

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH
January 22, 2023
DAY OF MOURNING

The Gathering of the People of God

WELCOME & GREETING

Every year on the Sunday before Australia Day, the Uniting Church marks a Day of Mourning to reflect on the dispossession of Australia's First Peoples and the ongoing injustices faced by First Nations people in this land.

We celebrate the strength, survival and resilience of First Peoples. We pause and reflect on the truth and pain of our history. We lament the violence, dispossession and trauma faced by First Peoples and our own complicity. We lift up to God our prayers for First Peoples and our nation. We say sorry and we pray for forgiveness, healing and hope.

But today is also a day of worship. So we come together and give thanks to God for the abundant grace and liberating hope which we know through Jesus Christ and which is for all people. Let us worship God.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And also with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the Eora peoples,
the first inhabitants of this place
from time beyond remembering.
We acknowledge that through this land,
God nurtured and sustained
the First Peoples of this country,
the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

***We honour them for their custodianship
of the land on which we gather today.***

We acknowledge that the First Peoples
had already encountered the Creator God
before the arrival of the colonisers;

***the Spirit was already in the land,
revealing God to the people
through law, custom and ceremony.***

We acknowledge that the same love and grace
that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ
sustained the First Peoples
and gave them particular insights into God's ways;
***and so we rejoice in the reconciling purposes of God
found in the good news about Jesus Christ.***

CALL TO WORSHIP

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.
Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.
All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.
Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
***the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.
Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.***

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here / ***God is always here***
God is with us / ***God is always with us***

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Abba, Father,
Bäpa God,
source of all life,
answer our call,
as a mother responds
to the cry of a child in the night.

Jesus Christ,
brother and friend,

Liberator,
stand beside us
as bearer of our humanity,
and sharer of God's grace.

Creator Spirit,
giver of new life,
purposeful guest,
prod us to praise,
calling us to be a people
of hope and faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

VIDEO FROM AUNTY JEAN PHILLIPS

(Video)

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ABORIGINAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF THE PAST

(Video)

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HYMN: What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590 (Tune in 435 The Hymnal)

What a friend we have in Jesus
all our sins and griefs to bear,
what a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer:
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations,
is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrow share?
Jesus knows our every weakness:
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge:
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
in his arms he'll take and shield you,
you will find a solace there.

LAMENT AND CONFESSION

Merciful God,
we, the Second Peoples of this land,
acknowledge and lament
the injustice and abuse
that has so often marked
the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

***We acknowledge and lament
the way in which their land was taken from them
and their language, culture, law and spirituality
despised and suppressed.***

We acknowledge and lament
the way in which the Christian church
was so often not only complicit in this process
but actively involved in it.

***We acknowledge and lament
that in our own time
the injustice and abuse has continued.***

We have been indifferent
when we should have been outraged,
we have been apathetic
when we should have been active,
we have been silent when we should have spoken out.

***Liberating Jesus, hear our lament and
by your Spirit bring healing, hope and transformation
to the lives of our First Nations sisters and brothers
and their communities, we pray.***

Gracious God, hear our acknowledgements —
We have not loved you

with our whole heart,
nor have we loved First Peoples
and other neighbours as ourselves.

***God of mercy,
forgive us for our failures,
past and present and
give us the grace today to make a fresh start.
By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts
so that we may love as you have loved us,
that we may boldly speak your truth
and courageously do your will.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

This is the best of all:
When we are empty, God fills us;
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;
when we are wounded, God brings healing;
when we confess our sin, God forgives.
In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,
our sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

HYMN: Sorrowing song TIS 689

Lord, hear my praying, listen to me;
you know there's evil in what I see.
I know I'm part of all that is wrong:
still, won't you hear my sorrowing song?

Children are crying, hungry for food,
sick from diseases — God, are you good?
People are homeless, lost and alone:
God, are you hiding? Where have you gone?

Why do the rich ones steal from the poor?
Why do they build their weapons of war?

How can you stand the torture and pain,
hope disappearing, freedom in chains?

Jesus, remind us that you are found
with those who cry, with those who are bound;
where there is suffering, you will be there -
help us to follow: Lord, hear my prayer.

The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Psalms 85: 7 – 13

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him and will make a path for his steps.

Micah 6: 6 – 8

“With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

John 14: 15 – 24

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This 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. “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They 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.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

1 John 4: 7 – 21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

REFLECTION

(Video of reflection provided by Common Grace CEO Gershon Nimbalker and Aboriginal Christian Leaders Safina Stewart and Bianca Manning)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jgCpMOyZUYUmDcxxPb8l5jiD3TPm-1Pk?usp=sharing>

HYMN: Creator God, you made every race tune TiS 526

Creator God, you made every race
giving each your law,
good and true.

We are to worship you, O God,
care for creation in your name,
love and forgive as you love us,
Holy God.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have made us one,
binding each to you,
making peace;

healing the wounds our hands have made;
asking for truth and grace to rule,
justice, respect and loyalty,
Covenant Lord.

Spirit of Christ, present from all time,
guiding, shedding light,
giving life;
Counsellor, make us strong to fight,
Free as the wind to do the right,
ready to follow all the way
yet untrod.

One God in three, bonded strong in love,
reaching out to all,
giving God!
Build in this land community -
black, white and brown, one family-
serving the world your love has made,
God of grace.

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God,
may our gifts enable your church to be a place
where strangers become friends,
outcasts are welcomed,
seekers receive,
and doubters find faith.
Give us wise hearts to use these gifts
not only to proclaim, but also to live out love.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Creator God, First and foremost we acknowledge and declare Your Sovereignty.
We come before You with thanks and praise for who You are;
steadfast, mighty to save, true, merciful, and above all, You are Love.
Give us the courage to accept the realities of our history
so that we may build a better future for our nation.
Teach us to respect all cultures.

Teach us to care for our land and waters.
Help us to share justly the resources of this land.
Help us to bring about spiritual and social change to improve the quality of life
for all peoples in our communities, especially the disadvantaged.
Help all young people to find true dignity and self-esteem by your Spirit.
May your power and love be the foundations on which we:
walk together as First and Second Peoples;
and build our families, our communities and our nation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed 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 in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.*

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

INVITATION

Jesus said,
"I am the bread of life;
Those who come to me shall not hunger,
and those who believe in me shall never thirst."

Behold, I stand at the door and knock;
if those who hear my voice open the door,
I will come in to them and eat with them,
and they with me.

COMMUNION HTMN: Feed us now TIS 538

Feed us now, Bread of life,
in this holy meal;
let us know your love anew:
we hunger for you.
Feed us now, Bread of life,

come and live within;
let your peace be ours today,
Lord Jesus, we pray.

Piece of bread, cup of wine:
Lord, this food is good:
love and mercy come to us,
your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, cup of wine:
who can understand
how his mercy works in these?
Yet, Lord, we believe.

God is here, O so near,
nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go;
Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, O so near,
in this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you –
on the bread that is true.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God the Creator, our Great Spirit,
from the depths of our hearts we give you thanks.
We say thank you, now and forever.
From the place of the rising sun
to the place of the warm winds blow,
from the place of the soft rain comes, to the coldness,
from the East, to the West
from the South, to the North.
We unite with all creation from the four directions to join in
the everlasting thanksgiving and praise for the gift of Jesus Christ.

With hearts lifted, we join with the angels, the saints,

and all our ancestors as we say

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

O Great Spirit,
our Creator from whom all holiness comes,
we come before you again today.
Just as in generations past,
like our grandmothers and grandfathers,
we come to worship you and acknowledge your greatness.

We marvel at your creation.
You sent Jesus into creation because people had turned away from you
and no longer loved each other, bringing death and destruction.

Sharing our living and dying,
Jesus opened our eyes and our hearts to understand that we are all relatives
and that you are our Great Spirit the Creator.
Stretching out his arms upon the cross,
he became a perfect offering for all,
uniting in beauty all that is, with all that has been,
and with all that ever will be.

We remember, on the night of his betrayal, that Jesus took bread,
giving thanks, and broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after supper, he also took the cup and said:

Drink from this all of you.
This is my blood shed for you and for the whole world for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine,
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Make us one with him,
one with each other,
and one in ministry in the world,
until at last we feast with him in the kingdom.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ,
in your holy church,
all honour and glory are yours, Father almighty,
now and for ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
Have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
Grant us peace.

THE COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Great Creator,
you have fed us with bread from heaven.
Continue to renew us in your truth,
to give light to our minds strength to our bodies,
and seal us with your Holy Spirit.
We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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HYMN: Beauty for brokenness TIS 690

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord in the suffering, this is our prayer,
bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.

Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark to a flame.*

Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark to a flame.*

BLESSING

People of God,
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,
the First and Second Peoples of this land,
have entered with one another.
Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.
Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures
and learn from them.
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share.
Commit to worship,
witness and serve as one people under God
until God's promised reconciliation
of all creation is complete.

Bless us, therefore,
as we depart this place:
give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk
alongside our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.

And the blessing of God; the Creator,
who made and knows us;
the Saviour, who redeems and befriends us;
and the Spirit, who enlightens and sustains us,
be with you this day and always. Amen.

SENDING SONG: May You Find Peace Seasons 7-26

May you find peace,
may you find hope,
may you find joy this day.
May you find love,
may you find rest
here in this place together.