

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

23 June 2024

5th 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

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

If God is for us, who is against us?

God gave the only Son for us.

Who is to condemn us?

Christ Jesus intercedes for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

***Neither death nor life, nor anything in all creation can separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Come, follow Jesus, who gave his life for us.

Come, worship God, for God's love is always with us.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

Open our hearts today, O Lord,
to feel the powerful strength and love you have for us.
Help us to listen, not only with our ears, but with our spirits
for your words of compassion and healing.
Enable us to become more faithful disciples for you;
for we ask this in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

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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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

***God of Love, in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done;
we have sinned in ignorance;
we have sinned in weakness;
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.***

***We repent and turn to you.
Forgive us, and renew our lives. Amen.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

“...There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus..” And - “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation”; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

In Christ, we are reconciled with God, and our trespasses are not counted against us. 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.”

BIBLE READINGS

1 Samuel 17:38-49

38 Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. 39 David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I am not used to them." So David removed them. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the wadi and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. 41 The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field." 45 But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head, and I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand." 48 When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

Mark 4:35-41

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And waking up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be silent! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

REFLECTION

In the beginning scene of today's reading in Mark 4, Jesus and his disciples had a real busy, tough day, preaching the gospel and healing the sick. Now when the day was over, and the sun was beginning to set, Jesus and his team knew they should get away. Well, many of us know that feeling that a nice break might be a good idea. Given the circumstances the only real way they could manage a break was to take a boat across the lake. Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So, they got on a boat and left the crowds on the shore. As they got half way across the lake, Mark tells us that suddenly, "A furious storm came up and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped."

Some years ago, I have been in a small commuter plane flying from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia to Jakarta, Indonesia. It was an international flight but its condition was not good. About 30 passengers and all of them were Europeans except my group. They all looked excited and talked to each other loudly in laughter. The atmosphere in the plane was literally and virtually 'up in the air'. Anyway, in about 15 minutes after it took off, the plane began to shake a little bit. Then, we could sense that the turbulence was apparently getting worse. The flight attendance announced that it was nothing serious and the situation was going to be in control very shortly. But she was wrong. The situation didn't get better and the plane captain finally made an announcement and said 'we would have to return to Malaysia due to some mechanical fault'. And, all of a sudden, it was a different world. There came an absolute sense of panic in that tiny plane. With the continuing turbulence and occasional bounces, all the passengers became seriously panic. But no body didn't talk, just sitting tightly there until the plane managed to return to the Kuala Lumpur airport. So, from that experience, I can relate to what must have been happening in that boat in the sudden stormy weather in today's scripture reading.

The reading says that Jesus was asleep when the storm came. All the disciples were panicked. It must have been very bad. Remember that at least four of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They had seen storms before. They had survived storms before. They knew what to do in a storm. But this one was different. So, in desperation, they woke up Jesus. "Master," they said, "we're about to go under here. Don't you even care? Don't just lay there! Wake up! Take charge! Do something to SAVE US!" In so many ways it is a contemporary story. It is our story. It resonates with us in our personal lives. Who has not experienced stormy times? Believing in Christ doesn't mean your life goes without storms. Family failings, children gone astray, lost jobs, shattered dreams, all sorts of abuses in the middle of our lives and our friends'.

The story also resonates with our worldview as well. There are so many problems in our modern world. Global health issues, COVID 19, Climate change, Global poverty,

Wars and military conflicts. Rumors of wars have become everyday reality. There are constant economic pressures. Violence is escalating in our cities. There are natural disasters and environmental changes that threaten this small global village and the lives of our children and their children. So we, too cry out to God, "Lord, don't you care; don't you care, that we are perishing here?" "God, how could you let this happen to me? Are you there? Are you asleep? Are you real?" Then somehow you come to realize that angry prayer is better than no prayer. A complaint to God is better than denial or indifference to God. Somehow this kind of angry prayers sometimes make us stay connected to God. If you feel your God is asleep in the middle of your stormy environment, do not just sit there and wait. Thing is, God is perfect but we are not. I mean, we don't have to be always nice, calm or even trying to be perfect in terms of our communication with God. 'Lord, don't you care... ? Don't care if what's happening down here?' They cried out to God. Jesus answered but he didn't answer directly. Instead, he got up, looked around and spoke but three words: "Peace, be still." The wind immediately died down, and things became completely calm. The sea became as smooth as glass. There were no wind or waves, just a calm sea.

This story of Jesus calming the storm on the Lake of Galilee is a wonderful teaching about life in the hands of God. The story reminds us that God is in control. God, who created the land and the sea has the power to calm the very sea he created. The disciples were all panicked because they didn't actually believe God would be in control. And perhaps that is where the problem lies for most of us. We become fearful when the storms of life howl and the waves threaten us because we think WE are in control; or We think We should be in control. We think WE can save ourselves. We think WE can fix our lives. We think WE have all the answers. We keep one hand on the steering wheel, just in case God doesn't know where he is going.

Jesus calms the storm and turns to the disciples and says, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" "Wait a minute. No faith? What do you mean, no faith?" We've left everything for you. How can you say we have no faith?" Peter could easily reply like this. Many of you have been Christians all your lives. Many of you have seldom missed the Sunday service. You pray, you read the Bible and you believe in Christ. But no faith. What did Jesus actually try to mean by 'no faith'. One commentary put Jesus' words in this way, "Why are you so afraid? How is it that you didn't have the faith when you needed it?" How is it that you didn't have the faith when you needed it? The issue for people of faith is this: Do we have faith that God is active and present in this specific event in our lives. We know God is around but do we actually believe that God is active and present in our specific, particular time and space and event. The point is this: Yes, the disciples went through the hardship of being in the middle of unexpected storm. That was a fact but the other side of the fact was... they did not face the storm alone. Jesus was there with them. We face the storms but we don't face the storm alone. We need to have faith when we

actually need it. The disciples failed this and as a result they thought they were facing the storm all alone.

There are lots of storms in our lives still as Christians. Totally unexpected storms like grim medical news, a financial reversal, the collapse of a relationship, the death of a dream, the lack of meaning of life. And we will continue to experience storms like these in the future. How will you get through these storms as a Christian? By faith? Or out of fear? Remember, we can still as Christians to be fearful – full of fear – or faithful – full of faith. Experts in stress management say that only 2 % of our "worrying time" is spent on things that might actually be helped by worrying. The other 98% of our "worrying time" is spent for nothing as follows:

40% is spent worrying about things that never happen

35% is spent worrying about things that can not be changed

15% is spent worrying about things that turn out better than expected

8% is spent worrying about things that are so insignificant that they don't matter at all.

Some of us come here today with a storm raging in our life. Others come knowing friends or loved ones who have a storm raging, whether that be a health problem, a marital problem, an addiction problem or even the storm of an imminent death. We must remember that we are not alone in the boat. Jesus is in the boat with us. Dear friends in Christ, let us go forth this morning with this good news, God is active and present in our lives, and God is in control. And we must remember that we need to choose faith, not fear. Amen.

HYMN: I will sing the wondrous story TiS 233

I will sing the wondrous story
of the Christ who died for me,
how He left His home in glory
for the cross of Calvary.

(Refrain)

*Yes I'll sing the wondrous story
of the Christ who died for me,
sing it with his saints in glory
gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost: but Jesus found me,
found the sheep that went astray,
raised me up and gently led me
back into the narrow way.

(Refrain)

Faint was I, and fears possessed me,
bruised was I from many a fall,
hope was gone, and shame distressed me:
but his love has pardoned all.

(Refrain)

Days of darkness still may meet me,
sorrow's paths I oft may tread,
but his presence still is with me,
by his guiding hand I'm led.

(Refrain)

He will keep me till the river
rolls its waters at my feet:
then he'll bear me safely over,
where the loved ones I shall meet.

(Refrain)

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COMMISSIONING SERVICE (Elders/Church Councillors)

1 SENTENCES

There are diverse gifts;

but it is the same Spirit who gives them.

There are different ways of serving God:

but it is the same Lord who is served.

God works through people in different ways:

but it is the same God

whose purpose is achieved through them all.

Each one of us is given a gift by the Spirit:

and there is no gift without its corresponding service.

There is one ministry of Christ:

and in this ministry we all share.

Together we are the body of Christ:

and individually members of it.

2 PRESENTATION

The minister addresses the people:

The Uniting Church provides for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them for the building up of the Church.

Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are now to commission as elders / church councillors those whom we have elected to this ministry.

I present the following persons to be commissioned or recommissioned as elders / church councillors:

Elders: Richard Goodman, Bobbie Miller.

Church Councillor: Robert McAlpine, Dinah Roepers.

**The minister reads the names of the candidates.
The candidates stand together facing the congregation
and the Minister addresses them:**

Brothers and sisters,
the congregation has elected you to serve as elders / church councillors.
The church council shall give priority in its life to building up the congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.

**If there are elders to be commissioned/recommissioned,
the following statement shall be included:**

The ministry of elder is one of spiritual oversight, and may also be exercised in pastoral visitation, teaching, encouraging members of the congregation to share in mission, and assisting the minister in leadership of worship and administration of the sacraments.

**Where the elders are to be members of the church council,
the following should be included:**

Elders who serve on the church council have a particular responsibility to ensure that such matters have priority in the work of the church council.

3 THE VOWS

The minister asks the candidates:

Do you confess anew Jesus Christ as Lord?

I do.

Do you believe that you are called by God through the Church to this ministry?

I do.

Being guided by the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia, will you live and work within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church?

With God's help I will.

Relying on God's grace, do you promise to carry out the duties of your office?

I do.

The people stand. The minister says:

Will you, the members of this congregation,
accept these brothers and sisters as church councillors?

We will.

Will you encourage them in love and support them in their ministry,
serving with them the one Lord Jesus Christ?

We will.

May God give you strength to fulfil these vows,
and to him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus
from generation to generation for ever.

Amen.

The people sit.

4 ACT OF COMMISSIONING

The minister says:

Beloved in Christ,
let us pray in silence for these people
before we commission them for the work
to which we believe the Holy Spirit has called them.

After a time of silence, the minister says:

Almighty God,

we thank you that in every age you have chosen leaders
to serve and care for your people.
We thank you that you have called these brothers and sisters,
our new elected elders / church councillors to serve you.

May those you have chosen
have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus
and be faithful disciples,
giving example to Christ's flock
and witnessing to the truth of the gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**The minister lays hands on the head of each candidate
in turn, and the minister says:**

God of grace,
through the Holy Spirit
empower your servants
Richard Goodman, Bobbie Miller,
Robert McAlpine, Dinah Roepers.

The people respond:

Amen.

5 DECLARATION

The minister says:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
I declare you to be elders / church councillors
of the Uniting Church in Australia
in the Kogarah Congregation.

The people may applaud.

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

We dedicate these gifts and our lives to you, O God,
in thanksgiving for your great gift of Jesus
in whom we know an inner peace
which is beyond our human understanding.

Strengthen and empower us with the Holy Spirit
to be bearers of this peace wherever we go.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Jesus, don't you see?
The waves are rising all around us;
The winds are shaking us about.

Speak to the storms of our day day-to-day –
The stress of making of making ends meet,
the deadlines, the expectations;
the ways we're all trying to show up with the care required
in our close relationships, and in our work,
and with looking after our bodies,
and all those things that make life both demanding and meaningful.

***O God of wind and God of wave,
God of peace, come make us brave.***

Speak to the storms of our bodies, our emotions, and our minds –
Be with those who are grappling with diagnoses, disorientation and decline.
Be with those doing the hard work of recovery.
Be a power greater than ourselves that gives hope, strength, and comfort.

***O God of wind and God of wave,
God of peace, come make us brave.***

Speak to the storms that sweep across our political systems
and the storms that rage between nations –
Bring peace, Lord Jesus! Bring healing! Bring hope!

***O God of wind and God of wave,
God of peace, come make us brave.***

(Silence)

We remember Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya, Jim and Bobbie, Craig, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia, John and Sue and especially John's mother and father; Peter and Sue; Dinah; the family of Dennis Gates in their grief; Pat Nankivell and her family, and all others who are not well.

Please grant them your healing power, intensive care,

peace of heart, and faithful hope. 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

Come, all you who thirst,
all you who hunger for the bread of life,
all you whose souls cry out for healing;
Come, come to the feast of life.

The Table of Jesus is our place of gathering;
here we are welcomed, wanted, loved,
here there is a place set for us;
Let us come to the feast of life.

COMMUNION HYMN: You are holy TiS 753

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

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

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.

Blessing and praise belong to you, gracious and eternal God.

Through your living Word you created all things,

the majesty of the heavens and the glory of the earth.

In your wisdom and goodness you have made all people
in your image and likeness.

Therefore, with saints and angels

and with all creation

we lift up our voices

to proclaim the glory of your name:

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.

Holy and gracious God,

we give you thanks and praise

that in the fullness of time

you gave your only Son

to share our human nature

and to be tempted in every way as we are,

yet without sin;

to set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem

and to be lifted high upon the cross,

that he might draw all creation to himself.

When the hour of his glory came,

and loving his own to the end,

he sat with them at supper,

took bread and, after giving thanks to you,

he 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.

***Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.***

In obedience to his command
we recall his suffering and death,
his resurrection and ascension,
and we look for his coming in glory.
Send your Holy Spirit
that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
In union with Christ’s offering for us,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice.
Unite us in love and peace with your people
until, with the whole company of heaven,
we are brought into the presence of your eternal glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***Through him, with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
almighty God, 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

God of glory, you nourish us with the bread of life
and the cup of salvation.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit,
that through us the light of your glory
may shine in all the world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God

HYMN: It is well with my soul

When peace, like a river, attends all my way,
when sorrows like sea-billows roll,
whatever my path, you have taught me to say,
'It is well, it is well with my soul.'

(Refrain)

*'It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.'*

Though Satan may buffet, though trials may come,
let this calm assurance control:
that Christ knows my need and my helplessness here
and has shed his own blood for my soul.

(Refrain)

The joy, O the joy of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

(Refrain)

For me it is Christ, it is Christ now to live!
Though death's waters over me roll,
no fear shall be mine, for in death as in life
you will whisper your peace to my soul.
(Refrain)

But, Lord, for your coming in glory we wait;
the sky, not the grave, is our goal;
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend:
bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul!
(Refrain)

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BLESSING

Go into the world
blessed with the holiness of God,
clothed with the humility of Jesus Christ,
united in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

SENDING SONG: May You Find Peace Seasons 7-26

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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