

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH 5/7/2025

Order of service

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

Draw in, all you who are weary.

Come near, you who are sad or lonely.

Let us dwell in this holy place and lift our eyes above.

Let us spend time together worshipping and praising God.

In this time, may you feel the love and comfort of God's love flow through you,
may you know peace and assurance.

God of love, mercy, and grace,

be with us today as we join in your song,

hear us today as we lift our prayers.

Let us worship you, God and giver of life,

in what we say, think, and do.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God,

we bring before you the times we have hurt one another and ourselves.

We are sorry for our part in broken relationships,

we are sorry for times when we haven't honoured boundaries,

Gracious God,

we bring before you the times we have hurt one another and ourselves.

We are sorry for our part in broken relationships,

we are sorry for times when we haven't honoured boundaries,

we are sorry for all that we take for granted.

Hear us as we pray.

Merciful God,

forgive us for times we doubt your love.

Forgive us for the ways we pour so much energy into defending, protecting, and proving
ourselves,

in place of receiving, accepting,

and participating in your very life.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Words of Grace

The beautiful thing about grace

is that it remains grace all the way—

always available whenever we are ready to receive it.

This is true of God's gift of freedom.
Brothers and sisters, you are forgiven!
Thanks be to God!

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Loving God,
hear us as we pray.
For all that we have, **we are grateful.**
For the times that our needs have been met, **we say thank you.**
For the way you hold our future, **we give thanks.**

Merciful God,
hear us as we pray.
For loving us through our struggles, **we are grateful.**
For uplifting us through friends and family, **we say thank you.**
For your promise to watch over us, **we give thanks.**

Gracious God,
hear us as we pray.
For your concern for all the world, **we are grateful.**
For walking with us day by day, hour by hour, **we say thank you.**
For your ever-loving presence, **we give thanks.**
Amen.

LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE God is here.....God is with us

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES

As we meet for worship today, we acknowledge the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of this land since time immemorial.. We pay our respects to their elders – past, present and emerging, and we commit to walking towards truth, treaty and reconciliation, acknowledging that sovereignty was never ceded

SAYING WHO WE ARE

Our vision is to be a loving and caring community, sharing God's love with the world. We are a congregation who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles. We are creating a safe place for community and sharing the journey of life and faith.

SING Sing Praise and Thanksgiving TIS/107

Sing praise and thanksgiving, let all creatures living
now worship their maker with gladness and song;
all glory and honour we come to him bringing:
O praise to the Almighty, sing praise to our God!

Our lives of his making he brings to their waking;
in darkness he held us in his gracious care,
now into the light we are called from our sleeping:
O praise to the Almighty, sing praise to our God!

Lord, frame our desiring to do your requiring,
that unto your glory be all that we do;
and where we have faltered, give strength and give healing:
O praise to the Almighty, sing praise to our God!

PD: text, Paul Gerhardt et al

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PEACE

SING Comfort, Comfort all my people TIS/647

Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.
Speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.

Though your tears be rivers running,
though your tears be an ocean full,
though you cry with the hurt of living:
comfort, comfort.
Every valley shall be lifted,
every mountain shall be low,
every rough place will be smoother:
comfort, comfort.

Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.
Speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.

Though your eyes see only darkness,
though your eyes can see no light,
though your eyes see pain and sorrow:
comfort, comfort.
sEvery night will have its morning,
every pain will have an end,
every burden will be lightened:
comfort, comfort.

Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.

Speak it tender to my people:
all your sins are taken away.

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HEWBREW SCRIPTURES

2 Kings 5: 1-14;

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. ²Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁴So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵And the king of Aram said, "Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel." He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. ⁶He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy." ⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me." ⁸But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. ¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." ¹¹But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! ¹²Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage. ¹³But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean'?" ¹⁴So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

PSALM 30

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."

By your favour, O LORD, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O LORD, I cried, and to the LORD I made supplication:

"What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?

Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me! O LORD, be my helper!"

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES Luke 10: 1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

REFLECTION

2 Kings 5:1-14; Luke 10:1-11

I'm not sure how many of you follow golf, but if you do, you were probably thrilled a couple of weeks ago when one of Australia's own, Minjee Lee, won her third major championship. I was certainly thrilled, and I was incredibly proud. After watching her incredible swing, I tried and copied it. 'If only I could swing it like that!' I thought. But I'm sure you can relate to this..... Even though the ball is just sitting there, perfectly still, why.... is it so hard to hit it properly? In my head, I have all the knowledge and the perfect swing form pictured..... 'Okay, this time, relax the shoulders, grip it softly like you're holding a small bird, and then... one, two, three... just find the rhythm..... Nice and smooth, like butter!' In my head, I'm basically a pro. But the moment.... I look down at the ball, the desire to hit itas far asI possibly can takes over, and my whole body tenses up. And then, without fail,..... one of the more experienced players will wander over and say those famous words: "Mate, relax!!!. You'll get more distance if you relax." I know... I

understand it perfectly in my head..... But when I'm actually standing over the ball, I just have that "This is the one!" But the result? Always the same. The ball is often discovered somewhere deep in the bush, in a place that has absolutely nothing to do with the nice, green fairway I was aiming for. So I watch all the YouTube videos, I study everything...dig into the theory at almost a PhD level. But strangely, the more my golf knowledge grows, the worse my score seems to get. I think..... I'm at the point.... where I need a radical intervention.!!

And as I was thinking about this..... I see how much..... it mirrors our life of faith. We have the teachings of Jesus—the most perfect 'swing form' for life. We know the ideal ethics of 'love one another' and 'forgive your enemies.' We know the core truths of the Gospel so well: the 'Kingdom of God,' the 'love of the Cross,' and the 'hope of the Resurrection.' But the moment worship ends, after prayer, and we walk out the church doors, when we stand on the field of our actual lives, we so often find to our old habits and anxieties—a stiff, muscled swing—instead of the gentle swing of Jesus's teachings. So today's reflection is about this very point. How can the great truth we only know in our minds.... become a radical reality.... we live out with our hands and feet? Jesus' Disciples, Christians.....

Today, we're going to look at two stories from the Bible — one about a man named Naaman, and another about 72 people Jesus sent out. These stories show us a wonderful field training session. I would say.....they show us how God leads his people—who have the very same struggles as us—out of the classroom of faithand sends them into the field of life. Let me take you first to the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5. Naaman was a great man by many standards—a commander of the army of Aram, highly respected, victorious in battle, and close to the king. Yet despite all his success, he had a problem he couldn't solve: he had leprosy. A young servant girl from Israel, taken captive in war told Naaman's wife, "If only my master would see the prophet in Samaria, he would heal him." And that one simple sentence became the beginning of Naaman's healing journey. Naaman went to Israel, bringing with him silver, gold, fine clothes, and a letter from his king. He expected a prophet to meet him with pomp and ceremony. But when he finally got to Elisha's house, something strange happened: Elisha didn't even come to the door. Instead, he sent a message: "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and your flesh will be restored." Naaman is furious. The Jordan River is dirty. The instruction seems ridiculous. There's no honour, no ceremony, no show of power. Just a simple command: go and wash. Thankfully, Naaman had servants wise enough to speak truth to him: "If the prophet had told you to do something great, wouldn't you have done it? How much more then, when he says, 'Wash and be cleansed'?" Naaman humbles himself. He goes to the Jordan. He dipped not once, not twice, not three or even six times... but seven times. I wonder how he felt after the first time. Or the third. Or the sixth. Nothing seemed to change. But it was the seventh time—the complete obedience—that brought the healing. His skin becomes like that of a young boy. He is restored—not because of money or status, but because of simple, faithful obedience.

Now let's turn to the New Testament—to Luke 10. Jesus sends out seventy-two of his followers to go ahead of him into every town and village. These weren't the famous

disciples. These were everyday people, sent with a simple mission: "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

But notice how Jesus sends them. He gives them some very strange instructions: "Do not take a purse, or bag, or sandals." Let's pause and really think about that. They were going on a mission trip — to towns they had never been to, to meet people they didn't know. And Jesus is saying: "Don't take money. Don't pack a bag. Don't even bring an extra pair of shoes." Can you imagine? Does that make any sense at all, humanly speaking? You're about to go out into the world to preach the gospel, and Jesus says, "Don't take your wallet. Don't take a suitcase. Just go." It sounds so impractical — even reckless. But still, they went. And when they returned, they were amazed: "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!" Why? Because they obeyed. They didn't wait until they understood everything. They didn't wait until they felt strong enough. They simply went where Jesus sent them—and God's power followed their obedience.

Here's the key truth we need to hear today: God's power isn't released through performance — it's released through obedience. Naaman almost missed his healing because the instruction didn't match his expectation. The seventy-two could have said, "We're not ready, we're not trained." But they went anyway—and they saw miracles. I know our obedience might sometimes, our endings are neither joyful nor celebrated. For example.... We can forgive..... and the relationship might not be restored. We can serve, and no one might notice. In those moments, it's easy to get discouraged and think, 'My obedience was a failure.' But Jesus says, "No. I don't see your results; I see your heart of obedience!!!! And that alone brings me more than enough joy.... The world cannot give.

In 1889, at the young age of 29, Joseph Henry Davies was sent from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria as the very first Australian missionary to Korea. He arrived in Seoul by boat, where he spent six months studying the Korean language and culture, preparing himself for the mission ahead. After his training, he set out for Busan which is a very south part of Korea, the city where he planned to begin his mission. But there were no trains, no cars, of course — only his feet.... and a call from God. He walked over 450 kilometres, mountains to mountains, village by village, often meeting strangers, praying silently, and dreaming of sharing the gospel. But just as he arrived in Busan, he fell seriously ill. And only one day after arriving, he passed away, never having preached a single sermon, never having planted a church, and never having seen any visible fruit. From a human perspective, his mission looked like nothing — a failed effort. But... in God's eyes, it was everything — an act of pure obedience. When the Victorian Presbyterian Church heard of his death, they were terrified. They decided it was too dangerous to send more missionaries to Korea — at least for a while. But that wasn't the end of the story. Inspired by Joshep's sacrifice, his own family and others volunteered to go. They went to Busan, where they built churches, schools, and orphanages. And now... I can say that I'm one of the fruits of that mission. When I was in Korea, one of the ministers who had a deep spiritual impact on me became a believer through their mission work in my hometown. Isn't that amazing? And now, by God's grace, I am serving the church here in Australia. Over time, the seeds sown by him, just one day of his being in Busan.... but faithful journey bear great fruit — fruit that still remains in Korea today. His life reminds us that success in

God's kingdom isn't measured by results, but by obedience. Even when the world sees nothing, God is planting something eternal. I am strongly convinced that his name is written in heaven.

Today we've shared how obedience is not a heavy burden, but more like a liberating golf swing—one that comes from relaxing our own strength and trusting in God's way. We've seen that it's expressed through proclaiming peace, not power. And most importantly, we've discovered that the goal of this entire journey is not to get a good score on the world's scorecard, but to fully enjoy the unshakable joy of being a child of God whose name is written in heaven.

So, shall we return to the golf story I started with? God is not a strict judge, checking our scorecard after every round of our journey... He is the loving parent — Father and Mother — waiting for us on the 18th green—the final rounds of our journey—ready to give us a big hug and say, "Well done, I'm so glad you're home," regardless of how we played. I love this imagination. Our real trophy isn't worldly success, but the embrace of God. This truth sets us free. It frees us from the pressure to perform, and it frees us to obey him with joy. This week, in that freedom, how about we try taking just one small step of obedience? Obedience isn't just about some great commitment or grand mission. It begins in the small places of our lives. Naaman was healed when he simply obeyed. The disciples saw miracles when they simply obeyed. He is simply calling you to trust and obey. And when we do this, the Lord promises that through that simple step, the joy of having our names written in heaven will overflow in our lives. I pray that this kind of obedience would be a reality for all of us. Amen.

SING Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets TIS/665

Jesus Christ is waiting,
waiting in the streets;
no-one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger,
fit to wait on you.
Jesus Christ is raging,
raging in the streets;
where injustice spirals
and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes
let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing,
healing in the streets;
curing those who suffer,

touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
Let my care be active,
healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing,
dancing in the streets;
where each sign of hatred
he, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.
Where good conquers evil
let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling,
calling in the streets;
"Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet."
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me;
I will follow you.

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OFFERTORY SENTENCE

For all that we have received, we give thanks. Let us offer our time, talents and gifts as a contribution to God's work in this place

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of grace, we humbly offer this sacrifice of what you have first given us.
As Jesus' disciples went out and proclaimed the gospel in word and deed, so may we do likewise. Bless and use these gifts and our lives, in Jesus name we pray.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of mercy,
there is so much destruction and devastation throughout the world right now.
There is division and hate,
there is anger and sorrow.
Within these difficult times, help us to be agents of love, truth, and peace.

God of love,
everywhere we look, there are impacts of racism and colonialism.
Many are not receiving adequate healthcare or education.

Children are being imprisoned.
Within these unjust times, help us to be agents of love, truth, and justice.

God of grace,
there is a world of loneliness in our communities right now.
People are hurting in plain sight.
People are grieving alone.
Within these disconnected times, help us to be agents of love, truth, and connection.

Almighty God,
We pray for those who are unwell or undergoing treatment,
may your spirit of love, truth, peace, and justice flow through us
and through this world.
May we join in your chorus and sing your song,
so that all the world may know your goodness.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

SING I sing a song of the saints of God AHB/551

I sing a song of the saints of God,
patient and faithful too,
who toiled and served and lived and died
for the Lord they loved and knew.
And one was a doctor and one fought fires,
and one was a sparky there fixing wires,
they were all of them saints, seemed never got tired –
God help me to be one too.

They loved their Lord with all their heart,
and God's love - it made them strong;
and they followed the right, for Jesus' sake,
the whole of their good lives long.
And one was a painter, and one taught at school,
and one was a builder with all their tools ,
and there's not any reason, not any rules
why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past;
there are hundreds of thousands still;
the world is bright with the joyful saints
who love to do Jesus' will.
You can meet them in school, on the street, in the store,

in the church, at the beach, in the house next door;
They are saints of God, whether rich, whether poor,
and I want to be one too!

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BLESSING

As we leave this place,
may we carry with us the comfort of grace,
the encouragement of love,
and a desire for justice—
Justice for each and every member of God's creation,
justice for the skies and the waterways,
justice for the lands and the bush.

Let us walk together into the new day,
lifting our eyes above,
our hearts towards each other,
and our hands, ready to serve in love and truth,
each and every day.
Amen.

SENDING OUT SONG Jesus hands were kind hands TIS/236

Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,
washed tired feet, and saving those who fall:
Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all.

Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you,
make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;
let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.

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