

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

13 July 2025

Pentecost 5

The Gathering of the People of God

WELCOME & GREETING

May 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 here for thousands of years. We pay our respects to their elders, past and present who have listened to Country and lived in harmony with the land. As we come together in our brokenness today, let us acknowledge the truth of our story in this country. Let us commit ourselves again to ongoing reconciliation between First and Second Peoples of this 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

Come, neighbours and strangers,
Prophets and seekers of justice,
those who need a helping hand,
And those who have something to offer.
Whether your faith is weak or strong,
Come: let us be neighbours in this place,
And let us worship God together.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

God of love and compassion,
you call us to be people of compassion, too:
to experience in our living the lives of others,
to laugh with their joys and cry with their sorrows.
In this time of worship speak to us again your words of love
and remind us again of what it means to be a neighbour.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the ultimate neighbour. Amen.

HYMN: Lord of creation, to you be all praise! TIS 626

Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
Most mighty your working, most wondrous your ways!
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
And yet in the hearts of the humble you dwell.

Lord of all power, I give you my will
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.
Your bondage is freedom; your service is song;
and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.

Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind:
rich truth that surpasses our knowledge to find,
what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
is taught by your Spirit and shines from your word.

Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
your presence to shield me, whatever betide.

Lord of all being, I give you my all;
if ever I leave you I stumble and fall;
but, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(based on Luke's Gospel reading, the story about the Good Samaritan)

Gracious God,
we come confessing that as individuals and as societies
we have met the man on the road to Jericho many times.
We encounter this man on the road
stripped, beaten, and left for dead.
Through apathy, injustice and greed
we have been those to hurt this man.
Forgive us God when we are violent.

We see this man on the road
and through fear, hate or disinterest,
we pass by on the other side, keeping a safe distance.
Forgive us God when we are indifferent.

We see this man on the road and we pity him,
but we remain unmoved
for reaching out will take time and money;
and so we pass on quickly so as not to be seen.
Forgive us God when we are selfish.

(Together)
***Forgive us, O God, when we do not act as neighbours
offering what we can to those in need.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.***

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Like the Samaritan, Jesus comes to us in our need bandaging our wounds,
offering mercy and new life.
Here 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: Jesus Christ is waiting 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.

BIBLE READINGS

Psalms 82

1 God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah 3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. 4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." 5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding; they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. 6 I say, "You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; 7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals and fall like any prince." 8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you!

Luke 10:25-37

25 An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." 29 But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

REFLECTION

A few years ago, I led a children's service. It wasn't a formal sermon, just a simple talk for kids. The text for that day was the very one we're looking at today: Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan. I know you know this story really well, but can I ask

you to come with me for a moment? Let's go back to our Sunday School days together.

I began telling the story to the kids. "Once upon a time, a man was walking bravely from Jerusalem down to Jericho. But on the way, he was attacked by robbers! They took everything he had, beat him up badly, and left him on the side of the road, half-dead." "A short time later, a priest and then a Levite came down the same road, but both of them saw the man and passed by on the other side. The man who had been attacked was heartbroken. But then, a Samaritan—someone the Jews despised—came along. And when he saw the man, he didn't hesitate. He went to him, bandaged his wounds, and took him to an inn to care for him." After the story, I asked the children a question I was sure they would get right. "Kids! Who was the kindest person in this story?" And all together, in one loud voice, they shouted, "The Samaritan!" So far, so good. But then, almost without thinking, I asked a follow-up question. "Okay... then who was the worst person in the story?" And just as quickly, the kids shouted back, "The priest!" "The Levite!" But just then, one little boy raised his hand. And when I called on him, he said something that left me completely speechless. He said: "The robbers!" For a moment, I just stood there. The child's pure answer gave me so much to reflect on. We are so conditioned to focus our critique on the inaction of the priest and the Levite that we forget the foundational evil that started the whole tragedy: the wicked act of the robbers. Of course, Jesus told this parable in response to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" But this child's answer invited me to ask another vital question: "In this parable, who am I?"

Jesus' parable in Luke chapter 10 is about the Good Samaritan and a man who was attacked by robbers and half dead on the way to Jericho. You may remember how it happened that Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He was headed toward Jerusalem, and in a village along the way, he got involved in a rather testy conversation with a local expert in the law. The lawyer evidently did not like Jesus' message, and he was pressing Jesus, trying to make him look foolish, attempting to expose a weakness in his teaching. He was trying to test Jesus, almost like a lawyer in a courtroom: "In your view," the lawyer asked Jesus, "just what do I need to do to receive eternal life?" "You're the lawyer," said Jesus. "What does it say in the law?" Well, this man knew the law, of course, the law of Moses, and he quoted it. "The law says, 'Love God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind and also love your neighbour as you love yourself.'" "Well," said Jesus. "There you have it. You're right. Love God fully and love your neighbour as yourself. Do this and you will have life." But the lawyer was not going to let this drop so easily. "Ahh, but wait just a second," he objected. "There's a problem with your definitions here. State your terms, Jesus. Just what do you mean by 'neighbour'? Be precise here. Who exactly is my neighbour?" It was in response to that challenge that Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. And in this parable, there are two deeply shocking moments. The first shock is that two people who could have helped—the priest and the Levite,

respected religious figures—saw the wounded man and did nothing. They deliberately crossed to the other side of the road and walked away. The very ones you would expect to show compassion simply ignored him. But the second shock is even greater. The one who did stop to help was a Samaritan—someone considered an enemy by the Jews. There was a long history of racial and religious hostility between Jews and Samaritans. And yet, it was this man—the outsider, the enemy—who was moved with compassion. He went to the injured man, tended to his wounds, carried him to safety, and paid for his care. I don't think the other two, a priest and a Levite, are totally out of compassion. Because they were all religious workers, they, too, must have been filled with pity when they first saw the troubled man. But they might have been too busy hurrying somewhere: They may have been on their way to conduct a worship service, offer a sacrifice, or attend an important meeting. There must have been a very important mission to complete for the day. When we encounter a case like the one who was in trouble in today's passage, we, too, become filled with pity. And then... we feel confused. When we hear stories of thousands children dying of hunger, or dying people and babies because they could not get basic medicines like 'antibiotic' or 'Panadol', we become filled with pity. And then, a confusion. We might get angry and blame the modern economic systems that allow such suffering. But, we often, too, walk past leaving the sad stories behind. There are already too many things that confuse our minds and hearts. There are too many things for us to finish for the day, for the month, or for the year. We do have compassion but we are often too busy. Sometimes, we need to stop everything we have been doing almost as an instinct and think very hard about what it means to follow Jesus Christ as a disciple.

At the end of this parable, the teacher of the Law responds to Jesus by asking, "Teacher, then who is my neighbour?" But instead of answering that question directly, Jesus turns it around and asks him, "In your opinion, which one of these three—a priest, a Levite, or a Samaritan—acted like a neighbour to the man who was attacked by robbers?" If we look closely at this conversation between Jesus and the lawyer, we notice something important: Jesus is turning the lawyer's question on its head. The lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbour?"—as if to define the limits of his responsibility. But Jesus changes the question. Sometimes we ask, "Who is my neighbour?" hoping to find out who qualifies for our love. But Jesus is asking something much deeper: "To whom can I be a neighbour?" It's about becoming the kind of person who shows mercy, regardless of who the other person is. That is a big difference. It means we don't wait for someone to qualify as our neighbour. We go first. We choose love. We become the neighbour.

In Jesus' story, the Good Samaritan helped a man others passed by. Today, there are many people the world still passes by: Refugees who lost everything in war, Immigrants starting over in a new land, LGBTQ people feeling rejected and unsafe, People who are homeless and sleep on the street, Former prisoners trying to live a

new life, Children stuck in broken school systems, Families who can't afford medical care, Communities suffering from climate disasters, Anyone hurt by racism, hatred, or injustice. These are our neighbours. Not just the ones who look like us or live near us—but the ones who need love. I heard about a woman who lived next to a refugee family. At first, she felt uncomfortable. They were different. But one day, she brought them warm soup. Then she helped their children with schoolwork. Now they share food, stories, and friendship. She didn't wait for them to become her neighbours—she became theirs. What about you and me? Who around us is hurting? Who is being ignored? Who is lying on the side of the road, waiting for someone to stop? Maybe Jesus is calling you to be the Good Samaritan in their life. Don't ask, "Who is my neighbour?" Ask, "Whose neighbour can I be?"

Brothers and sisters in Christ!

Jesus calls us to more than just belief. He calls us to love with action. To cross boundaries. To risk discomfort. To care, to give, and to stop walking past the pain. Let's be the ones who stop. Let's be the ones who see. Let's be the ones who love. Let's be the Good Samaritan! Amen.

HYMN: Kneels at the feet of his friends TIS 640

Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet:
master who acts as a slave to them.
*Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

Neighbours are wealthy and poor,
varied in colour and race,
neighbours are near us and far away.
*Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all these are neighbours to us and you.
*Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

Loving puts us on our knees,
Silently washing their feet:
this is the way we should live with you.
*Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

© 1969 Hope Publishing Words and music: Tom Colvin and the people of Ghana
Reproduced under Copyright Licences: ONE LICENSE A-604712; CCLI #45150

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

God of grace and compassion,
may our gifts enable your church to be a place
where strangers become friends, outcasts are welcomed,
seekers receive, and doubters find faith.
Give us wise hearts to use these gifts
not only to proclaim, but also to live out love.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Lord, we pray for peace and prosperity
for the peoples of the world,
that all may live in safety,
freed from hunger, poverty and war.

Turn the hearts of the leaders of nations to you.
Turn all from the ways of violence
and warfare to the way of justice and peace.
Turn all from destruction and hatred
to the way of reconciling love.

Awaken those who have more of life's necessities than they need.
Let them be generous and see many others are in need of the necessities of the
food,
water, clothing, and shelter.
We pray your gifts will be shared.

We pray for communities that have lost sight of your love and compassion.
Enable us, we pray, to be channels of Christ's love
as we share in the hurt of our neighbours.

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

We especially today remember Dennis and Robyn Lyons,
Rhonda Chamberlain and family; Prema and Priya,
Denis and Dolly, Naghuia, Peter and Sue; Dinah;
Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy, Sue Beglin,
and for others whom we name in our hearts.

Spirit of God, may they know your hope and comfort, your power and assurance.
Please give them your intensive care and healing, strength and hope.

Lord, we pray for all in this congregation,
all who are here and away that they may be blessed and strengthened by your Spirit.
We conclude our prayers with the prayer Jesus taught us

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

Hear the gracious words of our Saviour Jesus Christ:
Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Come, let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ
in remembrance that he died for us,
and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

COMMUNION 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.”

© Deidre Brown, Spectrum Publications

Reproduced under Copyright Licences: ONE LICENSE A-604712; CCLI #45150

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.

Thanks and praise, glory and honour are rightly yours,
our Lord and God, for you alone are worthy.
In time beyond our dreaming
you brought forth life out of darkness,
and in the love of Christ your Son
you set man and woman at the heart of your creation.
For this we praise you with the faithful of every time
and place joining with the whole creation in the eternal hymn:

***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 thank you that you called a covenant people to be a light to the nations.
Through Moses you taught us to love your law,
and in the prophets you cried out for justice.
In the fullness of your mercy you became one with us in Jesus Christ,
who gave himself up for us on the cross.

You make us alive together with him,
that we may rejoice in his presence and share his peace.

***By water and the Spirit
you open the kingdom to all who believe,
and welcome us to your table:
for by grace we are saved, through faith.***

We remember, on the night of his betrayal, that Jesus 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.***

Pour out the Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine,
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Make us one with him, one with each other,
and one in ministry in the world,
until at last we feast with him in the kingdom.
Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in your holy church,
all honour and glory are yours, God almighty, 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

We thank you, O God,
that through Word and sacrament you have given us your Son,
who is the true bread from heaven and food of eternal life.
So strengthen us in your service that our daily living may show our thanks,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God

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.

*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.

*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.*

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.

*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.*

BLESSING

Go in Peace, to love and serve.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
guard your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 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.

© 1982 Cliff Barrows

Reproduced under Copyright Licences: ONE LICENSE A-604712; CCLI #45150