**PT. CHEVALIER CO-OP PARISH**

**FACEBOOK LIVE STREAM SERVICE 10.30AM**

**17th May 2020**

***Rev. Dr. Fei Taule’ale’ausumai Davis***



*INTROIT: AS WE GATHER*

As we gather may your spirit dwell within us

As we gather may we glorify your name, knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship, we’ll be blessed because we came, we’ll be blessed because we came.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, new every morning, great is thy faithfulness O Lord, great is thy faithfulness. **X2**

**Call to worship**

**One**: Come, let us gather in praise of the one who shows us the way:

**All: The way of Christ is love.**

**One:** Let us gather in thanksgiving for the one who teaches the truth:

**All: That we were all made in God’s image and called good.**

**One:** Let us worship the one who gives us life.

**All: Blessed be our God, source of all creation.**

**Prayer of approach and confession**

Eternal and ever-blessed God,  
we give You thanks  
for the joy that comes  
when we gather to worship together  
and are truly united as the people of God.

We thank You for the family of faith,  
united in our desire to follow Jesus.  
Thank You for those with whom we have laughed. who have made this world a cheerier place. Thank You for those with whom we have wept  
and we have shared our sorrows  
in our times of need.  
We bless You for those we have served alongside sharing together in a common task,  
whose support has made the work more manageable. We bless You for those who have shared our dreams and pursued our visions,  
as partners in a common purpose,  
working to an agreed goal.

Thank You for those with whom we worship together, for those with whom we pray together,  
for those in whose company we have listened to Your voice and sought to see You face to face.

Forgive us for everything that has interrupted the companionship we should enjoy:for selfishness that made us want nothing but our own way,  
for intolerance which made us see nothing  
but our own point of view,  
for self-assertiveness that made us seek to impose our own will upon others. Have mercy, good Lord.

Forgive us for arguments in which we lost our temper, for discussions in which bitter words  
and sarcastic comments were thrown about,  
for things we said in the heat of the moment and now bitterly regret. Have mercy, good Lord.

So cleanse and purify us, that in the days to come we will work to live in unity with one another because we are one in Christ. Hear this our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**OPENING HYMN:**

Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

Mine is the sunlight  
Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning  
God's recreation of the new day

Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

**WELCOME AND NOTICES:**

Kia ora, Fakalofa lahi atu, malo lelei, Talofa lava, ni sa bula, kiaorana, taloha ni, dumela, anyonhaseo, Namaste, halo, greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Welcome to level 2, I hope this is a refreshing time for you to refamiliarise yourself with a bit of normality. Isn’t it great to be able to visit family, kiss and hug but still being mindful and keeping our distance where necessary. Our theme this morning is the Holy Spirit as counsellor and advocate.

**MINISTRY OF THE WORD:**

## John 14:15-21

## The Promise of the Holy Spirit

15 ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.17This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

18 ‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

**FAMILY TIME**

**My Invisible Friend**

I have a friend you cannot see  
A friend that only I know,  
A friend who’s with me every day No matter where I go.

I have a friend who understands  
The way I am today,  
A friend who always speaks the truth, No matter what I say.

I have a friend who’s always there Who stays with me each day,  
A friend who never runs away With someone else to play!

I have a friend who is sent from God Who never lets me down,  
He teaches me of Jesus here  
And God of heaven above.

I have a friend that loves me Wherever I might be  
He is the Holy Spirit of God Who came and set me free.

**SONG: HOLY SPIRIT COME**

**(teach the song to everyone)**

Holy Spirit come, make my eyes to see

Make my ears to hear,

Make my mouth to speak

Make my heart to seek

And my hands to reach out and touch the world with your love.

X2

**Prayers of intercession**

Let us take our weariness and tiredness to God who picks up those who have fallen  
and raises up those who are brought low  
Bless those, good Lord, who are bowed down under the burdens they must carry.  
We pray for those who are crushed by their responsibilities at work and those who feel the pain of our world,  
who marvel that others can seem so indifferent to it.  
Help them to keep on going.  
Bring supportive friends alongside them.  
Give them tokens of Your grace,  
fresh vision and courage  
and signs of encouragement in their struggle.

Let us take our loneliness to God,  
who delights to put the solitary into families. God our Creator,  
bless those who are lonely  
those who have grown old  
and whom the passing years have taken  
all their friends and contemporaries.  
Bless those who are shy,  
who find it hard to initiate conversation  
and have never known real friendships.  
We pray for strangers in a foreign land,  
for asylum seekers and refugees, for the 12 Samoan sailors trapped on a ship in the Bahamas, we pray for them and their families, loving God they are  
separated by language and culture  
from familiar ways and much loved customs. We remember all those  
who even in the midst of crowds feel alone.

Help the Church, we pray,  
to be a place of acceptance and belonging,  
a place of welcome and inclusion,  
where all can find a home,  
a listening ear, a friendly smile and a helping hand. Let us take our sorrows to God,  
who binds up the broken-hearted  
and comforts those who mourn.  
Bless those whose hearts are sore today.  
Be very close to those  
whose family circle has been invaded  
and whose joy has been darkened by death.

We remember those who have lost loved ones for whom they have cared,  
whose needs they have met,  
whose lives have been so intertwined that they still listen for a voice they will not hear again.

We remember wives who have lost husbands  
and husbands who have lost wives;  
parents who have lost children,  
who find their homes strangely silent and empty now and children who have lost parents, who are confused by a world that seems less secure and more frightening than before and all who for whom familiar places, and sounds and smells  
awaken memories that bring tears in their wake. Thank You for our faith.  
May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Let us turn to God in trust  
and recommit ourselves to God.  
Send us forth this day  
with the joy that no-one can take from us,  
the life which is Your life  
and the hope that gives strength to our actions. Help us to sing of our faith  
and in that singing find our strength to go on, trusting in Jesus who lived among us,  
died for us and rose again  
and who prays for us today,  
even as we pray to Him as he taught us to pray together…

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

In His name we pray  
Amen

**REFLECTION**

May the words of my mouth…

A word that has been increasingly familiar in our everyday vocabulary is the word, “counsellor.” We are all acquainted with counsellors and counselling. The position of counsellor is a very familiar occupation in our society. For all Presbyterian ministers it is compulsory for us all to have a supervisor and attend supervision once a month, most of us choose supervisors who are also qualified counsellors and therapists mainly because we need to be counselled as well as supervised from time to time.

Ministers preparing to enter the ministry, are required to take courses in Pastoral Care of which counselling and therapy are an extension. Counselling has lost the social stigma that it had merely two decades ago. The attitudes of society towards counselling have changed and nowadays people are much more open about their need for a counsellor. Counselling is becoming a normal acceptable part of life. In fact, in many circles, it is becoming downright fashionable to be seeing a counsellor.

In addition to professional counselling, all of us receive counsel from family, friends and work associates. Any intelligent person realizes the value of other peoples’ insights. No person is an island of information; we need information from others, and so we ask our friends and associates about engineering problems, accounting challenges, cars, boats, campers, and everything else. We are constantly looking for better information to make intelligent decisions, and so we always consult others for help.

What makes a good counsellor? First, a good counsellor has a personal concern for others; the counsellor is personally concerned and compassionate for the needs of others. He or she is not a detached individual who listens for sixty minutes and then asks you to pay the fee. Rather, the mark of a good counsellor is that they are truly concerned about your welfare. Second, a mark of a good counsellor is empathy; he or she has an intuitive understanding and feeling of the person before them. It is important that the counsellor does not judge us for our feelings or actions. Judgment inhibits communication of further feelings.”

“What is the purpose of a good counsellor?” “A counsellor tries to facilitate growth. He/she tries to enable a person to grow. We all have blocks in our paths to maturity. We all have blocks to growth such as painful, early childhood trauma with parents or persistent personality problems or addictions or embarrassing personal habits that prevent us from growing into God’s fullness for us. A counsellor helps remove those blocks. Like when a person has a blood clot in the leg, medication may be given to dissolve that block. So a counsellor works with the client to help dissolve those blocks that prevent them from growing. A counsellor does not solve problems for people, but helps them grow stronger so they can solve their own problems. A counsellor does not make hard decisions for people but helps them become strong so they can make their own decisions and choices.”

But what stands out most clearly today is the Spirit is called the Counsellor. God will not leave us desolate or orphans. The Greek word is, “orphani” from which we get our word, “orphans.” We will not be left as orphans in the universe but God’s Spirit will come to be with us and in us.

The Greek word for “counsellor” is “paraclete,” which means “called to the side of.” You call someone to be by your side and give you strength. For example, when there is a sudden tragedy in your life, the natural instinct is not to be left alone, but to have someone there with you, someone by your side, to give you strength. Or when you face a momentous decision, you often don’t want to think it through alone. You want input from other people as you intelligently go about making this decision. So you will call someone to be by your side, to talk through the options. That is what the word, “counsellor,” means: to call someone to be at your side, to give you strength and help as you sort out your decisions.

God, our counsellor, is not a detached listener who listens politely to us for sixty minutes, asks for payment and then wants us to leave so the next client can get in. If the mark of a good counsellor is that he/she is personally concerned about our welfare and well-being, then God is truly a good counsellor. God is truly concerned about what is good for us.

God, the Spirit, is an empathetic counsellor. God intuitively understands the complexity of our inner being. Psalm 139 is a wonderful mantra to recite when we need someone to talk to: “O God, you have examined me and know you. You know all about me. From far away, you understand all my thoughts. You see me whether I am working or resting. Your knowledge of me is too wonderful and I cannot comprehend it.” Instantly, instinctively, intuitively, God understand every corner of our being.

The Spirit is a non-judgmental counsellor. God, the Spirit, does not judge us for what we say, think or feel. Can you imagine God hearing every word we ever said; listening in on our every thought; seeing our every action? It is embarrassing to think that someone knows that much about us, seeing and hearing our *every* thought. And God still does not condemn us. Nor does God condone our thoughts and feelings and actions. But God does not condemn us in our humanness, and therefore we are free to tell God more.

The purpose of this Spirit/Counsellor is to help us grow towards maturity and wholeness.

The counsellor is a facilitator of growth and maturity within us. We all have these blocks that prevent growth. These qualities block us from becoming what God wants us to be. We have blocks due to the inner scars of childhood conflicts. Blocks due to our birth order. Blocks due to deeply ingrained personality habits. Blocks due to addictions. Blocks due to bad decisions and choices we have made. We all have these blocks within us.

What are those blocks in your inner life? What are those qualities which are preventing you from growing into maturity and wholeness?

God, the Holy Spirit, helps us see the truth about ourselves, and our blocks that inhibits growth. God guides us into new directions and ways of dealing with our inner blocks.

Some people have the illusion that God, the Spirit, the Counsellor, will solve all our problems. That is not true. Like any good counsellor, the Spirit enables us to become stronger.

Nor does the Spirit/Counsellor make decisions for you. Sometimes, that is just what we want; we want God to make the decisions for us, especially difficult decisions. Rather, God is the “paraclete,” who comes to our side and gives us the strength and new resources and new insights, so we can make difficult and painful decisions. But the Spirit/Counsellor does not solve our problems or make decisions for us. Nor does any good counsellor. I like that passage from Philippians where God says that the love in us is to grow and grow and grow so that we will make the best choices. I like that; the focus is on love and wisdom growing inside, whereby we can make the best choices.

God is always there to hear us, immediately, instantly. God is present. There are no busy signals, no answering machines.

“God is there for me in the big things, the tough moments, and tough decisions.” Yes, there is no problem too big for God, or too complicated for God. God helps us deal with tough decisions and complicated problems.

“There is no problem too small for God.” How true. It is not only the big issues of life but the million little issues that are important to us. In fact, you would never telephone a psychologist or psychiatrist or therapist in counselling to talk over such little things that we talk over with God. Nothing is too insignificant for God.

I find that God knows your need and knows with whom you need to talk. So God sends you to the right people, or the right people happen to show up at the right time, and you didn’t even call them. God often speaks through them.

“It is important that counsellors not only talk during the counselling session but listen.” How true. We can talk, talk, talk, talk our hearts out, but somewhere in the conversation, we need to be quiet and listen. Patiently listening for God’s direction and guidance is very important.

Jesus could be only in one place at a time in the flesh, by His Spirit, Jesus could be with all His followers all the time; and not simply alongside them but within them. As an advocate, the Holy Spirit would defend them and give them the words to say in their own defense. The Spirit would be a helper to strengthen them, a presence to support them and a guide to lead them in the way of truth. The Holy Spirit would overcome their ignorance and their forgetfulness, by leading them into the truth and by reminding them of what they have learned. The paradox of Jesus’ presence is that: • Jesus will be absent, but present • Jesus will be hidden, yet visible • Jesus will be dead, yet alive The paradox of their future is that: • They would not be orphans, but adopted • They would belong, for God is their Parent • They would be secure, for Jesus will never leave them • They would be loved, and loving leads to knowing Far from being orphans without any family, they would become part of a world-wide family. Many testify to the sense of connection they find meeting Christians whom they have never met before, even across cultural and language barriers. Without spelling it out, Jesus hints that the cross would be the last time He was seen in public, for the disciples the seven weeks of rich resurrection appearances would be the hope they would hang on to in the years that followed. However, the mark of discipleship would be shown in the obedience of faith, a continuing commitment to follow Jesus wherever He led them. This will show whether their professed love for Him is authentic or not, but in such living they will know God’ s love and understand better God’s love for them, both that of God Creator, Jesus the Son. And the Holy Spirit our counsellor and helper.

Let us go out from this place with our eyes or ears, our hearts wide open to the movement of the Holy Spirit swirling around us. Let us go out from here prepared to see our God, even in the most unexpected times and places. Let us remember that God will not leave us, even though we might leave this space.

**CLOSING HYMN:**

Holy Spirit we welcome you, Holy spirit we welcome you,

Move among us with holy fire

As we lay aside all earthly desire,

Hands reach out and our hearts aspire

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,

Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

Holy Spirit we welcome you, Holy spirit we welcome you,

Let the breeze of your presence blow

That your children here might truly know

How to move in the Spirit’s flow

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,

Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

Holy spirit we welcome you, Holy spirit we welcome you,

Please accomplish in us today

Some new work of loving grace, we pray

Unreservedly – have your way.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,

Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

**Sending**

Go out into the world,  
the community you know,  
your workplaces and your homes with hearts open and  
ready to love those you meet.

Go and reflect the welcome of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
whose heart closes no-one out  
but whose love is for all, always.

**Sung blessing:** May the Lord Mighty God bless and keep you forever. Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes to seek his face and his grace forever. May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever.

BENEDICTION: Let us say the grace to one another. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever more. Amen.