

**KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH**  
**October 22, 2023**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after 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**

The world tells us  
we need to be part of something big and bold;  
***We belong to God.***

The world tells us to put our hope in wealth and success;  
***We put our faith and trust in Jesus.***

The world tells us to seek our own gain and satisfaction;  
***We seek joy in the Spirit of God.***

Come, let us worship God,  
who leads us away from the ways of the world.

***Let us follow and live  
into the Way of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.***

## LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

***God is always here***

God is with us

***God is always with us***

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we are yours.

We come as we are, with our cares and concerns.

We long to touch you and find healing in your embrace.

Strengthen our faith and heal our brokenness,  
that we may worship you with joy. Amen.

**HYMN:** O for a thousand tongues to sing      TIS 210

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of our God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! The name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
such music in the sinner's ears  
is life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free;  
he sets the prisoner free;  
his blood can make the foulest clean,  
his blood availed for me.

He speaks, and listening to his voice  
new life the dead receive,  
new life the dead receive,  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, you deaf; his praise, you dumb,

your loosened tongues employ;  
your loosened tongues employ;  
you blind, behold your Saviour come;  
and leap, you lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of your name.

PD; Words: Charles Wesley

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## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

***Almighty God,  
we confess that our point of view is often narrow.  
We see only what is in front of us—  
the easy way or the best way for ourselves,  
and we do not see how our actions may harm others.  
Forgive us for our short-sightedness.  
Open our minds to see that what makes things easy for us  
may make things much more difficult for others.  
Help us to see how our actions may harm others and creation, and ultimately You.  
Transform our lives so that we will help and serve others,  
rather than only ourselves.  
In the name of Christ, who calls us into repentance, forgiveness,  
and restoration, we pray. Amen.***

## **DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

In Christ, there is life.  
With Christ, there is freedom.  
Because of Christ, there is hope.  
Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:  
Our sins are forgiven.  
***Thanks be to God.***

## **PEACE**

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

**HYMN:** Come as you are TIS 693

“Come as you are: that’s how I want you.  
Come as you are; feel quite at home,  
close to my heart, loved and forgiven.  
Come as you are: why stand alone?

“No need to fear, love sets no limits;  
no need to fear, love never ends;  
don’t run away shamed and disheartened,  
rest in my love, trust me again.

“I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;  
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.  
Each time you fail to live by my promise,  
why do you think I’d love you the less?

“Come as you are; that’s how I love you;  
come as you are, trust me again.  
Nothing can change the love that I bear you;  
all will be well, just come as you are.”

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The Service of the Word
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## **BIBLE READINGS**

### **Exodus 33:12–23**

Moses said to the Lord, “See, you have said to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favour in my sight.’ Now if I have found favour in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people.” He said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” And he said to him, “If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.” The Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord,’ and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my

face, for no one shall see me and live.” And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

### **Matthew 22:15–22**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this and whose title?” They answered, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

### **REFLECTION**

A Little Boy desperately wanted \$100 to buy some toys and prayed to God for a whole week, but nothing happened. So he decided to write a letter to God requesting the \$100. When the Post Office got the letter addressed to God they forwarded it on to the Parliament house in Canberra. The Prime Minister surprisingly received it and was very impressed, touched and amused so he instructed his aid to send the boy \$5. He thought \$5 would be a lot to the little boy. And the boy was, indeed, delighted by the money. He sat down and immediately wrote a thank you note, which read: Dear God, thank you very much for sending the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you had to send it through Canberra and as usual they kept most of it.

Our gospel text today is about paying taxes. Jesus was challenged with an interesting dilemma. The Pharisees and the Herodians tried to catch Jesus in a word of disloyalty against either the Roman Empire, or the Jewish people. They hoped that he would take one of two sides therefore placing himself on the bad side of someone. The question was “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” They thought that there were only two possible answers. Yes, it is right to pay taxes or No it is not right. Either answer would condemn Jesus. If Jesus said it was right to pay taxes, he would be accused of being a traitor to the Jews and of being in favour of the Roman Occupation. This would alienate him from all his supporters. If Jesus were to say it was wrong to pay taxes, then he would prove he was against Rome. The Jewish leaders would be able to say Jesus had shown himself to be a revolutionary and he could be handed over for trial and execution. All he had to do was say that paying

taxes was either good, or bad. They were looking for a simple answer to a difficult question. Instead, Jesus showed them the face on the coin and let them answer their own question. What a way to provide an answer.

Often, we have our own difficult questions. We look to God for answers, and sometimes we don't hear what we are expecting. Sometimes, we are not ready for the answer. Other times, we might receive the answer, but we don't like the result. But, the most destructive questions are those that really don't have an answer. This morning, I would like to look at how we question God and how we relate to the answers we receive.

First of all, sometimes, we are not yet ready to bear the answer. Children are great examples of people not ready to know all the answers. They are often the most interested in learning more, and they ask some of the toughest questions too. Toddlers are known to ask why, why, why to the point that others around them finally give up and answer, "Just because."

Why is the sky blue. Because the sky reflects light from the oceans.

Why is it blue though. I don't know, maybe the water is blue.

But some water is green, why isn't the sky green.

I guess there's more blue water than green.

But I never see a green sky, why isn't the sky green some times.

Why is it always blue? I don't know. Just because.

There is no way we can have all the answers or understand all the issues that impact even the simple questions. I don't know why the sky is blue instead of green. In the end, it really doesn't satisfy their inquisitive minds. They want to know more, and as they find out more, they want to know more than that. They question everything around them and challenge almost every assumption. This is a good thing for young minds, but they are not ready to know everything. Just like children are not always ready to hear the answers to some of the simplest questions, we too are children in God's eyes. We are not necessarily ready for all of the answers to all of our questions. Sometimes, we need to trust that God will provide the answers when the time is right.

Secondly, sometimes our questions have no desirable answers. There are some questions that have no real answers. It may look like a question, it may even sound like a question, but sometimes it is really a pointed statement or an attempt to throw someone off balance. Sometimes people want to argue or test God. That is what we see in the Gospel message today. Jesus was given a question that was expected to have no answer. He was expected to be wrong regardless of how he answered. Like the Pharisees and the Herodians, we often pose questions to God that we feel can't have a right answer either. Why did this bad thing happen? Why am I in this bad situation today? Why me Lord? We are probably all wondered

something similar at sometime or another. Sometimes these are appropriate questions. But sometimes, we already know the answer to our question and God can't answer in a way that will ever satisfy us. That's an attitude problem that we need to deal with. It is not an issue of the answer, but the nature of the question. If we really want to have the answer, we will be happy with the result, even if it is opposing to our preconceived notions. Attitude can be changed simply by humbly coming to God, ready to receive what he offers, even if it is not the answer we expected.

The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old Bible. His grandson who wanted to be just like him tried to imitate him in any way he could. One day the grandson asked, "Grandpa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?" The Grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water." The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You will have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again. This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was impossible to carry water in a basket, and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You are just not trying hard enough," and he went out the door to watch the boy try again. At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather, the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See Grandpa, it is useless!" "So you think it is useless?" The old man said, "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket, and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean. "Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out." That is the work of God in our lives. To change us from the inside out and to slowly transform us into the image of his son.

Reading the Bible is a way we can change our attitude. We can improve from the inside out through prayer, worship, confession, communion and even singing. In this way, we are slowly turning another part of our time and ourselves over to Him. The works we perform on the outside have an effect on the inside as well. It may happen slowly, so slowly that we don't even notice it. But, like the coal basket, we become clean on the outside as God cleans us on the inside.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. What can we learn from the Pharisees and Herodians questions? In God's eyes, we are the inquisitive children. Sometimes the questions are simple. Sometimes they are complex. Sometimes we like the answers, and sometimes we avoid what we don't want to hear. Sometimes we are ready to hear the truth and move on with the knowledge. Other times we are like children, unable to understand or bear the reality that exists. It is probably one of the hardest things we can do, once in a while, we may need to drop how we think situations should be resolved, and let God figure it out for us. Ultimately, our attitude towards our relationship with God determines how we ask questions. Just like our relationships with family and friends are dictated by our relationships with them, the same is true with God. Come closer to God. He is waiting for you. Ask the answerable questions and he will provide the answers. But, be patient, the answers come in his time with his wisdom. Amen.

**HYMN**     Seek ye first     TIS 745

Seek ye first the kingdom of God  
and his righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you.  
Allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, allelu, alleluia.*

Ask and it shall be given unto you,  
seek and you shall find,  
knock and it shall be opened unto you.  
Allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, allelu, alleluia.*

We shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.  
Allelu, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, allelu, alleluia.*



## **OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER**

Loving God, because we wish to follow the example of our Lord,  
we present these offerings to you.

Lord, make our Christian faith more visible and tangible  
so that the world might know you better. Amen

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

Loving God,  
thank you for your great and wonderful love for us  
and for what you have done for us in the past of our journey.  
God, we now come to you not only for ourselves –  
but also for others - for those who do not know your peace –  
for those who have not yet found any rest –  
for those who struggle with those things we have brought to you.

We pray for those who are sick or in hospital  
and for those who will never recover;  
for those who care for them.  
For those who are depressed, anxious or afraid,  
and for those with great problems,  
and no one with whom they can share them.  
We pray especially today for Brian and Rhonda,  
Prema and Priya, Jim and Bobbie,  
Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia,  
and others whom we name in our hearts.  
May the grace of Christ give them strength,  
give them your healing and comfort.

We pray for those who are struggling because of their hard lives.  
Lord, listen to their heart-felt prayers  
and help us to be supportive to them  
and their needs in our prayerful concerns.

We pray for Kogarah Uniting Church and the mission and ministry of our  
congregation.  
We thank you that though in many ways we are very different,  
in Christ you have made us one body.  
We thank you for our fellowship  
and ask that your Holy Spirit

may continually lead us into deeper ways of sharing with each other.

We pray for the Kogarah Storehouse and its many clients;  
for the parents and children in the Early Learning Centre.  
We pray for Padstow-Panania (Grace) church,  
and the leader Becky Douglass

We pray for the people of Israel and Palestine, Ukraine and Russia.  
O God, may your justice dwell in the land  
may your righteousness abide in fruitful fields  
may the effect of righteousness be quietness and trust forever  
may the effect of justice be peace—enduring peace.  
We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. 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**

Let us draw near to the holy table.  
This is the table our Lord has prepared for those who love him.  
Jesus said,  
"Come to me,  
all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
"I am the bread of life;  
Those who come to me shall not hunger,  
and those who believe in me shall never thirst."

**COMMUNION HYMN:** 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.

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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.***

Loving God,  
you made this world marvelous for us to enjoy.  
You gave Jesus to be our Savior and friend  
and to bring us to you.

You sent your Spirit to make us one family in Christ.  
For these gifts of your love we thank you,  
and we join with angels and saints  
in this joyful hymn of praise:

***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.***

For your kindness to us and your goodness to all,  
we give you thanks.  
We thank you that you showed your love  
by sending your Son, who gave his life for us,  
and rose again from death,  
and lives to pray for us forever.

We thank you that he has taken away  
all that separates us from you  
and has made us friends with you and with one another.  
We thank you that he has brought us together  
at this table, to strengthen us by his love.

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.”

And so, we eat and drink in memory of Jesus and His great love.  
And in this simple meal, we acknowledge the living Jesus.  
We celebrate the life and rest he gives us, even today.

***Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.***

***Christ will come again.***

Send down your Holy Spirit  
that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Unite us with him for ever and bring us with the whole creation  
to your eternal kingdom.

***Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor are yours,  
almighty Father, forever. 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**

Loving God,  
we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off  
you met us in your son and brought us home.  
Dying and living, he declared your love,  
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;  
we who drink his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**HYMN:** The Lord of the Dance    TIS 242

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun;  
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,  
at Bethlehem I had my birth:

*Dance then, wherever you may be;  
"I am the Lord of the dance," said he;  
"and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,  
but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John,  
they came with me and the dance went on:

*Dance then, wherever you may be;  
"I am the Lord of the dance," said he;  
"and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame:  
the holy people said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,  
and they left me there on a cross to die:

*Dance then, wherever you may be;  
"I am the Lord of the dance," said he;  
"and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;  
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back.  
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;  
but I am the dance and I still go on:

*Dance then, wherever you may be;  
"I am the Lord of the dance," said he;  
"and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.*

They cut me down and I leap up high,  
I am the life that will never, never die;  
I'll live in you if you'll live in me:

"I am the Lord of the Dance," said he:  
*Dance then, wherever you may be;*  
*"I am the Lord of the dance," said he;*  
*"and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,*  
*and I'll lead you all in the dance," said he.*

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## **BLESSING**

Go in peace, love and care for one another in the name of Christ.  
And may God's love surround you and fill you;  
may the Spirit's power support and guide you,  
and may the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord shine  
in all that you say and do both now and forevermore. **Amen**

**SENDING SONG:** May You Find Peace Seasons 7-26 (Sing twice)

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.

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