

# KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

May 28, 2023

Pentecost

The Gathering of the People of God

## WELCOME & GREETING

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:

We acknowledge that this land is God's land, and God's Spirit dwells here. We pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging of the Biddegal and Gweagal people of the Eora nation, who have cared for this land in time beyond our dreaming. This land on which we live and move was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

## KUC VISION STATEMENTS

***We are a congregation  
who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles,  
who create a safe place for the community  
and who share the journey of life and faith.***

## CALL TO WORSHIP

We are the Easter people!

***We have witnessed the Resurrection of our Lord.***

We are now called to be people of the Pentecost.

***We are called to boldly share the good news of God's love.***

Open your hearts, O people, to God's great power and love.

***We open our hearts to hear God's word for us***

***and to joyfully proclaim Jesus Christ as our Savior. AMEN.***

## LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

***God is always here***

God is with us

## ***God is always with us***

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Spirit of God,  
we long to be open to your presence in our church and in our lives.  
Fill us with your wind and fire, that we might be enlivened again.  
Help us hear the words as if for the first time, that they might touch us anew.  
Give us visions and dreams of what you long for in your creation,  
that we might begin to live them into reality.  
Come, Spirit; come into our worship, into our church, into our very selves.  
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**HYMN:** Holy, holy, holy! TIS 132 (Pentecost Version)  
(Verse 1: English, Verse 2: Korean, Verse 3: Tongan, Verse 4: English)

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,  
early in the morning to you our praise shall be;  
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

#### *Korean*

Gao Luk, Gao Luk, Gao Luk!  
Chun Nung Ha Shin Ju yao  
E-Ren A-Chim Woo-ri-ju-rul  
Chan Song Ham Ni Da.  
Gao Luk, Gao Luk, Gao Luk!  
Ja Bi Ha Shin Ju yao  
Seong Sam We Il Chae  
Woo-Ri-Ju-Ro-da.

#### *Tongan*

Ei Ma' oni' oni, Tamai mo e 'Alo!  
Tali 'emau pongipongi 'oku 'atu e'  
Ei ma' oni' oni, ko homau Taukapo!  
Ko e Toko Tolu, ko e Taha-pe.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,  
all your works shall praise your name in earth and sky and sea;  
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

PD ; words by Reginald Heber

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## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Pentecost God,  
thank you for the gift of the Spirit; for the power and energy the Spirit brings  
and for the knowledge that we are not alone.  
Nevertheless, sometimes we find it hard to believe in things we cannot see or touch.

***We remember the times we have not recognized the Spirit's still small voice,  
the times we have ignored the Spirit's prompting,  
the times we have not acknowledged the Spirit's work around us,  
the times we have resisted the Spirit's transforming power.  
We remember, and we are sorry.  
Pour out your Spirit anew;  
blow through us and ignite us once more. Amen.***

## DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Our God is always making all things new;  
our shortcomings are forgotten and we can begin again,  
with God's Spirit as our helper.  
***Thanks be to God! Amen.***

## PEACE

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

**HYMN:** Holy Spirit, go before us TIS 420; tune TIS 233

Holy Spirit, go before us,  
every mind and heart prepare  
for good news of life in Jesus,  
for the joyful hope we share.  
Gently lead the lost to safety,  
gently teach them Wisdom's way,  
till they come to seek you gladly,  
till we find the words to say.

Holy Spirit, come and help us,  
give us words to speak of Christ.  
Teach us how to tell all people:  
deepest darkness can be light!

Help us tell how faithful God is,  
and how Jesus sets us free;  
take our words, and make them gospel,  
so that many may believe.

Holy Spirit, stay to show us  
how to serve as Christ served us.  
May our words of love be grounded  
in love's actions, first and last.  
Your good news is news of justice,  
and the strong befriend the weak  
in your service, till compassion  
builds the peace the nations seek.

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## The Service of the Word

### **BIBLE READINGS**

#### **Acts 2:1-8, 14-21**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?"

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to

darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

### **John 20:19–23**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

### **REFLECTION**

We celebrate the birth of Jesus, and all the world pauses to celebrate Christmas with us. We celebrate his resurrection, and most of the world recognizes Easter as a very special day on the calendar. And today is Pentecost. This day is important, because Pentecost is the birthday of the Church, and God has given us the wonderful opportunity of being a part of it.

There was a mother mouse who was running quickly across the kitchen floor with her six little mice following. All of a sudden, she came eye-to-eye with a very large and very mean-looking cat. Mother mouse was terrified! But she stood up as tall as she could and said as loudly as possible, "Bow Wow!" The cat nearly was very shocked, very scared and immediately ran away from them. Meanwhile, mother mouse gathered her little ones around her and said, "You see what I've always told you about the importance of learning a second language!"

On the day of Pentecost, all the disciples and followers who gathered in the upper room were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages. I have been asked many times about Pentecost Day how it looked like. My answer was always, "I don't know because I wasn't there." But our reading today Acts 2 tells us about what happened on that day.

Before Jesus was taken back up into heaven, he told his disciples to "wait" for the gift his Father had promised. He said, "John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So, they returned to Jerusalem to the Upper Room where they had been staying. We are told they "joined together in constant prayer." And they waited and waited expectantly for this gift Jesus had promised. And on the Day of Pentecost, "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed like tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them..." and... "all of them

were filled with the Holy Spirit.” That frightened group of men and women who had been in hiding in fear of ending up in the same fate as the Crucified Lord, ran out into the streets and told the crowds: “God has made...Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” And when the people heard this they were cut to the heart because the Spirit was blowing and the Truth was being shared. This is what we celebrate today.

A young football player, in the last two minutes of the game, his team down by 3, makes a touchdown. He runs faster than his legs can carry him, and farther than he ever dreamed of running. When the game is over, the coach says to him, “I didn’t know you had it in you.” The kid replies, “I didn’t. I was picked up and carried by something outside myself.” That is the experience that people have when they completely outreach and outdo themselves. Taking a look at our Acts’ reading for this morning, Peter is the one who stood up and addressed the crowd, and when he began to speak, they all listened. He spoke with boldness and with power. We read that 3,000 people were saved and baptized that day. If anyone had said to Peter, “I didn’t know you had it in you,” he surely would have said, “I didn’t. It wasn’t me. It was the Spirit of the Lord speaking through me.”

If we were to be honest with ourselves, I would imagine that many of us can relate to Peter...at least the old Peter...the pre-Pentecost Peter. Peter was just an ordinary man when Jesus called him. He was uneducated. He would continue in the family business. In the whole system of things, he probably didn’t feel very important. But then, he and his brother Andrew were casting a net into the lake, when Jesus came upon them. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.” At once, Peter and his brother left their nets and followed Jesus. And they followed him and followed him and followed him for three spectacular years. Peter was positive that he would never betray Jesus....not after all he had seen! “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you,” Peter told Jesus a few hours before he was arrested. But Peter’s confidence in himself was crushed just a few more hours later when he denied even knowing Christ three times! A few days before Pentecost, Peter was present when the resurrected Jesus said, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Sometimes a Christian will hear the words: “Your ministry has changed my life.” And that Christian will think to herself or himself: “Really? How? I didn’t do it. It wasn’t me!!!” And it really wasn’t. It was the Spirit of the Lord using him or her as a vessel through which lives are changed, the kingdom of God is increased, and thus the world is made a better place. One of my friends who is a church minister in Korea recently got a call from a member of his church, who said he needed to make an appointment to speak with him. He said he would take my friend to lunch at a local restaurant. My friend became concerned. The man has a beautiful family, and he hoped nothing was wrong. There they sat at lunch, and the man said to my friend, “Pastor, I’ve been

thinking a lot about a recent sermon of yours entitled: 'Challenge for Growth.' Well...as you know, I responded to your challenge, making a commitment to grow in God's Word by reading and praying with Scripture daily. So, every morning before work, I get up and read my Bible. Then I pray with the Scripture passage. Well, the more I read God's Word and the more I pray, I feel...I don't know how to explain it...but I feel God calling me to something more. I don't know yet what the more is, but God is definitely calling me to more service, to grow more, to serve God and people more." My friend told me that "A violent and mighty wind of the Holy Spirit blew through that restaurant that day---and the flame of the Holy Spirit ignited souls on fire as much as it did in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago."

Brothers and sisters in Christ! God has great plans for your life, for my life—for all lives. All we need to do is to be available for what God has in mind. God has promised: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

What is God's Dream and Vision for you?

What is God calling you to do?

Don't miss God's calling, to be a part of God's great plan. Don't be like the guy in the parable of the talents... the guy who buried his talent in the ground because he was afraid, or lazy or wicked or whatever. Instead, be like Peter. Again, if anyone had said to Peter, "I didn't know you had it in you," he surely would have said, "I didn't. It wasn't me. It was the Spirit of the Lord that gave me the ability." This is how the Church began, and 2,000 years later, this is how the Church continues to grow!

Have you experienced Pentecost in your life?

Is the Holy Spirit working through you?

What Visions and Dreams is God laying on your heart?

Share them with the congregation. Let the Holy Spirit have his way. Pentecost is not just something in the long ago past. It's not just something for the future. It is happening now; continuously. Let's all be part of it. It is the only hope for the world. We are called to be vessels through whom God's work is done. There is nothing more exciting than this. There is no greater privilege.

*We celebrate your Church, O God, and your Spirit. Help us here at Kogarah Uniting Church to be a Spirit-filled congregation reflecting your glory, now and always.*

*In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

**HYMN:** Spirit of the Living God SiS 303

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.  
Break me, melt me,  
mould me, fill me.  
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us.  
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on us.  
Break us, melt us,  
mould us, fill us.  
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on us.

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## **OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER**

For all you have given, for all we have received, we give you thanks.  
We bring before you our gifts of substance and the gift of our lives.  
We bring our passion and joy and surprise, our visions and dreams.  
May they refresh and enliven our church and community,  
as the wind of your Spirit did long ago.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

Spirit, Wind, Breath.  
***God beyond our description and understanding,  
you have come to be with us in many amazing, wonderful,  
sometimes incomprehensible ways.  
You challenge us, comfort us, provoke us, yes sometimes  
even anger and confuse us – yet you always  
love us, forgive us, and call us to be your people. We  
thank you, and we come before you in prayer.***

Spirit, Wind, Breath.  
***Your love is a gift for all people.  
We pray for those who do not know they are loved  
by you, or who have forgotten, or whose hearts have  
grown weary and tired – even hardened – from living  
unsure they are loved at all.  
Infuse them with a new awareness of your spirit.  
Guide us to share the good news in ways that invite***



***all to find their lives renewed and made whole.***

Spirit, Wind, Breath.

***Offer comfort for those who are lost and alone. Offer wisdom to those who are in leadership over others, in communities, churches, and nations. Offer a spirit of renewal for a tired world.***

Spirit, Wind, Breath.

***We pray to you, O God, in a sense of wonder and hope, knowing that your compassion for all Creation is deep, never-ending, and always unfolding.***

We pray for those who are not well  
and in suffering in this congregation.

(We remember Brian and Rhonda,  
Prema and her family, Denis and Dolly and their children,  
and all others who are not well.)

Spirit of God,  
may your healing hand rest upon them,  
give them your intensive care and healing,  
may they know your hope and comfort,  
your power and assurance.

Spirit, Wind, Breath.

***Come, Holy Spirit, come. 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
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## **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."

Come to this table  
where bread and cup are transformed by the Spirit of God  
into a meal of love and grace  
a supper of visions and dreams  
a table where all souls are welcome.

**COMMUNION HYMN:** You are holy TIS 753

You are holy, you are whole.  
You are always ever more than we ever understand.  
You are always at hand.  
Blessed are you coming near;  
blessed are you coming here  
to your church in wine and bread,  
raised from soil, raised from dead.

*You are holy, you are wholeness,  
you are present, let the cosmos praise you, Lord!  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
hallelujah, hallelujah, our Lord!*

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## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.  
***And also be 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.***

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy God, almighty and everlasting God,  
through Jesus Christ, your only Son our Lord.

This day we give you thanks  
because in fulfilment of your promise you pour out your Spirit upon us,  
filling us with your gifts, leading us into all truth,  
and uniting peoples of many tongues in the confession of one faith.

Your Spirit gives us grace to call you Father and Mother,  
to proclaim your gospel to all nations and to serve you as a royal priesthood.  
Therefore, we join our voices with angels and archangels,  
and with all those in whom the Spirit dwells,  
to proclaim the glory of your name, for ever praising you and saying:

***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.***

We praise and bless you, loving God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

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.”

So, God, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.  
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

***Christ has died:***

***Christ is risen:***

***Christ will come again.***

Lord of all life,

help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours,  
O loving God, for ever and 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**

Thank you, Divine Spirit,  
for this meal of remembrance,  
and for coming to us as we have shared it.  
May the love we find at this table be reflected in our lives;  
May the power we receive at this table  
make us peacemakers and healers;  
And may the Spirit who fills us again at this table  
lead us to be those who proclaim God's Reign  
in every word we speak and in everything we do. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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**HYMN:** Filled with the Spirit's power TIS 411

Filled with the Spirit's power with one accord  
the infant church confessed its risen Lord:  
O Holy Spirit, in the church today

no less your power of fellowship display.

Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire,  
that unity may be our great desire:  
give joy and peace, give faith to hear your call,  
and readiness in each to work for all.

Widen our love, good Spirit, to embrace  
in your strong care all those of every race:  
like wind and fire with life among us move  
till we are known as Christ's, and Christians prove.

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## **BLESSING**

In our service this morning,  
God has poured out on us again the fire and the storm wind of the Spirit.  
May the Spirit move us  
to take the risk of committing ourselves fully to God and to people.  
May he give us the courage to change  
ourselves and the Church we love,  
that we may be living signs to all the world of God's goodness and presence.

The blessing of God almighty,  
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

**SENDING SONG:** Father, bless us as we go TIS 781 (sing as a 2-part round)

Father, bless us as we go,  
Jesus, walk beside us.  
Holy Spirit, guide us.  
Father, bless us as we go,  
Jesus, walk beside us.  
Holy Spirit, guide us.

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