

## KUC ORDER OF SERVICE 15/10/23

### RESPONDING TO THE INVITATION INTO GOD'S FEAST

#### WELCOME

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

We are called to the foot of the mountain,  
called to wait on the word of God.  
We are called to the top of the mountain,  
to the high, the thin, the sacred places.  
We are called to the banquet, to the feast,  
invited, honoured, made welcome: so come!  
Make ready to accept the invitation;  
make ready to receive the gifts of the Divine.

**LIGHT THE CANDLE**            God is here.....God is with us

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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. We acknowledge that this land on which we live and move was and always will be Aboriginal land.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

We are a congregation/community .....  
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.

#### **SING: Rejoice the Lord is King            TIS/216**

Rejoice, the Lord is King:  
your Lord and King adore;  
Let all give thanks, and sing,  
and triumph evermore;  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus the Saviour reigns,  
the God of truth and love;  
when he had purged our stains,  
he took his seat above;  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,  
he rules o'er earth and heaven;  
the keys of death and hell  
are to our Jesus given:

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

He sits at God's right hand,  
till all his foes submit,  
and bow to his command,  
and fall beneath his feet:

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope;  
Jesus the judge shall come,  
and take his servants up  
to their eternal home:

We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;  
the trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!

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## **PRAYER OF ADORATION, CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

We praise you, O God, with words of thanksgiving in our mouths and in our hearts - words which can never really do justice to the depth of your care for us. We rejoice in your blessings, yet we so often fail to live up to them. Like your people of old, we often desire to fashion you in our image or in ways that we can control. Knowing these failings of ours as you do, you still invite us to share your life of grace and abundant love by being united with Jesus Christ through the power of your Spirit. We do not deserve such gifts. We can only receive them and respond because Jesus intercedes for us in our weakness. May this time of worship and our daily living proclaim our thanksgiving for these undeserved and lavish gifts of grace.

It's not as if we mean to forget you,  
Source of our life and love,  
but we do allow 'busy' and 'shiny'  
to draw us away, and then we've caused  
you pain again, stopped living well again.  
So, we stop now and say sorry  
for the golden calves, the shiny things,  
the promises of instant happiness we prefer  
to waiting for your promise to be known.

Pause

And we stop now to say sorry  
for the busyness, the rushing, the hurrying,  
the distractions we prefer to discomfort  
in silence, in honestly sitting with you.

Pause

We stop.  
We wait.  
We sit still.

We listen.  
We are sorry.

#### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear again the promise:  
God is here.  
God is listening.  
God chooses love every time.  
Receive the gift and let it heal –  
you, your relationships with God,  
and with all that lives.  
Find peace.  
Be at peace.  
Amen.

#### PEACE

#### READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES:

##### **Exodus 32:1-14**

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." <sup>2</sup>Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." <sup>6</sup>They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup>they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" <sup>9</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup>Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation." <sup>11</sup>But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they

shall inherit it forever.'"<sup>14</sup>And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

**SING:           Your Words to Me TIS/430**

Your words to me are life and health;  
pour strength into my soul;  
enable, guide, and teach my heart  
to reach its perfect goal.

Your words to me are life and truth;  
from day to day they show  
their wisdom, passing human thought,  
as in their truth I grow.

Your words to me are full of joy,  
of beauty, peace and grace;  
from them I learn your blessed will,  
through them I see your face.

Your words are perfected in One,  
yourself, the living Word;  
within my heart your image print  
in clearest lines, O Lord.

PD; G.C. Martin

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**READINGS FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES:**

**Philippians 4:1-9**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. <sup>2</sup>I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. <sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Matthew 22:1-14**

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my

dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup>"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen."

### **REFLECTION:**

**Today we would like to look at one of the fruits of the Spirit in the Bible. Paul says in the** book of Galatians that if we live by the Spirit, in another word, if we live as Christians or as followers of Jesus Christ, we bear some fruits of the Spirit. Do you know how many and what kind of fruits of the Spirit are mentioned? 9 fruits. Paul says in Galatians 5, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." This is very popular verses among Christians. This morning we will look at the third fruit of the Spirit which is peace.

Today, the world we live is no more peaceful world. People fear the war on terrorism. We have been watching the news this week and last week and have been overwhelmed with emotion at what is unfolding in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Already thousands of people have been killed. We know the war between Russia and Ukraine. Not only this, we also have experienced COVID. We fear natural disasters such as earthquake, hurricane, tsunami, and many other problems surrounded us. In these terrible events, we think and talk about peace. And we pray for peace. Today, many people in this world are committing suicide. The reasons of their suicide are worrying too much, depression, financial matters, and so on. I have thought about why they had to kill themselves. Couldn't they find any peace in their situations? What is peace? Where is peace? Where does peace come from?

I want my children to live in peace through their whole lives. Whenever I pray for my children, I pray for them to be a peace maker, happy maker, smile maker through their whole lives. God calls us to live in peace in this difficult world through our whole lives, and to live as peace makers in our congregation, our family, our community, and our world as Jesus came to the world as a peace maker. Then we need to ask, "What is peace"? If someone were to come and ask you, what is peace? How would you answer them? Peace is one of those things that everyone wants, but no one has a real clear answer of what it is or how you can get it and keep it. I like to look in the dictionary whenever I have a word that I need a clear understanding of. My electric dictionary has this to say about

peace: a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area, the state of being calm or quiet, the state of living in friendship with somebody without arguing, harmony, concord; an undisturbed state of mind, absence of mental conflict. All the explanations of peace that I have mentioned so far and probably many of the explanations of peace that you might give talk about peace as if it is something that happens when conflict and problems are not present. I have to get rid of all those things that create anxiety in my life in order for me to have peace. I have to get rid of my wife or my kids, or my friends or my neighbors or my bills. If this is so, then you will never have peace, because as long as you are alive, you will always have conflict, and you will always have problems. I want you to see today that peace comes not by getting rid of our problems but by focusing our thoughts on what God wants us to think about.

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them. One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace. The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, and in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest ..... perfect peace. Which picture do you think won the prize? The King chose the second picture. Do you know why? "Because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace." Peace doesn't come with the absence of the storm; it comes in the presence of the storm because Jesus is walking there beside us, and we have got our eyes on him.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, we find one of the most popular benedictions in the church. Chapter 4 verse 7 says, "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Then in verse nine, Paul inverts two of the important words in that benediction. Instead of saying "the peace of God," he says, "And the God of peace will be with you." The peace of God comes when we know the God of peace. We exchange a sign of peace with others every Sunday in our worship in saying "The peace of the Lord be always with you" or simply "Peace be with you". The world cannot give you nor teach you how to experience this true Divine peace. You can chant, do yoga, practice your bio-rhythms, take a drink, listen to your meditation music, consume your herbs, burn your aromatic candles and you will not find the inward tranquillity that God can give. The world can't understand it. The world can't supply it nor can you find it in yourself. It comes from God alone. In order to experience the peace from God, we shouldn't worry about anything. In our Philippians reading today in verse 6, Paul begins by commanding – "Don't worry about anything." You know this verse is what God has been saying to me over the past few months. I worried about my health every

day. What do I do now? What if my health gets worse? What about my family and children? What is my future? God kept talking to me, "Don't worry about anything." We are not to have anxiety. We are not to have worry. We are not to have nervousness. We are not to have fretfulness and fear. No matter what our situation or circumstances, there is no need to be anxious. Thus, we are not to be anxious. Instead of worrying, look at the Lord your God, the peace of God who besides you, who wants to give you peace that the world cannot give and understand.

So what can we do if we are in worry situation. Paul says that we are supposed to first pray. Whatever is bothering us, we need to take it to the Lord in prayer. Whatever we are facing that gives us cause for mental or emotional turmoil or distress, we need to bring it to the Lord's attention. That's what I did when I was weak and in times of trouble over the past few months. I Prayed and remembered your prayer. Praying is simply talking to God about what you think of him, what's going on in your life. It is your means of taking those things that cause you anxiety and worry and placing them at the foot of God. Then he talks about supplication or petition. That's where you ask God to do something in your life and in your situation. The Bible says in Romans, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. When you are wrapped up in the arms of Jesus, and you know that you have an all-powerful God who hears your prayers and is in control of every situation, that's when you can have real peace.

I can't forget the conversation that I had with one of my friends around 20 years ago when I was in really difficult situation. I shared it with him and he said, "Isn't it so exciting that how God will work in your difficult situation?" Yes, it is so exciting because I believe God is beside me and definitely will do something which is best for me.

Brothers and sisters! Rejoice in the Lord, and give thanks to God for he has done for you and for he will do for you even in your difficult situations. Human beings cannot provide the peace that you need, only God can provide it for you.  
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**SING:            Gather us in            TIS/474**

Here in this place new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away,  
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;  
gather us in, the blind and the lame;  
call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;  
we are the old, who yearn for your face;  
we have been sung throughout all of history,  
called to be light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,  
gather us in, the proud and the strong;  
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take of wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth,  
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
call us anew to be salt of the earth.  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you;  
nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven light years away,  
but here in this space, the new light is shining,  
now is the kingdom, now is the day.  
Gather us in, and hold us forever;  
gather us in, and make us your own;  
gather us in, all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

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### **OFFERING:**

With gratitude and joy, we accept God's invitation to share in the banquet of life for all.  
Keep reminding us, O Holy One,  
of the joy of attending your banquet:  
joy offered to all;  
joy offered through each of us as we give,  
we share, we nurture life with you.  
May all we bring give you joy and honour. Amen.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

At the feet of the mountains,  
people are waiting – waiting for words  
of comfort, of hope, of wisdom, of peace.

Holy One, we pray for the waiting,  
with our voices, our love, our presence.  
In the streets of the cities,  
people are busy, too busy to notice  
each other, or you.

Holy One, we pray for the busy,  
with our voices, our love, our presence.  
In the shadows, unseen,  
people are yearning for invitations,  
for nurture of body, of mind, of soul.

Holy One, we pray for those who are hungry,  
with our voices, our love, our presence.  
All over our planet, Creation cries  
to the people for help, for healing,  
for a gentler walk together.  
We pray for the people of Morocco and Libya in their time of overwhelming need.  
We pray for those known to us who are unwell.

Holy One, we pray for all life,  
with our voices, our love, our presence.  
And we pray with the saints who follow you,  
Jesus, with the prayer you taught us to speak:  
The prayer Jesus taught.

**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 from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

**SING:           Praying in the morning           ATW/485**

Praying in the morning,  
praying in the evening,  
praying any time of the day.  
'Cos God's there any time at all,  
any time there's something to say.

Praising when you're happy,  
asking when there's needs,  
praying on and not letting go.  
'Cos God knows everything you need,  
all the things that help you to grow.

Praying when you're lonely,  
praying when you're sad,  
praying when your prayer's just a cry.  
'Cos God's there any time at all,

even when you think God's passed by.

Praying in the quiet,  
praying when you're still,  
praying with your listening ears.  
'Cos God's got things to say to you,  
words of love to break through your fears.

Praying in the morning,  
praying in the evening,  
praying any time of the day.  
'Cos God's there any time at all,  
any time there's something to say.

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**BLESSING:**

Hear the call of the Holy One,  
heed the invitation:  
be ready, be waiting,  
be present when you are asked to turn up.  
May Wisdom welcome you,  
Creator nourish you,  
Spirit sustain you,  
in the streets and at the feet  
of the mountains. Amen.

**SENDING SONG: May the God of Hope**

**Seasons 6-30**

May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace,  
singing, share our joy with all.  
Working for a world that's new,  
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

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