

**KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH**  
**11 February 2024**  
**Transfiguration**  
**Last Sunday before Lent**

The Gathering of the People of God

**WELCOME & GREETING**

Good morning everyone.  
I would like to welcome  
all of you to our worship this morning  
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today is the last Sunday before Lent and the Transfiguration Sunday.  
Transfiguration Sunday is a "pre-Lent" celebration,  
a pointer to the darkness of Good Friday  
and the glory of Easter Sunday.

So let us remember Jesus' journey for us to Calvary  
and also let us be prepared for our Lenten journey  
as we worship together this morning.

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**

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.*

## LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

***God is always here***

God is with us

***God is always with us***

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Lord, you have called us to the mountaintop.

***Help us to look forward to where you would have us go.***

Help us to listen carefully to the words of your healing love.

***Open our hearts and spirits***

***to receive your glorious directions.***

Place your trust in the Lord in all your ways.

***Lord, we have come here to give our lives to you. AMEN.***

## OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God –

you who surprise us with new experiences of love –

we come with reverence to praise and adore you.

Help us to be open to your appearance among us and within us.

Pour out, we pray, your Spirit upon us.

Make us, as we gather as your people,

attentive to your Word and ready to do your bidding.

Grant that we may know your touch and enter into your glory.

We ask it in the name of Christ Jesus –

he who lives and reigns with and the Holy Spirit,

one God, both now and forevermore. Amen

**HYMN:** Morning has broken TiS 156

Morning has broken like the first morning;

blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing,

praise for the morning,

praise for them, springing

fresh from the word.

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness  
of the wet garden,  
sprung from completeness  
where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight; mine is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play.  
Praise with elation,  
praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day.

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## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(Together)

***Eternal God,  
we confess that we do not expect and long  
for the transforming power of your love  
to work miracles in these hard hearts of ours.  
Yet we secretly long for a rescue, an escape, a miracle,  
to relieve us of the responsibilities  
and the challenges you set before us.  
Healing Spirit,  
renew our confidence in your power  
and in the power of love to change our lives,  
and give us courage to be the fully responsible persons  
Christ calls us to be. Amen.***

## **DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

The Apostle Paul writes:

“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 forgiven.

***Thanks be to God.***

## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

***And also with you.***

**HYMN:** Be still P&W 527

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.  
Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear.  
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.  
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.  
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

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The Service of the Word
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## BIBLE READINGS

### **2 Corinthians 4:3–6**

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing clearly the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus's sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

### **Mark 9:2-9**

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling bright, such as no one on earth could brighten them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Then

Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” 8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

## REFLECTION

Our life is not easy. Life is filled with mountaintops and valleys. A mountaintop is something excellent that happens in your life, something great, something to celebrate and remember. “The birth of your child”, that is a highpoint in your life. “The day you get married”, that is a peak. During those moments, it’s easy to be a Christian. “God is good,” you think to yourself. There is no doubt in your mind that God is blessing you. But life isn’t one peak after another. There are the valleys too. The troubles of life. Those difficult moments. When you have been diagnosed with cancer, that is a valley. When a loved one dies, that is a valley. During those moments, it is more difficult to be a Christian sometimes. When you are in the valley, it is hard to say, “God is good.” Sometimes your faith is shaken. There is some doubt there, when you are in a valley, that God is blessing you and those around you.

Our Christian faith is like a yo-yo. “Sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes almost to the ground.” It was only about a week before the Transfiguration that Jesus had asked his apostles the question, “Who do people say that I am?” Who was it who answered him? It was Simon, of course. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus praised Simon, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it . . .” And then Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. And how did Simon Peter respond to this? He took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (Matthew 16:16-23). One moment he’s the rock, the next Peter is Satan! Friends, Simon Peter is us! We’re just as weak in our faith. One moment we feel so close to God that we are willing to give him all that we are and hope to be and the next moment, in a time of testing, we deny we ever knew him.

Peaks and valleys, where are you right now? Are you on top of a peak? Or are you in a valley? Maybe you are somewhere in between, maybe there is a peak or a valley for you right around the corner, and you don’t even know it. The disciples of Jesus Christ had no idea that they were about to enter a valley, they were about to go through a low-point with Christ. Things with Jesus seemed to be going so well, he

had performed miracles, walking on the water, feeding the 5000. He had been surrounded by crowds of people, listening to his parables. It was easy to be a disciple of Jesus at that time. There was no doubt that this was the Son of God, the Savior of the world. The disciples were experiencing one high-point after another with Jesus. But right around the corner appeared the valley of the shadow of death. The crowds would soon turn against Jesus. He will be betrayed, and arrested, and tortured, and publicly condemned, and executed in the most shameful way known to man at that time. The valley was right around the corner. The disciples would be filled with fear and doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. Soon, it would be very difficult to be a disciple of Christ. A deep, dark valley was right around the corner, and the disciples had no idea.

And so that is why today, Jesus takes them to the top of a mountain. He lets them experience something amazing with their own eyes, they catch a glimpse of his glory. Right before the valley, Jesus takes them to a mountain, to a high point, and he does this to strengthen them for the difficult road ahead. Today, it is good for us to go on this journey with those disciples too, and experience with them this high point, for two reasons. First of all, it prepares us for Lent. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is this Wednesday. Up until this time, you have heard about Christ, how powerful he is, what a great teacher he is, how he is, without a doubt, the Son of God and Savior of the World. But now it is Lent, that time in the church year when Jesus descends into the valley of the shadow of death. You are going to hear about how he was rejected. How he was weak. How he suffered and died for the sins of the world. These next six weeks, we are going to walk with Jesus, into that valley, and see those difficult moments. This mountain-top experience we hear about today prepares us for the valley ahead. It also prepares us for something else, our own personal valleys. As we see Jesus glorified here today, it prepares us when we go through our own difficult moments. May God bless you this day, as you stand with those disciples and see Jesus reveal his glory, may your faith be strengthened, for the days ahead, as you prepare for all the different peaks and valleys in your life.

In verse 2: "After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them." The word "Transfigure" means that Jesus' appearance completely changed. The other gospels tell us that his face changed. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. At that moment, Jesus revealed his divinity. He was the holy, almighty God, and the brightness of his appearance revealed that to his disciples. This was good, because soon the disciples would see Jesus dirty and bloody and weak and dying. During that time, it would seem as though Jesus was a lowly man. But here it is clear, as he shines brighter than the sun, he is God, holy, almighty, and powerful. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. These were two of the greatest prophets in the

Old Testament. Once again, this was good for the disciples to see. Soon, people would be saying that Jesus was against the prophets, that Jesus had nothing to do with the prophets. But here it is clear, Elijah, Moses, and Jesus, they are speaking together about his imminent departure. What an amazing high point for those disciples to experience. Peter wanted this moment to last forever. He wasn't really sure what to say or what to do, so he said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. He did not know what to say, they were so frightened." And then bright cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" The disciples were surrounded by a bright fog, and then they heard the voice of God himself. It must have been an amazing thing, to hear the voice of God. They heard God say that Jesus really is his Son, that he was loved, and that they should listen to him. Once again, this was good for those disciples to hear. Soon, people would be saying that Jesus was not the Son of God. Soon, it would seem as though God didn't love Christ. The religious leaders would be saying that no one should listen to Jesus. But here it is clear, none of that is true, this is the true Son of God that we should listen to. And then, just as quickly as it began, this moment ended: "Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus." This was a high point for those disciples, a peak, they saw Christ in all his glory, surrounded by the prophets, and acclaimed by God. This would help and strengthen them as they continued on with Jesus into the valley of the shadow of death.

And this helps us as well. As we enter the Lenten season this Wednesday, we will watch Jesus battle with Satan, and we will see him eventually become weak and die. Here today we are reminded that Jesus is the Son of God, the holy one spoken of by the prophets. Although he will be suffering and dying, he is still God and Savior, doing these things to win for us our salvation. This also helps us as we go through our own personal peaks and valleys in life. I do not know where you are right now, if you are experiencing a high moment, or a low moment. And I don't know where you will be two years from now, what high moments or low moments you will be going through. In reality, neither do you. For us today, right now, it is good for us to be here, because here we are reminded of our Savior's glory, who he really is.

The disciples needed to climb a mountain to see this. Today, God's Word is your mountain to climb. Every time you come here, to church, and you hear the Word of God, you have climbed the mountain. Here, you see Christ, who has taken your sins away on the cross and who has risen from the dead. Here you catch a glimpse of his glory, even if it is just for a moment. Sunday morning worship, the Word of God, this is your mountain top. It is good for you to be here, because this is where you are strengthened for the days ahead, for all the peaks and valleys that are around the corner for you. Amen.

**HYMN** Shine, Jesus, shine TiS 675

Lord, the light of your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining;  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,  
set us free by the truth you now bring us –  
shine on me, shine on me.

(Refrain)

*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
fill this land with the Father's glory;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
send forth your word, Lord,  
and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance;  
by your blood I may enter your brightness:  
search me, try me, consume all my darkness –  
shine on me, shine on me.

(Refrain)

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory:  
mirrored here may our lives tell your story –  
shine on me, shine on me.

(Refrain)

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**OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things.  
Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts.  
With them we offer ourselves to your service  
and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made,  
for the sake of him who gave himself for us—  
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**

(Pray in silence)

Loving God - whose nature and ways are far beyond our understanding,  
we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ.

Lord - we often find ourselves weary, tired out by a load of care,  
a heap of responsibility and concern.

We hunger and thirst, and often fail to stop to eat and drink  
at the table you have prepared for us.

Lord, we are here now - and we ask you –  
grant us a glimpse of your glory - fill us with your spirit –  
refresh us and make us new.

Loving God, we pray that your glory may fill your church  
and give to your people everywhere the energy to shine  
wherever there is darkness, disunity, persecution, or despair.

Lord, we pray for the sick and people in suffering  
who are known in this congregation.

We remember Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya,  
Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia, Craig and his family  
who are at difficult time of loss, and others whom we name in our hearts.

Grant to them health and wholeness, peace and joy, strength and hope.

Give us all, O Lord, a greater love of your holiness,  
a greater delight in your mystery,

and a greater joy in seeking your presence.

We pray this in Jesus' name. 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

This is the table of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
In great humility and love  
Jesus lived among us, he became one of us.  
He came, not to call the righteous,  
but sinners to repentance.  
He came, not to condemn us, but to save us from our sins.  
He understands our doubts, our lack of faith,  
our longing for more love, more holiness of life;  
and even now he accepts us as we are and calls us to be his disciples.

Come then to this holy feast.  
Come to our crucified Saviour and risen Lord.  
The Master is here and is calling to you.  
Come and receive the signs of his presence,  
the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### COMMUNION HYMN    Be known to us in breaking bread    TiS 514

Be known to us in breaking bread  
But do not then depart  
Saviour, abide with us, and spread  
Your table in our heart

There sup with us in love divine  
Your body and your blood  
That living bread, that heavenly wine  
Be our immortal food

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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.**

We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature.  
We praise you for forming us in your image  
and calling us to be your people.  
We thank you that you did not abandon us  
in our rebellion against your love,  
but sent prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation.  
Above all we thank you for sending Jesus, your Son,  
to deliver us from the way of sin and death  
by the obedience of his life,  
by his suffering upon the cross,  
and by his resurrection from the dead.  
We praise you that he now reigns with you in glory and ever lives to pray for us.  
We thank you for the Holy Spirit,  
who leads us into truth, defends us in adversity,  
and out of every people unites us into one holy church.

Therefore, with the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth  
we worship and glorify you, God most holy, and we sing with joy.

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

We give thanks to God that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, before he suffered,  
gave us this memorial of his sacrifice until he comes again.  
The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed,  
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.”

With this bread and this cup we do as our Saviour commands:  
we celebrate the redemption he has won for us.

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

***Christ will come again.***

Eternal God,  
let your Holy Spirit move in power over us  
and over these earthly gifts of bread and wine,  
that our sharing of them may be for us  
the communion of the body and blood of Christ,  
and that we may become one in him.  
May his coming in glory find us ever watchful in prayer,  
strong in truth and love, and faithful in the breaking of the bread.

Then, at last, all peoples will be free, all divisions healed,  
and with your whole creation we will sing your praise,  
through your Son, Jesus Christ.

***Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honour 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.***

### **DISTRIBUTION**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given  
and for what you have promised us here.  
You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth.  
You have fed us with the bread of life, and renewed us for your service.  
Now we give ourselves to you;  
and we ask that our daily living may be part of your kingdom,  
and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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**HYMN:** At the name of Jesus    TiS 231

At the name of Jesus  
every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess him  
King of Glory now:  
this the Father's pleasure  
that we call him Lord,  
who from the beginning  
was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season  
to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners  
unto whom he came,  
faithfully he bore it  
spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious  
when from death he passed.

In your hearts enthrone him,  
there let him make new  
all that is not holy,  
all that is not true.  
He is God the Saviour,  
he is Christ the Lord,  
ever to be worshipped,  
trusted and adored.

When this same Lord Jesus  
shall appear again  
in his Father's glory,  
there with him to reign,  
then may we adore him,  
all before him bow,  
as our hearts confess him  
King of Glory now.

## **BLESSING**

Mountaintop experiences are wonderful.  
There is so much to see,  
but you are called now to go to the valley  
where there is much to be done.  
You are not alone;  
God goes with you, bringing healing, hope and peace.

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

**SENDING SONG:** May God's blessing (Benediction)

May God's blessing surround you each day,  
as you trust Him and walk in His way.  
May His presence within  
guard and keep you from sin,  
go in peace, go in joy, go in love.

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