

Communities of Trust and Hope

7th July 2024 @ Kogarah UC @ 10am

Welcome

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that this land is God's land, and God's Spirit dwells here. We pay our respects to the elders, past, present and emerging of the Bidjegal people 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
Lighting the Christ Candle

Saying who we are

We are a congregation and 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.**

Lighting the Christ Candle
(點燃基督蠟燭)

God is here!
God is always here!
God is with Us!
God is always with us!

Call to Worship
Come in faith and humility
as an open community,
accepting each other
in our diversity,
for we all have strengths and weaknesses.
Come thanking God.

John Howell. Used by permission.

Opening Prayer

Christ, you knew:
the subtle put down,
 (he was born the wrong side of the track)
the cowardly gossip,
 (callous whispers behind your back)
the degrading innuendo,
 (he's after your job, he's a hack)
the insidious rebuff,
 (whatever you do will be slack)
and you watched the fear and unbelief.

When we experience rejection,
may we simply be ourselves,
and go about living the good news.
May we encourage each other,
to hold the grace that will triumph,
and the life that conquers death. Amen.

John Howell. Used by permission.

Sing: *For everyone born a place at the table* Shirley E. Murray

<https://youtu.be/akF3oWZoIXE?si=qzDleTUfyLAMdgr3>

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,

for young and for old, the right to belong,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

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Prayer of Confession

Home is where the heart is.

But also sometimes the shame,
and those old stories that keep us small.

We're sorry, God, for the ways we fail to honour the sacred dignity of
others.

We're sorry for all the times we've made people feel like they don't belong.

We're sorry for the possibilities we have limited.

Words of Grace

Jesus shows us how to shake the dust,
to let go of the things that will weigh us down for the journey ahead.
You do not have to carry your sins, your failures, your regrets,
they are forgiven.

So, shake the dust,
embrace your forgiveness,
embrace the creative new possibilities that are now opening up for you.
Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God, amen.

Sing: *Here Stands A Stranger, Who Is She?*" (Tune: 'Saffron Walden', 88.86) Andrew Pratt (TiS 584 (i) or (ii))

**Here stands a stranger, who is she?
We do not know. What do we see,
someone who threatens you and me?
Is she a foe, or friend?**

**Here stands a person, young or old,
seeking asylum, so we're told.
How does he fit your frame or mould?
Is he your foe or friend?**

**Here stands a child: assess her need.
What should we offer so we heed
her cry of hunger, so we feed
this child? This foe? This friend?**

**Here stands a person, this time, you.
The choice is yours. What will you do
to ask this stranger in, or sue
this foe, who could be friend?**

**Here is a mirror, see your face.
What do you offer; hatred, grace,
now in this very time and place,
to Christ you call your friend. (Andrew Pratt/ssb)**

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ENGAGING THE WORD

Scripture

A Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

2 Samuel 5:1–5, 9–10

5Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, “Look, we are your bone and flesh. 2For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.” 3So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

9David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. 10And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

Sing: *God of Abraham lead us*

<https://youtu.be/SwG4rRaed0M?si=NhwOkENGIv4nxLK0>

**God of Abraham, lead us,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into fruitfulness, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of Moses and Aaron,
lead us to your kingdom.
Out of slavery, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of Samuel, lead us,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into listening, lead us,
*Lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of Jesus Christ, lead us,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into your new creation, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**Guiding light for our journey,
lead us to your kingdom.
Out of shadows and darkness,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**By the waters of healing,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into life everlasting,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of all living people,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into unity, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of ev'ry race lead us,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into harmony, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**God of humankind lead us,
lead us to your kingdom.
Into harmony, lead us,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

**Lead us now and for ever
lead us to your kingdom.
Give us now a new future,
*lead us together, lead us to freedom.***

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Readings from the Christian Scriptures

2 Corinthians 12:2–10

2I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— 4was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1–13

6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. 4 Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house.” 5 And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. 6 And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. 7 He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, 9 but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. 10 He said to them, “Wherever you

enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

RESPONDING

Offering

The Creator invites us to live in a world of trust and connectedness. Let's participate in this now as we bring our offering.

After:

**Creator God, extend your generosity and care into all the world.
Amen.**

Choir: I surrender

Reflection

Mark 6:1–13

One of the greatest desires that any of us have is the need to be loved, accepted and needed. It's because we were created in love, to be loved and to share love, to share that love with God, with ourselves, with other humans and with all of creation. In light of that, one of the greatest fears that any of us humans can experience or face is the fear of rejection. Rejection is one of the most difficult things that any of us can experience in this life. And yet, rejection is something that we have all experienced and will experience in the future. Rejection is sadly a part of the human experience. It begins in our childhood. We get laughed at or ridiculed. We're not chosen by this certain team or that group. We're not invited to go to this party or this social event. The truth is we all have to face the possibility of rejection throughout the rest of our lives.

Mark tells us that Jesus has gone home for a little period of time. On the Sabbath Jesus goes to the local synagogue and begins to teach. Many people from all over had gathered together to hear him. They had heard the news of what he had been doing, his teaching, his healing people, casting out demons and even stilling the storm was big news. Who wouldn't be drawn to hear Jesus?

Everyone was amazed. It seemed like everything was going well and then suddenly the tables were turned. What started off well ended up being a time of denial and rejection. The town turned on Jesus. They rejected him and began questioning his identity, his worth and his abilities. They began to wonder how in the world this little boy that they had seen walk around their town could do all the things that he could do. After all, he was just a carpenter a few months ago. He was one of their local handymen. We see the same thing happening to the disciples in the story that follows this one (verses 7 - 13). Jesus had given his disciples the power to cast out demons and to bring healing to those who desired it. He had given them a message of salvation to share with those who would listen. And yet, like Jesus they face rejection after rejection. They faced towns and places that even though they have the power to heal, to put down evil and to share the Good News, the people rejected them.

No matter what you do or what you say or even how nice you are there are some people who will reject you. Some people will never accept you or want to be in your presence. They don't want to talk to you, have a cup of coffee with you or listen to what you have to say. They don't want to hear you talk about Jesus, about your family or yourself. They don't want anything to do with you, simply reject you. Wow! Really? Yes! Really!

Last Wednesday, I went to Brighton Le Sands to have a cup of coffee with Elin after lunch. As I pressed the signal button and waited at the crosswalk to cross the road, a woman came up and stood next to me. Then she kept pressing the signal button, looked at us with an unpleasant expression, and mumbled loud enough to be heard, "You have to press the button, the button..." The traffic light turned green and she kept following us and said, "Speak English! Speak English!" Then, when there was no response, she said "stupid..." I couldn't believe this. I stopped walking and looked at that person for a moment. What happened after that is up to your imagination. I think you can imagine what kind of feeling I had in that situation.

**Why did she do that to us?
Was there something wrong with us?
What was wrong with her?
Was she out of her minds?**

Why? That's the question that sometimes just bugs us. We don't like it when we are rejected. We want to know why? Jesus faced rejection. Not just once but many times in his life. His disciples even though they came in the power of the Holy Spirit faced rejection. But why? But a great deal of the time there is not something wrong with us as was in the case of Jesus and his disciples. When we are not at fault or there is nothing wrong with our message then: we have to learn how to brush it off and if necessary, walk away. Jesus tells us that we must brush it off.

Rejection can cause us to stop living. It can stop us from enjoying life. It can stop us from fulfilling our dreams and enjoying life. If we keep rehearsing all the times we have been rejection by this person, that person, this group or that group then we will allow our rejections to hold us hostage. That is why Jesus and his disciples walked away. They didn't get into an argument. They didn't get into a long-term battle. Jesus knew that in some situations that the best thing we can do is for us to walk away or to allow other people to walk away. Of course, we get angry when we are rejected. It hurts our pride. It wounds our souls. But if we are going to grow as people and as a people of God, we have to know when to brush ourselves off and walk away. Not in anger, not in a spirit of bitterness but with our heads knowing that we have done our best and been faithful to our task.

One more thing that Jesus tells us this morning is, we have to learn how to keep going - keep sharing - keep loving - keep reaching out. Mark tells us that Jesus and his disciples didn't quit when they faced rejection. Verses five and thirteen tells us that both Jesus and his disciple experienced some amazing victories. They may not have been as many as they wanted but the truth was there were men, women, boys and girls that were saved, redeemed and made whole. People were transformed and brought out of darkness into light. We also have to understand that not every rejection is a total rejection. Sometimes the seed is sown and the Holy Spirit uses it in another season. Sometimes all we are to do is to sow that seed.

One of the greatest photographers in Korea is Jungjin Lee. He loves taking pictures of the Earth and all its creatures. He has enjoyed teaching his technique to thousands of people, writing numerous articles. He owes his success to determination and perseverance. Over his life time he has taken hundreds of thousands of photos. In a recent interview, he reported that on an

average shoot he takes somewhere around 4,000 different shots. 4,000! A long time ago, he began to realize that more than 99% of them would be rejected either by him or by his publishers. In some cases, only 1 or 2 at the most will be accepted. 4,000 pictures taken but 3,998 of them rejected. Think about that for a moment. All of those pictures were taken with great care but only 1 or 2 accepted. Even though he knows that over 99% of the pictures he takes will be rejected, he still takes picture after picture after picture. Why? Because the fact is, one or two or even at times a whole slew of them will be accepted, printed in a magazine and the whole world will get the opportunity to enjoy what he has seen. For Jungjin, it is all worth it. It is worth all the effort, all the pictures being taken and yes, even all the rejection that he has to face. He knows what it means to be steadfast, determined and have perseverance. The key is that we have got to keep on going. We have got to learn how to brush it off and get up and go again. We have got to put everything into its proper perspective and continue to share the message of Jesus.

A closing story brings this truth alive in our lives. Six -year-old Brandon decided one Saturday morning to fix his parents pancakes. He found a big bowl and spoon, pulled a chair to the counter, opened the cupboard and pulled out the heavy flour container, spilling it on the floor. He scooped some of the flour into the bowl with his hands, mixed in most of a cup of milk and added some sugar, leaving a floury trail on the floor which by now had a few tracks left by his kitten. Brandon was covered with flour and getting frustrated. He wanted this to be something very good for Mom and Dad, but it was getting very bad. He didn't know what to do next, whether to put it all into the oven or on the stove and he didn't know how the stove worked! Suddenly he saw his kitten licking from the bowl of mix and reached to push her away, knocking the egg carton to the floor. Frantically he tried to clean up this massive mess but slipped on the eggs, getting his pyjamas white and sticky. And just then he saw Dad standing at the door big crocodile tears welled up in Brandon's eyes. All he had wanted to do was something good, but he had made a terrible mess. He was sure a scolding was coming, maybe even a smacking. But his father just watched him. Then, walking through the mess, he picked up his crying son, hugged him and loved him, getting his own pyjamas white and sticky in the process!

That's how God deals with us. We try to share the Good News, but sometimes people reject us. We try to do something good in life, but it turns into a mess. Sometimes we just stand there in tears because we can't think of anything else to do. That's when God picks us up and loves us, even though some of our mess gets all over him. But just because we might mess up, we can't stop trying to "make pancakes" for God or for others. Sooner or later, we'll get it right, and then they'll be glad we tried... Let's keep making pancakes together. Amen.

Announcements

Prayers for Others

Brother, Teacher, Healer, Jesus,
Change the story in all those places where shame calls the shots,
Change the atmosphere anywhere fear and disconnection limit possibilities.
Bring courage and imagination to human lives -
to our lives,
to our faith community,
to the lives of our neighbours and communities,
to our nation and beyond.

We pray for all of those trapped in stories that keep us small.

A silence is kept.

We pray for the sick.

A silence is kept.

We pray for those in difficult circumstances at this time.

A silence is kept.

Help us to hang in there with serving
and trusting you, Lord Jesus.
Remind us of our sacred dignity that remains
no matter the welcome we receive.
And help us to remember the sacred dignity of another –
no matter how they might have treated us.
Help us to hold the truth that we are all bound together,
all connected, all invited to eat at the same table,

all the better for the great movement beyond self-sufficiency
into a world of trust and connectedness.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done. Amen.

**Sing: *Summoned by the God who made us* Sisters of St benedict
(Tune: TiS 392) <https://youtu.be/9q1-G UHSHo?si=Bs2HeH24eq0gPwfy>**

**Summoned by the God who made us,
rich in our diversity,
gathered in the name of Jesus,
richer still in unity:**

**Let us bring the gifts that differ
and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being,
one of faith and love and praise**

**Radiant risen from the water;
robed in holiness and light,
male and female in God's image,
male and female God's delight:**

**Let us bring the gifts that differ
and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being,
one of faith and love and praise**

**Trust the goodness of creation;
trust the Spirit strong within.**

**Dare to dream the vision promised,
sprung from seed of what has been.
Let us bring the gifts that differ
and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being,
one of faith and love and praise**

**Bring the hopes of every nation;
bring the art of every race.
Weave a song of peace and justice:
let it sound through time and space.
Let us bring the gifts that differ
and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being,
one of faith and love and praise**

**Draw together at one table
all the human family;
shape a circle ever wider
and a people ever free.
Let us bring the gifts that differ
and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being,
one of faith and love and praise**

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SENDING OUT

Blessing/Benediction

God is summoning an alternative community of hope
So come, take your place,
Know that hope deep in your being
and carry it with you wherever you go.
Let go of all the unnecessary baggage
that will only weigh you down,
and remain with those who welcome you,
who welcome hope,
who welcome the beautiful things God is doing.
May God be your endless possibility
in the midst of your everyday humanity.
May we go
with the enfolding of God
who fashioned us for peace
the encompassing of Christ
who goes with us
in love
the encircling of the Spirit
who ever seeks
to make us one.
Amen.

Exit Song: *You are called to tell the story*, (Tune: TiS 134)

https://youtu.be/hliQDCwpMsY?si=xuOrUa5pAXgx2Y_F

**You are called to tell the story,
passing words of life along,
then to blend your voice with others
as you sing the sacred song.
Christ be known in all our singing,**

filling all with songs of love.

**You are called to teach the rhythm
of the dance that never ends,
then to move within the circle,
hand in hand with strangers, friends.
Christ be known in all our dancing,
touching all with hands of love.**

**You are called to set the table,
blessing bread as Jesus blest,
then to come with thirst and hunger,
needing care like all the rest.
Christ be known in all our sharing,
feeding all with signs of love.**

**May the One whose love is broader
than the measure of all space
give us words to sing the story,
move among us in this place.
Christ be known in all our living,
filling all with gifts of love.**

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