

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH
13 August 2023 Pentecost 11

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 Bidjegal 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

Let us say together who we are.

***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

*In a world overwhelmed by waves of bad news,
we feel tossed and turned in the chaos of current events.*

*Here we are, carrying our dreams in our spirits,
wondering what God dreams in the storms and turmoil.*

*It is God's dream of abundant life,
and we are stirring to interpret its meaning.*

*We come together to listen and wonder, to praise and
celebrate.*

***We come in hopeful anticipation to awaken our hearts to
God's dream fulfilled.***

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

SONG: Come, now is time to worship
Come, now is the time
to worship.
Come, now is the time
to give your heart.
Come, just as you are
to worship.
Come, just as you are
before your God, come.

One day every tongue
will confess you are God,
one day every knee will bow.
Still, the greatest treasure
remains for those
who gladly choose you now.

Come, now is the time
to worship.
Come, now is the time
to give your heart.
Come, just as you are
to worship.
Come, just as you are
before your God, come.

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OPENING PRAYER and PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Comforter God, with vivid dreams and bold visions, inspire us;
with tender love towards one another, renew us;
with your Spirit, alive with colour and breath, lead us to this place.
May we speak and act authentically with one another,
so this community bears witness to the reconciling,
generous spirit of Christ. Amen.

Our dreams have been small, Loving God.
We have not allowed ourselves to dream big.
Our doubt and fear diminish our courage.

Our past failures define what we can imagine.
Our resentments have limited your grace.
Forgive us, and dance in our dreams once more.
Spark our waking hours with visions, we pray.
Silence.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

As the Apostle Paul wrote: “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

The good news therefore is this: in Jesus Christ we are made new, we are loved, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. ²This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

¹²Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” He answered, “Here I am.” ¹⁴So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, ¹⁵and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” ¹⁶“I am seeking my brothers,” he said; “tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” ¹⁷The man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one

another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” ²¹But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” ²²Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him” —that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; ²⁴and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. ²⁵Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. ²⁸When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Matthew 14:22-33

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” ²⁸Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

HYMN: TIS 224(ii) All hail the power of Jesus' name
All hail the power of Jesus' name;
let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem
to crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, you martyrs of our God,
who from his altar call;
praise him whose way of pain you trod,
and crown him Lord of all.

Let every tribe and every tongue
responsive to his call,
now shout in universal song
and crown him Lord of all.

PD; Edward Perronet

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REFLECTION Trust in God through Jesus

Life is a journey of endless decision about risky matters. Thus more or less we are all risk takers. Everything we do for the first time is a risk - learning to walk, to ride a bike, to swim, to hit a ball, and to drive a car. Of course there are bigger risks - getting married, having children, starting a new job or business or moving across the country. These are risks because we don't know for sure what will happen and how to respond.

Nevertheless why are we willing to take risks? It is because if we didn't take them, there would be no opportunity at all in life. Usually we see other people doing it and we think if they can do it, so can we. Also we are more apt to take a risk if we trust the person who is encouraging us to do it - they can be your parents, close friends or siblings. So risk and trust go hand in hand.

Today's Gospel is a story of terror at sea that shows both risk and trust. Peter wants to do the impossible - walk on water. Thus he is a risk taker. Let's picture the scene. The disciples are sailing on the Sea of Galilee and it can be really frightening when a storm hits. All you can hear is the wind howling and changing directions and the crashing of the waves.

They must have been thinking - how can this be happening to us and why? After all Jesus had told them to get into the boat and go to the other side, after the feeding of the 5,000, while he went up the mountain to pray. They faithfully followed what Jesus told them. However instead of a nice, smooth and comfortable boat trip, they were full of fear and they thought they were surely going to drown.

We learn that toward morning they saw a ghost coming and they cried out. But above the noise of the storm, the disciples heard a familiar voice, the voice of Jesus saying, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." And it is at this point that Peter cries out, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." And Jesus said, "Come."

Peter might have wanted assurance that it really was Jesus who stood on the waves before them and not a ghost. Then Peter took the risk of getting out of the boat and did the impossible - he started walking on the water. Peter on the water is surely the risk taker trusting in Jesus. But when Peter noticed the strong wind and large waves, he became frightened. Soon he began to sink, so he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Today's Gospel is a story of trust and risk. Jesus has been with his disciples but they get into difficult situations and need reassurance at times. That would be quite true of us, we who are on the faith journey. There are times when we are afraid, lose our confidence, so need to be renewed and strengthened in our faith. And that is what Jesus does for the disciples in today's Gospel. It ends with those in the boat worshiping Jesus saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Throughout history, the church has often been symbolised as a boat or a saving ark. The church is often in the midst of life's raging sea of problems. The church, like a ship or ark, can be a refuge, a place that provides a respite from the storms of life. Jesus sometimes calms the storm and us who are in the midst of the storm, giving confidence and assurance to go out to trust and risk.

In today's Gospel, Peter trusted and risked by getting out of the boat. But then he lost his trust and began to sink. He called out to Jesus and Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Then is Peter doubting Jesus or himself? It seems that it must be himself because he looked to Jesus to help him.

It seems that Peter experienced a loss of confidence. He began to doubt himself and his walking on the water. The lesson here may be that faith is not only placing our confidence in God to get the job done, but faith also is confidence that God has given us all that we need to do it.

Therefore trust in oneself is an expression of trust in God. In a way it is like the saying, "God helps those who help themselves."

In spite of all his weaknesses and failings, Peter must be the one who shows the most trust in Jesus. He is truly the risk taker. He is willing to try the impossible. It is absolutely amazing because many of us are not willing to take any risks. We are afraid we will fail, or that we will look foolish, or we will do something wrong, so we do nothing. Peter, with all his imperfections, is an inspiration to us to trust and to risk.

The miracles which Christ performed when he was here on earth were not just walking on water or multiplying the loaves for the 5,000 or changing water into wine, but also changing hearts and transforming people's lives. Jesus changed Simon Peter from a being who was so light and fluffy in the wind to a solid rock in the end.

The good news today is that we can trust Jesus, risk and do what God calls us to do because Jesus Christ who is our Saviour and Lord has not abandoned us, even in the most fearful circumstances. We are to remember what Jesus says to us, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus even when the waves of life's storms are threatening, he will not let us drown. Let us trust in God through Jesus and trust in ourselves. Amen.

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

We have received so much from you, O God,
and what we offer in return seems paltry by comparison.
But we offer these gifts and our lives to be blessed by you,
rejoicing in the knowledge that you can accomplish
great and wonderful things through them.
This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ
and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Most merciful God,

We bring to you our prayers for your world and its people:

For those caught in war and conflict, esp for Türkiye, Syria, Ukraine,
Russia;

For victims of natural disasters, starvation and disease;

For all aid and relief workers.

As you came to your disciples in the midst of a storm, come today to your people in troubles of life that we may take heart and trust in you through Jesus and in ourselves.

We bring to you our prayers for your church:

In places where it faces persecution;

In places where it is marginalised and ignored;

In places where it is discredited by discord and disgrace.

As you came to your disciples in the midst of a storm, come today to your church and its members in troubles of life that our faith, mission and ministry of the congregation maybe rekindled and empowered by your presence.

We bring to you our prayers for all who are in need:

For all without family and friends;

For all who mourn the loss of those they love;

For all who are afraid, confused or without hope;

For the sick and all who care for them, esp for DH, the minister at KUC, Brian and Rhonda , Prema, Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Russell Foxe and others whom we name in our hearts;

We also pray for the Kogarah Storehouse and its clients, Lala and staffs, for Dorothy and Godfrey and the work of LACLA, for Nick Hedges and the scripture teaching at local schools, for the team, parents and children in the Early Learning Centre.

We pray especially today for health care workers in this time of COVID-19, including Richard, Millin and Roseline Goodman and Dorothy Makasa and Elin, and we hold Gymea-Miranda UC in our prayers.

As you came to your disciples in the midst of a storm, come today to your people in troubles of body, mind and soul that our pain and terrors maybe calmed by your healing and comforting presence.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

INVITATION

COMMUNION HYMN: TIS 685 The power of your love
Lord, I come to you: let my heart be changed, renewed,
flowing from the grace that I found in you.

And, Lord, I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me
will be stripped away by the power of your love.

Hold me close, let your love surround me;

bring me near, draw me to your side:

and as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle,

and I will soar with you:

your Spirit leads me on in the power of your love.

Lord, unveil my eyes, let me see you face to face,
the knowledge of your love as you live in me.

Lord, renew my mind as your will unfolds in my life,
in living every day in the power of your love.

Hold me close, let your love surround me;

bring me near, draw me to your side:

and as I wait I'll rise up like the eagle,

and I will soar with you:

your Spirit leads me on in the power of your love.

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.

.....

SANCTUS TIS 736

***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.

.....

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.***

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

We thank you, Father,
that you have fed us
in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste
of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all humankind.

**Father, we offer ourselves
to you as a living sacrifice
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Send us out in the power
of your Spirit to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.**

The Sending Forth of the People of God

SONG Teach me to dance

Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,
teach me to move in the pow'r of your Spirit,
teach me to walk in the light of your presence,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,
teach me to trust in the word of your promise,
teach me to hope in the day of your coming,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.

You wrote the rhythm of life, created heaven and earth,
in you is joy without measure.
So, like a child in your sight, I dance to see your delight,
for I was made for your pleasure, pleasure.

Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,
teach me to move in the pow'r of your Spirit,
teach me to walk in the light of your presence,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,
teach me to trust in the word of your promise,
teach me to hope in the day of your coming,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.

Let all my movements express a heart that loves to say 'yes',
a will that leaps to obey you.
Let all my energy blaze to see the joy in your face;
let my whole being praise you, praise you.

Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,
teach me to move in the pow'r of your Spirit,
teach me to walk in the light of your presence,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,
teach me to trust in the word of your promise,
teach me to hope in the day of your coming,
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.

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EXTINGUISHING THE CHRIST CANDLE

As we extinguish the Christ Candle, we are now the Light of Christ
as we go out into the world and our community.

BLESSING

Go into this week blessed by
the wondrous love of God,
the faithful love of Jesus Christ
the empowering love of the Holy Spirit

SENDING SONG: Old rugged cross
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown