



# Kaurihohore Historic Church

P O Box 4118, Kamo, Whangārei 0141



## Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 5 June – Pentecost



*Our service today is led by Kimberley Nielsen, one of our Lay Preachers*

We continue to provide emailed, posted or hand-delivered service outlines for those unable to participate in our services in person, and seek to find creative ways of doing Church so all are included in some way.

### Welcome

Kia ora, and welcome to our service this morning. My name is Kimberley, and I am one of the lay preachers here at Kaurihohore. Today is Pentecost Sunday, the day where we celebrate the ways that the Holy Spirit acts within all who believe, helping us let go of fear, dream for a better future, and trust God in all things.

To begin with, I want to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit has many names so, to avoid confusion, I thought I would list some of them. If you hear any of these names in the service this morning, know that they all refer to the Holy Spirit:

- Holy Spirit
- Spirit of Truth
- God's Spirit
- Wairua Tapu
- Giver of visions
- Sender of Dreams
- Other suggestions from congregation....

I would like to start our service this morning with a poem from James K Baxter, entitled 'Song to the Holy Spirit.'

**Contemporary Reading: James K Baxter, Song to the Holy Spirit (Rory)**

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks,

Inside and outside the fences,

You blow where you wish to blow.

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the sun who shines on the little plant,

You warm him gently, you give him life,

You raise him up to become a tree with many leaves.

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are as the mother eagle with her young,

Holding them in peace under your feathers.

On the highest mountain you have built your nest,

Above the valley, above the storms of the world,

Where no hunter ever comes.

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the bright cloud in whom we hide,

In whom we know already that the battle has been won.

You bring us to our Brother Jesus  
To rest our heads upon his shoulder.  
Lord, Holy Spirit,  
You are the kind fire who does not cease to burn,  
Consuming us with flames of love and peace,  
Driving us out like sparks to set the world on fire.  
Lord, Holy Spirit,  
In the love of friends you are building a new house,  
Heaven is with us when you are with us.  
You are singing your song in the hearts of the poor.  
Guide us, wound us, heal us. Bring us to the Father.

### **Call to Worship**

The Holy One calls our sons and our daughters to prophesy.

**We come, ready to hear the word of God.**

The Holy One calls our young people to see visions.

**We come, ready to see new visions.**

The Holy one calls our elders to dream dreams.

**We come, ready to dream new dreams.**

The Spirit of the Holy One is poured upon all flesh.

**We come, ready to be filled with God's spirit.**

### **Opening Prayer**

The Spirit of truth invites us to worship;

**In prayer, in praise, and in the silence, we are inspired.**

The Spirit of truth calls us to listen,

**And the Word of our Loving God speaks quietly to us.**

The Spirit of truth confronts lies and distortions,

**And shows us the just and merciful way.**

The Spirit of truth arises from the life of Jesus,

**And challenges us to the opportunity and the joy of discipleship. Amen.**

**First Song HFTC 240:** Spirit Divine, Inspire Our Prayers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrHNTHuUiOc>

### **Prayer of Confession**

Spirit of truth, Giver of visions, Sender of dreams, our hearts remain troubled and afraid.

**For we fear the future, forgetting your promise to do whatever we ask in your name.**

You promise to fill us with new vision, to give us gifts of prophesy and dreams.

**Yet, we act as if we are on our own, forgetting your promise to fill us with your Spirit.**

You tell us that we are not alone, that you are always with us.

**Forgive us when we forget, and we fail to keep your commandments to love you and one another.**

### **Words of Assurance**

Hear the good news: the Holy Spirit is always with us, filling us with prophesy, visions, and dreams. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.**

### **Scripture Readings:**

#### **John 14:15-17 (The Message)**

<sup>15-17</sup> “If you love me, show it by doing what I’ve told you. I will talk to the Father, and he’ll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can’t take him in because it doesn’t have eyes to see him, doesn’t know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be *in* you!

#### **Acts 2:1-21 (The Message)**

<sup>14-21</sup> That’s when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: “Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren’t drunk as some of you suspect. They haven’t had time to get drunk—it’s only nine o’clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen:

“In the Last Days,” God says,  
“I will pour out my Spirit  
on every kind of people:  
Your sons will prophesy,  
also your daughters;  
Your young men will see visions,  
your old men dream dreams.  
When the time comes,  
I’ll pour out my Spirit  
On those who serve me, men and women both,  
and they’ll prophesy.  
I’ll set wonders in the sky above  
and signs on the earth below,  
Blood and fire and billowing smoke,  
the sun turning black and the moon blood-red,  
Before the Day of the Lord arrives,  
the Day tremendous and marvellous;  
And whoever calls out for help  
to me, God, will be saved.”

### **Romans 8:14-17**

<sup>12-14</sup> So don’t you see that we don’t owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There’s nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God’s Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

<sup>15-17</sup> This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It’s adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike “What’s next, Papa?” God’s Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what’s coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we’re certainly going to go through the good times with him!

### **Response to the Word**

Giver of visions, Sender of dreams, Spirit of truth, you fill us with new vision and offer us new dreams. In the hearing of your word, our hearts are no longer troubled or afraid.

**Amen.**

## Sermon

When I think about the story of Pentecost, the beginning of the church, God's spirit choosing to dwell inside of God's people, I find myself asking 3 questions:

- How has the Holy Spirit led our church in the past?
- Where do you see the Holy Spirit active in our church, or in your own life?
- What dreams do you have for our church in the future?

You see, while Pentecost was the beginning of the Holy Spirit living within God's people, it was not a one-off event. God's spirit still dwells within us, God's people, today.

But before we talk about that, I want to go back to the first Pentecost, because I have a few questions about that too. How did Peter know what was going on? I'm sure there is some divine revelation happening, but on top of that, I think it's safe to say that Peter knows his scripture. He knows that it's not uncommon for God to make God's presence known through flames:

- He knows how in Exodus 3, God speaks to Moses from a bush which is on fire but not burning up.
- He knows how in Exodus 19, God appears as fire on the top of Mt Sinai.
- He knows how both Exodus and Numbers tell us that the Israelites are led through the desert by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.
- He knows how in 1 Kings 18, God sends fire from heaven to consume Elijah's offering in front of the prophets of Baal.
- He knows how in 1 Kings 19, Elijah goes to meet with God at Mt Horeb. God gets his attention in a hurricane, an earthquake, and a fire. The Bible tells us that God was not in any of these things, instead God was in the "gentle quiet whisper" that followed.

Peter also knows how God also appears in the form of flames at inauguration services of temples – the place where ancient Jews believed that Heaven met earth and God dwelt among God's people. This is described in:

- Leviticus 9 – Aaron is inaugurated as High Priest and the glory of God appears to everyone and fire from heaven consumes the burnt offering.
- 2 Chronicles 7 – Solomon dedicates the temple, then fire comes from heaven, and God's glory fills the temple.

[Dr David Moffit](#), from the School of Divinity at the University of St Andrews, links these stories of dedication and inauguration to Pentecost. Moffitt sees a link between Jesus' ascension into the Heavenly Holy of Holies and his role as both sacrifice and high priest there, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Moffitt believes that Peter and his friends would have interpreted the flames that appeared above their heads at Pentecost, as similar to the flames from heaven which consumed the sacrifices at the inauguration of the temple.

While the temple was filled with God's glory then, it is now God's people who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Peter had also been a follower of Jesus since pretty much the beginning of his ministry. He had heard Jesus teach, asked him questions, and seen the way he interacted with others. It is likely that Peter remembered Jesus' promise that he would send a helper, like we heard in our John reading this morning, I wonder how long it was before he realised that this was it?

As we think about the work of God's spirit in our church in the past, like Peter we need to reflect on the stories we have heard and the things we have seen so that we are able to recognise the spirit in both the present and the future. Sharing these memories will hopefully be encouraging as we think about the way we, as a congregation, have been guided in the past. It will also help us improve our collective memory as those who have been at our church longer, share stories with those of us who are more recent members.

It is important to note too that these stories probably won't involve flames from heaven, or suddenly speaking new languages. They might however look like "it was a really difficult decision, but somehow we just knew it was the right thing to do", or "we saw a need in our community, and we knew just how to help"

We can see from Peter's experience that the work of the Holy Spirit can sometimes, but not always, be scary or confusing – sudden strong winds, and the appearance of flames above people's heads, these could be hard to wrap your head around. Outsiders also may not be able to understand what is happening – Peter and his friends are accused of being drunk! But we can also see that, presumably once they realise what is happening, they feel confident and empowered to do the work the spirit is calling them to do.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter begins to preach, explaining to all who are listening that what is going on around them is the fulfilment of Joel's prophesy hundreds of years earlier.

The experiences of Peter and his friends are pretty extraordinary, and in comparison, our own experiences of the work of the spirit can seem pretty, well, boring, because for many of us, the work the spirit is calling us to is just our normal lives. So perhaps a better way to think about this is by asking ourselves where we see the fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. Try asking, how do I help my friends and neighbours? How do I make other people feel loved and welcome? How have I been generous recently with my time or possessions? When have I brought peace?

I was reminded recently of the writings of Ada McBeth. Ada was the daughter in law of the family who founded our church and is buried in our cemetery. She used to write short anecdotes for magazines and newspapers, and there are two I would like to share with you now:

One of our neighbours, a woman with a huge family, was expected home with the latest arrival. We cooked a tasty meal for her, my two little girls picked flowers, set the table, lit the fire, and the kitchen looked quite charming. I left them to greet her and make her a cup of tea. When they came home, I asked, "Well, what did she say?" "She didn't say anything," said Nora, quite disappointed. "She just sat down and cried." So, then I had to explain that there were different kinds of tears, and that hers were tears of gratitude.

Another story of Ada's goes like this:

There was a very pretty pattern for a bed-jacket in Woman's Weekly some time ago, and I copied it in a bright colour. I was putting the finishing touches to the jacket when one of my friends called, and greatly admired it. "Kapai te koti" ("what a lovely jacket!") she exclaimed, so I offered to lend it to her for the impending arrival of baby number eleven. Since then, it has been in constant demand and I always know months ahead when a new baby is expected, for the mothers come long to book the garment. We call it "the Community bed-jacket" and I often laugh and say it could find its way to the nursing home unaided!

The Holy Spirit worked through Ada as she showed kindness and generosity to her neighbours. I never met Ada, in fact, I'm pretty sure she died well before I was born, but I am sure she'd say that she didn't do anything major, she just helped out where she could. But I am also sure that the woman mentioned in these stories never forgot her kindness to them.

In my work as school librarian at Excellere College, I am constantly asking the Holy Spirit to help me as I look for new resources for our students. That I will find resources that are good, that they will introduce our students to God in a way that is truly reflective of who God is, and what God is like. That the books on our shelves will show both boys and girls how they can live their lives in healthy and empowering ways.

God's Spirit is calling all of us to work whether it be treating our neighbours with kindness; sharing what we have whether it be our time, our talents, or the excess from our garden; or encouraging others with a note, a text, a call, or through prayer.

God's spirit is not finished with Peter and the other followers of Jesus though – God's plan for God's church is slowly revealed to them, showing inclusion of people previously excluded, such as gentiles like Cornelius and his whanau, who Mike talked about a few weeks ago. Then come more revelations to other followers of Jesus, who also have God's spirit living in them – ideas about being adopted into God's family, like we heard in our Romans reading this morning.

With this in mind, *what dreams do you have for our church in the future?* What might we look like in 10, 20, or 50 years? Who is included or attending? How are we serving our community?

I would like us as a church to keep thinking about these 3 big questions

- How has the Holy Spirit led our church in the past?
- Where do we see the Holy Spirit active in our own lives and church right now?
- What dreams do you have for our church in the future?

I'm not expecting answers today, although it's great if you have them! Feel free to go home and think about these questions, pray about these questions, write your answers down, and then come and stick them on the noticeboard here. If you are someone who is currently attending our services by distance, feel free to email your answers to the church office, and we can print them out and stick them on. It's up to you whether you put your name on your responses.

Your answers to these questions don't have to be long. You don't have to write a story like Ada. You can just write a few short sentences or bullet points or draw a picture if you'd like. At the end of the month, I'll take our responses down and type them up so that we have a record the work of God's spirit in the past, the present, and our holy imaginings for the future.

The story of Pentecost reminds us that God has poured God's spirit out upon us, that the spirit now dwells inside of us, simultaneously calling us to, and helping us do, God's work. This spirit helps us to prophesy, to see visions, to dream dreams. So, let's invite the spirit to help us imagine what the future of our church could look like. Don't worry at this stage how we might do it, just allow yourself to dream.

### **Offering Prayer**

We love our church.

**We will support the work our church carries out in the name of Jesus Christ.**

Within this faith community,

**Our gifts promote healing and counter loneliness.**

Within this faith community,

**Our gifts encourage youngsters and support the housebound.**

Through our mission fund,

**Our gifts build community through Mums and Bubs, Circle of Friends, and the Monday Markets. Our gifts help to empower girls and young women through Girls Brigade.**

We love our church and we are prepared to give,

**But in giving we also receive. Amen.**

## **Community Time & Notices**

- Celebrations to share
- Prayer requests
- Notices for the coming week

## **Prayers of the People**

The Spirit is with all who suffer. To those who are going through tough times of challenge, listen.

**The Spirit is with you, do not be afraid.**

The Spirit is with those who have received worrying news this week.

The Spirit is with those whose recovery is painfully slow.

The Spirit is with those who have suffered a setback in health or in the progress of life.

The Spirit is with those who are having difficulty sleeping or eating.

The Spirit is with those who have lost a loved one.

The Spirit is with those burdened by grief.

The Spirit is with you.

**Do not be afraid. Amen.**

**Final Song HFTC s23 and s 24:** Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DtJgaGRav4>

## **Benediction/Blessing**

Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. See visions and dream dreams.

Testify to the saving work of the Lord as the Spirit gives you life and breath.

**Amen**