

## Advent Sunday 2019

One of the great treasures of our church is our prayer book. On this advent Sunday 30 years ago *A New Zealand Prayer Book: He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* was launched. I was asked to write a hymn to celebrate this occasion. So I want to introduce each verse, get you to look up relevant pages of the book and then at the end our wonderful choir (Judith) will sing it for us. Judith Bylett wrote the music.

The Prayer Book Commission began its work in 1965 and members of this congregation were on that Commission: the Reverend Ian Bourne and the late Reverend John Williamson, Margaret Mahan typed the minutes of the Commission and Reverend David Winfield was a member also. The new prayer book wove the very best of what this land had to offer but also combined prayers and material that go back to the very origins of our faith - especially material from the Bible

1. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own,  
woven with care  
inspired by your love  
under a sky  
that bursts with stars.  
Words ever ancient  
words ever true.  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

Beginning on page 14 we have our calendar of saints. These are people who are beacons of hope in our world. Names have been added and will appear in our next printing, for example Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

(The calendar Te Maramataka)

2. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own,  
people of joy  
lives lived in faith.  
Running the race  
examples to all.  
Friends of the poor  
and neighbours of us all  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

The prayer book is both words for church and words for our personal devotions at home. They are called Liturgies of the Word and these resources begin on page 30. The ones you might use in the home begin on page 104. Everyone's favourite is Night Prayer on page 167. The prayer book is online and the most hits are for Night Prayer. There is also Family Prayer for the family on page 187.

3. So we thank you O God

for a prayer book of our own,  
daily we come  
the wellspring of joy  
opening your word  
transforming our lives  
Becoming a canticle  
of your praise  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

The beginning of our life in Christ is of course baptism. This is found on page 383. I have had the joy of baptising hundreds of people using this rite. (Baptism)

4. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own,  
We who are called  
to never ending love  
life giving water  
bubbling with grace.  
Lives with hope  
restored and refreshed.  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

The very heart of our life is the Eucharist or holy communion. Eucharist means to give thanks and this is the goal of our life as Christians to live a life of thanksgiving. You will notice the Eucharist is also the heart, the centre of the book. These words begin on page 404.

5. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own,  
to break bread  
is the centre of our lives.  
Our grateful hearts  
are lifted to you  
Christ's body ours  
and we to the world  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

Our calling as Christians is to care for one another. This is called pastoral care. Our prayer book provides for a number of pastoral services. These begin on page 727. There is a home communion service, a service of healing, reconciliation or confession, thanksgiving for the birth of child, the blessing of a home, marriage and funerals, including prayers at death and in a home after death and the blessing of a headstone. (Pastoral)

6. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own  
For caring words  
and healing love.  
Tears for our dead

and hope to come.  
Couples are joined  
in your unfailing love  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

The Anglican tradition sets people aside for ordained ministry we call these people deacons, priests and bishops. The ordination services are set out beginning on page 887. We were privileged to celebrate Kofe's ordination recently. (Ordination)

7. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own  
Those who are called  
to minister your grace  
faithfully gather  
to praise our God.  
Daily they wait  
upon your word  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

There is other stuff the hymn doesn't talk about: the psalms, catechism and collects for each Sunday. However good a prayer book is, and ours has been admired and used throughout the world, we know there will come a time which we long for in advent when we won't need prayer books anymore because the reign of God will come in all its glory.

8. So we thank you O God  
for a prayer book of our own  
There comes a time  
when prayer books will cease.  
Then we will see  
our God face to face  
we will be drawn  
to a much farther shore  
He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa.

*Nick and Judith 2019*