

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH
27 October 2024
23rd 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:

As we gather together in this time and place, let us acknowledge the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation who have gathered, baked bread, shared food, nourished each other in story and song for thousands of years. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, who have handed down stories, songs and wisdom. Let us learn from the First Peoples of this land, listening to their innate knowledge of how to live in this land in harmony with all living things.

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

We come to praise our God.
We bless God, who walks with us.
God surrounds us in all our senses:
taste and see that God is good!
We come to praise our God.
O God, we worship you!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and all merciful God,
we give thanks to you today for your compassion and your love.
We proclaim your goodness and your strength
and we call upon you in praise and thanksgiving.
Bless us and bless your people everywhere this day with your holy presence.

Oh, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer – be with us now
and help us offer to you the true worship of your kingdom.
We ask it in Jesus's name. Amen

HYMN: Praise to the Lord TiS 111 (Verses 1, 2, 3 and 5)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation.
Come all who hear,
brothers and sisters draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord who in all things is wondrously reigning
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining:
have you not seen
all that is needed has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:
ponder anew
what the Almighty can do
as with his love he befriends us.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen
sound from his people again:
gladly for ever adore him.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(based on Psalm 51)*

Merciful God,
you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you.
We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy.
***We have not loved you with a pure heart,
nor have we loved our neighbour as ourselves.
We have not done justice, loved kindness,
or walked humbly with you, our God.***
Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.
In your great compassion,
cleanse us from our sin.

(Together)
***Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Do not cast us from your presence,
or take your Holy Spirit from us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

God knows our weakness and remembers our human frailty.
For this reason, Christ Jesus came into the world
that our sinful condition might be healed
and our relationship with God restored.

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: Change my heart All together 354

Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true:
change my heart, Oh God, may I be like you. (X2)

*You are the potter, I am the clay;
mould me and make me, this is what I pray.*

Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true:
change my heart, Oh God, may I be like you. (X2)

*You are the potter, I am the clay;
mould me and make me, this is what I pray.*

Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true:
change my heart, Oh God, may I be like you. (X2)

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The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Job 42: 10-17

10 And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends, and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. 12 The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. 13 He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15 In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years and saw his children and his children's children, four generations. 17 And Job died, old and full of days.

Mark 10: 46-52

46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

REFLECTION

This morning, we hear the story of a man who is blind. His name is Bartimaeus. He is sitting by the roadside on the way up to Jerusalem - begging. Indeed, as a blind man that is likely all that he can do. Without his sight, he, like most blind people of his day - and indeed ours, is cut off from the normal transactions of daily life. He can't see the sun rise, he can't support himself by the labour of his hands, he can't see the expressions on the faces of his parents or his brothers and sisters or anyone else. He dwells in darkness. He is cut off, isolated - and for the most part he is regarded as a burden by all - by his family and by society. A burden - nothing more - and nothing less. One day, as he sits by the side of the road begging, he is aware that a large crowd is approaching - and he hears that Jesus is approaching. He heard about Jesus. He heard about his miracles. He knew that he is a healer. He knew that he has power. So he cries out - he cries out loudly so that he may be heard, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me", and again and again -- "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me".

Despite being rebuked by those around him, Bartimaeus does not waver; he shouts even louder, desperate for the healing he knows Jesus can provide. We know how the rest of the story goes. Jesus stops and says to those near to him, "Call him." And they do. And Bartimaeus throws his coat away and jumps to his feet and comes to Jesus. Jesus asks him "What do you want me to do for you?" He replies, "Rabbi, I want to see." And Jesus has mercy on him and says "Go, your faith has healed you." Instantly, Bartimaeus regains his sight and chooses to follow Jesus, becoming a disciple instead of seeking merely a new life for himself.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." A prayer of desperation - and a prayer of faith. This is a meditation - and a prayer - for millions upon millions of people a

prayer expressed for over 20 centuries - a prayer that is part of my life and which may well be - or should be – a part of your life.

“Lord, have mercy on me.”

My life is out of control. All that I love - has been taken from me. I have lost my job, my family, my health, I grieve and I see no light in front of me I dwell in darkness.

“Lord, have mercy on me.”

There was a young man who wanted a job as a signalman at his local train station. For his interview, he was told to meet the inspector at the signal box. The inspector asked him, "What would you do if you realized that two trains were heading toward each other on the same track?" The young man answered, "That's easy. I would switch the points for one of the trains." "The inspector then asked, "What if the lever broke?" The young man said, "Then I'd jump down out of the signal box and use the manual lever over there." The inspector asked again, "What if the manual lever had been broken down?" The young man said, "Then, I would run to the signal box and phone the next signal box to let them know what was happening." The inspector continued on, "What if the phone was out of order?" The young man said, "Oh, well, in that case, I would run into town and get my uncle." That answer puzzled the inspector. So, he asked, "Why would you go get your uncle?" The young man answered, "That's simple. Because he's never seen a train crash before."

Too many people today feel that their life is headed toward a crash. Their life feels like two trains headed directly toward each other and there is really nothing they can do about it. For many people today, a crash seems inevitable, whatever it is. For many people, including us this morning, life seems to have come unglued and untracked. They feel as if they are 'partly on track' and 'partly off track'. Life is full of challenges—problems that seem to multiply endlessly. In our moments of frustration, we too need to cry out, just as Bartimaeus did: “Lord, have mercy on me. Change my life, O Lord.” Jesus changed Bartimaeus and he touched his life, his old life, the life with full of sufferings and problems. And Jesus gave him a new life, the life he can enjoy so much.

A man in his twenties wanted to change the world. So he prayed to God, “Lord, give me the power to change the world.” As he turned thirty, he came to realise that he couldn't change the world. So he changed his prayer into, “Lord, give me the power to change my country.” Time passed and he still realised he couldn't change his country. So he began to pray, “Lord, give me the power to change my town. He became middle aged but realised his prayer wouldn't be answered. So he changed his prayer, “Lord, give me the power to change my family.” As time went and he became older and older, however, he learned he couldn't change his own family at all. Now he was very old and weak. One day he was reflecting on his life and realised

that he couldn't change anything, even his own children. It's like his whole life is a total failure. So he stopped praying. Instead, he came to Lord, asking a humble request, "Lord, you know I have lived my whole life as your child, trying to do everything to change the world, the society, the friends, and my wife and my children. But Lord I've realised now I failed everything. Lord, for the last time, allow me to make this request of you. Change me, Lord, change me." He continued to get older and weaker but he continued to change. Soon he realised that his family began to change with him. And his society. Probably his country, too. Our Christian faith never promises us a rose garden. We pray, cry, yell and shout but we soon realise our lives are full of problems. So we are confused and taken aback and try everything to sort it out but there is always another problem, problem, problem. When we pray to God, or when we come to Lord, or when we live our lives as parent, husband, wife, when we live our normal life, we need to see what the real problem is. We need to learn to pray. We need to learn to cry out. Lord, have mercy on me.

In the Book of Job, we see a righteous man who faced unimaginable loss and suffering yet refused to curse God. In the conclusion of this story, we hear that Job repents of his attitude - the attitude that questions the goodness of God towards him, saying to God, "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I repent in dust and ashes." "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner". Job repents and receives from God a new life, a new life with a new blessings - children, land, a wife, wealth, and length of days in which to enjoy them.

As I stand before you today, I urge you to embrace the humility of Bartimaeus and the repentance of Job. This prayer, so simple yet so profound, invites us to lay our burdens before God. I cannot guarantee that this prayer will magically restore your health or bring back lost opportunities. But I can promise you this: it will lead you to a new life—one that is filled with hope and purpose. Just as Bartimaeus received his sight and chose to follow Jesus, and Job received a new beginning, we too can experience transformation through prayer. What will we do? We who are hurting? We who like Job, may be angry at God? We who like Bartimaeus may be suffering an affliction? All I can say is this: pray. Pray with Bartimaeus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Pray with all those around the world who seek God's mercy, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Pray it again and again, and God will answer. He will touch your life, change your circumstances, and grant you a new beginning. Amen.

HYMN: Beauty for brokenness TiS 690

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord in the suffering, this is our prayer,
bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,

sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.

Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

(Refrain)

*God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.

(Refrain)

Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.

(Refrain)

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OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, We come before you with thankful hearts,
recognizing that all we have comes from your generous hands.
As we present our offerings today,
we dedicate them to your service and the work of your kingdom.
May these gifts be used to bring hope and healing to those in need,
to share your love, and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.
Bless both the gift and the giver,
and help us to be good stewards of all that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Lord, hear my praying, listen to me;
you know there's evil in what I see.
I know I'm part of all that is wrong:
still, won't you hear my sorrowing song?

Children are crying, hungry for food,
sick from diseases — God, are you good?
People are homeless, lost and alone:
God, are you hiding? Where have you gone?

Why do the rich ones steal from the poor?
Why do they build their weapons of war?
How can you stand the torture and pain,
hope disappearing, freedom in chains?

Jesus, remind us that you are found
with those who cry, with those who are bound;
where there is suffering, you will be there -
help us to follow: Lord, hear my prayer.

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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

Let us draw near to the holy table.
This is the table our Lord has prepared for those who love him.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life;
Those who come to me shall not hunger,
and those who believe in me shall never thirst."

Behold, I stand at the door and knock;
if those who hear my voice open the door,
I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me.

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 share 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.

The Communion

Prayer after Communion

Loving God, We thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who nourishes us with his body and blood.

We are grateful for this sacred meal that strengthens our faith
and unites us as one body in him.

As we leave this place,

may we carry the love and grace we have received into our lives.

Help us to serve others, to be a light in the darkness,

and to share your love with those around us.

In moments of challenge and struggle,

remind us of the hope and strength found in you.

Guide us to seek you in all things and to live as faithful disciples. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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HYMN: Make me a channel of your peace TiS 607

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred let me bring your love;

where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

(Refrain)

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

(Refrain)

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

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BLESSING

Let us go out as faithful followers of Jesus,
to walk as he walked, the path of humble service.
May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by 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. 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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