



KAPITI UNITING PARISH

ChristianChurchesNZ – Methodist – Presbyterian
10 Weka Road, Raumati Beach, Paraparaumu 5032

Waikanae Church: Sunday 24 November 2024

Leader: Rev John Roberts

Readers: Various members of the congregation

Music: Marie Smith

A service in response to the abuse and neglect of children



**in the care of State and
Faith-based institutions 1950-1999.**

Song: Be still

**Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am God**

A thought as we gather
In the winters of life,
when the flowers and leaves have fallen by the
wayside,
the stripped back branches reach starkly towards the
sky
and the roots cling to the earth and its rocky
foundations
like a grip of hard-won faith, there is God,
our company in the questioning,
the seeking after truth,
the passion in our indignation,
always gently, tenderly holding us all in love.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Be still and know that I am God (repeat)

Excerpts from an online article 'Abuse in Care' by Felix Desmarais reporter in the 1 News parliamentary press gallery

Song: God weeps

**God weeps
at love withheld,
at strength misused,
at children's innocence abused,
and till we change the way we live,**

God weeps.

Shirley Murray, Faith Forever Singing 30

Gathering prayer - David Poultney, Methodist Church
Faith and Order

We are gathered here in grief, shock, sorrow, shame and anger. Especially for our Churches and their institutions, parishes, synods and presbyteries, schools, programmes that were run for the welfare of children. All should have been safe welcoming places, but they were not.

**Behind our walls, covered by our good name
the most terrible breaches of trust have
happened.**

**Where children and young people should have
felt safe
and confident in giving their trust, it has been
abused.**

Where children and young people have suffered, and the suffering continues. Survivors of abuse continue to carry the pain.

**We acknowledge a truth we perhaps distanced
ourselves from, played down, minimised.**

**We must now face it, to acknowledge the truth
of it,
to lament it, and to pray for those who suffered
and continue to suffer.**

We are a people who follow Jesus, who see in him

the life of the Sacred and the possibility of a flourishing humanity.

Sometimes we forget or skim over how he suffered.

For here was a man who despite the cultural and religious prohibitions of his people was stripped before a cohort of troops.

He was exposed, mocked, humiliated, beaten, and broken, was naked and put to death.

We are moved by his suffering and find our compassion deepened by it. So may we now show compassion to the victims of abuse in our churches.

May we lament their suffering and that it happened in our parishes, synods and presbyteries, our care institutions, schools and the programmes we ran for children.

So be it, Amen.

Song: The Mercy Tree

**Will you offer me compassion?
Will you walk the road with me?
Brother, sister, will you feed me
ripe fruit from the Mercy tree?**

**Will you utter words of comfort?
Will you bless me with your peace?
Mercy is the gift I long for:
mercy from the Mercy Tree.**

**I do not deserve your loving,
brother, sister, yet I plead –**

**I am human, I have need of
mercy from the Mercy Tree.**

**If you offer me your friendship,
if you make your peace with me,
mercy will most surely touch you:
mercy from the Mercy Tree.**

John Weir, Alleluia Aotearoa 160

Excerpts from an article ‘Let this moment be our turning point for children’ by Dr Clair Achmad, Chief Children’s Commissioner, published in the Methodist Church’s newspaper ‘Touchstone’, August 2024

Lighting candles

We now give expression to our grief, our anger, our shame and our pain; for faith broken, for trust betrayed, love denied; for the culture of denial.

You are now invited to come forward and light a candle to recognise and affirm the victims of abuse, and for the churches as they come to terms with their involvement in abuse.

Litany – Rose Luxford, Moderator of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ

Holy God, this day we pause and we reflect.

**We are deeply saddened at what has occurred
in the life of our nation and our national
churches.**

Saddened and distressed that vulnerable people have been hurt.

Hurt in situations and places where they should have been safe.

We think of Jesus who came so that all may have fullness of life .

And acknowledge that (instead) in our churches some have been denied that.

We think of the courage it would have taken for people to tell their stories.

And the pain and distress that would be there in the telling, and the hearing.

As a church we grieve for the wounds people have to bear.

And regret that this has happened within our church communities.

Through time and space the church has failed to protect vulnerable people, and given a safe haven to those in power.

And that weighs heavily on us all here and now.

Our human condition is frail and has its shadow side .

And often we find that hard to admit to ourselves and hard to bear in others God what are we to do?

We call out to you in sincere humility and deep need. (Pause in silence....).

We give thanks that this darkness can be brought to the light of Christ.

And in that light, we pray that there may be healing and justice.

In the light we pray that we can all learn from the mistakes of the past.

And ensure that the present and future is guided by your Holy Spirit.

So that all may feel safe and protected.

That integrity, justice and honesty be hallmarks of our church.

We pray that we can hold the tension of the reality of life and the hope that comes in Christ.

And that in all things you are at work - in the brokenness, in the pain, in the healing.

Gracious God, enfold your broken church in your loving embrace.

And enable us to be the people that you call us to be. Amen.

Jesus advocates for protecting children

The reading of gospel verses with a brief comment following.

Offering

God, as we move forward from recognising the harm caused by those in our churches who have harmed and abused children and young people we bring forward our offerings and gifts for the foodbank:

Take all that we bring, our gifts and our talents, our longings and our faith, and add your power for life,

for we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Song: Let the children live

**Life is for the living,
so let the children live,**

**free from all fear and conflict,
our failures, Lord forgive.**

**Life is for the living,
so let the children live,
with nourishment and caring,
our failures, Lord forgive.**

**Life is for the living,
so let the children live,
with futures that are hopeful,
our failures, Lord forgive.**

**Life is for the living,
so let all children live,
in families that love them,
our failures Lord forgive.**

Norman Brookes, With a Song in Our Heart 26

Closing words

Word of God flowing free,
flow in and through us,
to cleanse and bring
a new beginning,
a fresh start,
right relationships
and peace.

Kate McIlhagga

We now say The Grace together