit with that for a moment.

Now, keeping your imaginary on and you are sitting with your friends. You have been making decisions. You can see that there is a future out ahead of you and you have a sense of purpose that is bringing energy and enthusiasm to your conversation.

What has changed between the two moments?

I think what has changed is a move from hope less to full of hope. And here we come to the difference between optimism and hope. Optimism looks at the future and believes that there is going to be a positive outcome. It is a feeling that offers strength for going forward. Hope on the other hand does two things

rather differently. First it works out ways of getting to the goal, and second, it figures out how it is going to make that happen. There is feeling attached, but there is a strategic component to it as well. The more I have thought about it, the more important this seems. I don't know about you, but over the years I have never really understood hope as a thing. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13, faith, hope and love remain. Why does hope get in there? It must be more than some hand wavy feeling for it to get in that list. The idea of hope being a practice that looks for ways to reach a goal and then works on reaching that goal seems to fit Paul's list far better.

To be honest, I have always thought of hope as being this kind of fluffy, hand-waving thing that had no real impact on the world. I realise that most of us, myself included have never consciously attached any kind of strategic thinking to hope and I suspect that many of you feel tired just thinking about it so let's think about it this way.

Suppose you hope to see your family in the next few months. An optimist would simply think, 'Wouldn't it be lovely if I saw my family in the next few months.' But, with hope, we begin to make plans. It might be to have some things in place when they come to visit. Or it might be to start saving so you can travel to them. It could be that you write to them and talk about ways of making it happen. Can you see the difference there?

See the creativity that begins to happen, almost without you being aware of it. In hope you are problem solving, searching for solutions, changing things in the world with the purpose of adding a little good to the world – the opportunity to spend some time with your family.

And that takes me to my last point. I want to suggest that Hope, real hope, grows out of relationship with and confidence in others. We may hope for things that are physical – a nice house or a large or small garden, but those hopes almost always grow out of our relationship with others. It is that relationship that encourages us to make an effort to move ahead and do what we can to achieve the outcome we desire. Then, as we hope we create.

Sitting in boat, not catching fish, worried about the future found the disciples focussed not on relationship, but on opportunity lost. They had no hope in that moment because they could not see how Jesus, even the risen Jesus, fit in their future.

Sitting in that room, focussed on being prepared for Jesus' promise, they were filled with hope. And that hope was fulfilled in spectacular, if unexpected manner. What creating flowed from there! Together, empowered by the Holy Spirit, they planned and acted to work out the Hope that was living in them. Preparing for Jesus' return. Preparing for the New Heaven and the New Earth. Preparing for God coming to dwell among his people. What an incredible, creative, focussed, plan-filled, action centred hope!

### We Pray

God, full of hope, you have designed us to be like you. Filled with hope for a relationship with human beings you spoke the world in all its fullness into being. You made light and dark, water and dry land and filled it all with life. Fill us with an alive hope, a hope full of strength and action, a hope that changes the world and adds good. When we are challenged to speak of the hope that fills us gift us with insight into how that hope informs all our choices and drives our actions. And where that's not quite the case, help us to turn to you and be the people you have designed us to be. In the love and hope of Jesus, whose hope drove him to the cross we pray. Amen.

### Love divine

*Charles Wesley*

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down:  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
into every troubled breast;  
let us all in thee inherit,  
let us find the promised rest:  
take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its Beginning,  
set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray and praise thee without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;  
pure and spotless let us be:  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee;  
changed from glory into glory,  
'til in heaven we take our place,  
'til we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

## Offering

From <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/>

Renewing and refreshing God, fill our thirsty souls with your living water! As Jesus promised to the woman at the well, and as Jeremiah reminded the prophets, this water is ours if we keep our focus on you and don't chase after other gods. May the offering we make this day mark our commitment to keeping our eyes and our hearts set on a closer walk with you. We pray in the name of Jesus, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

## Prayer for Ourselves and Others

*Bethne Dodd*

To lead us into our prayers for ourselves and others I first share the words of the Prophet Isaiah. From The Message Bible, we read...

*The Spirit of GOD, the Master, is on me  
because GOD anointed me.  
He sent me to preach good news to the poor,  
heal the heart-broken,  
Announce freedom to all captives,  
pardon all prisoners.  
GOD sent me to announce the year of his grace -  
a celebration of God's destruction of our enemies -*

*and to comfort all who mourn,  
To care for the needs of all who mourn in Zion,  
Give them bouquets of roses instead of ashes,  
Messages of joy instead of news of doom,  
a praising heart instead of a languid spirit.  
Rename them "Oaks of Righteousness"  
planted by GOD to display his glory.  
They'll rebuild the old ruins,  
raise a new city out of the wreckage,  
They'll start over on the ruined cities,  
take the rubble left behind and make it new. (Isaiah 61:1-4)*

As fog descends to cloud familiar landmarks  
disorientating, depressing,  
So, too, a spirit of heaviness envelops our world  
insidious, pervasive.  
Obscuring senses, sapping energy, creating unease.  
Causing confusion and spreading despair.  
Through the fog of life, we are reminded,  
the thief comes only in order to do what comes naturally  
to lie, steal, kill and destroy.  
But that Jesus comes so we might have life and enjoy it.  
As the Light of the World, Jesus descends to dispel darkness.  
To lift the fog of despair.  
To encourage goodness.  
To bring about healing and hope,  
freedom and comfort to all in need.  
To spread messages of joy instead of news of doom – and so must we.  
We pause to bring before the One who knows the needs of our world,  
of others and ourselves, before we even ask...  
We uphold those who are weighed down by life's circumstances.  
The heartbroken, the downcast, the defeated.  
The overlooked or unheard.  
The wrecked and ruined.  
Those bound by past mistakes, guilt or fear.  
Those grieving the loss of loved ones,  
the loss of independence, the loss of the familiar.  
All those known to us...



(Extended Pause)

American Poet Edwin Markham reflects -

*Defeat may serve as well as victory  
to shake the soul and let the glory out.  
When the great oak is straining at the wind,  
the boughs drink in a new beauty,  
and the trunk sends down a deeper root on the windward side.  
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief  
can know the mighty rapture.  
Sorrows come to stretch our spaces in the heart for joy.*

As Jesus was filled with God's Spirit, so too are we.  
By leaning upon, and learning from, the One whom Isaiah called  
The Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief,  
may our sorrows - and those of whom we know and pray for -  
come to stretch those spaces in our hearts for joy.  
May we continue to grow deeply with God  
to renew and rebuild our own sense of hope,  
that we in turn might share that with others.  
Then we too might become known as Oaks of Righteousness,  
planted for the Lord, to give him glory.  
In closing I invite us to join in sharing the Lord's Prayer together, saying...

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, holy be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as 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

### Do something beautiful

*Graham Kendrick*

We are a shining light  
City on a hill that can't be hidden  
A shining light  
And this shining light  
Is the life of Jesus in us, Oh what a light

The fire of his Spirit burns  
With justice, joy and peace  
And works through our hands and feet

Go do something beautiful  
In the name of Jesus  
Do something beautiful  
Go do something Jesus would  
Do something beautiful  
Do something beautiful

We are the salt of the earth  
Here to purify and flavour, salt of the earth  
Sent through all the earth  
To love God and love our neighbour, salt of the Earth  
As freely as we received  
So freely we must give  
And we are his hands and feet

Let your light so shine  
Before the world  
That all may see  
The good you do  
And give their praise  
To God our Father

### Benediction and Grace

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.