

Kogarah Uniting Church

3rd August 2025 @ 10am

Giving Thanks to God

Acknowledgement of Country

As we meet today, we acknowledge that we are gathered on the lands of the Biddigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional owners of this land who have cared for this place since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging. We commit to seeking justice through truth telling, treaty and reconciliation, walking together and working for the good of all.

Introduction to Theme

It's easy to fall into the mindset that happiness comes with just one more thing—a toy, a job, a new car, or a bigger house. Today, we are encouraged to shift our focus to what truly endures. Give thanks to God because God is good. So says the psalmist, and more—they remind us that God's faithful love will last forever. Isn't that something to be thankful for?

Lighting the Christ Candle

God is here!

God is always here!

God is with us!

God is always with us!

Saying who we are

We say who we are

(KUC 願景聲明)

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.

Call to Worship

Come as you are,
you are welcome in this place.

Come as you have been,
your history makes you who you are.

Come as you would like to be.
May your future be a blessing to you
and to those whom you encounter.

Let us pray.

Opening Prayer

Creator God,
you have made each of us uniquely in your image.
You love us and cherish us.
As we worship you this morning,
may we remember that we are your children.
Amen.

**Sing: AoV2-020 / ATAR665 Come to the feast of Heaven and Earth /
Table of Plenty (Dan Schutte)**

<https://youtu.be/kLcVC3CoOVA?si=nyZschiE2i4hYkDt>

Refrain

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

***My God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.***

**O come and sit at my table
where saints and sinners are friends.
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely
to share the cup of my love.
Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
My God will provide for all that we need,
*here at the table of plenty.***

**O come and eat without money;
come to drink without price.
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit
with faith and fullness of life.
Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
My God will provide for all that we need,
*here at the table of plenty.***

**My bread will ever sustain you
through days of sorrow and woe.
My wine will flow like a sea of gladness
to flood the depths of your soul.
Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
My God will provide for all that we need,
*here at the table of plenty.***

**Your fields will flower in fullness;
your homes will flourish in peace.
For I, the giver of home and harvest,
will send my rain on the soil.
*Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
My God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.***

***Come to the feast of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
My God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.***

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Prayer of Confession

Loving God,
we bring all of ourselves to you,
the times we have been good,
and the times we have not,
the times when we have built each other up,
and the times when we have torn each other down.
Please forgive us for the times when we have failed to love each other
as you love us.
In Jesus' name, we pray,
Amen.

Words of Grace

Beloved, hear this word of grace. You are loved, and you are forgiven.
Accept this gift of peace and use it to encourage you to love one
another.
Amen.

Sing: *Prayer of peace* L. Newton, All Together Everybody 301

**May the Father of love stir you deep in your heart.
May the Son bring his tears to your crying.
May the Spirit of love rise anew ev'ry day,
and compassion flare up in your soul.**

**May you live day by day and for those whom you meet.
May you care, though your heart will be broken.
May your voice be as one with the cry of the poor,
and the hungry be filled with your food.**

**May your love in your deeds work for peace on this earth,
for our God dwells within those who suffer.
May you ache for the time war will pass from your life,
and your freedom frustrate Caesar's power.**

**May the Father of love stir you deep in your heart.
May the Son bring his tears to your crying.
May the Spirit of love rise anew ev'ry day,
and compassion flare up in your soul.**

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Pass the Peace of Christ

ENGAGING THE WORD

Readings from the Hebrew Scriptures

Hosea 11:1–11

11When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ²The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and offering incense to idols. ³Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴I led them with cords of

human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them. ⁵They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. ⁶The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests and devours because of their schemes. ⁷My people are bent on turning away from me. To the Most High they call, but he does not raise them up at all.

⁸How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. ⁹I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. ¹⁰They shall go after the Lord, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west. ¹¹They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the Lord.

Sing: *Like a mother who has borne us* Daniel R Bechtel

<https://youtu.be/aob1OAIL-yk?si=xbnkE-gPnldffen0>

Like a mother who has borne us,
held us close in her delight,
fed us freely from her body,
God has called us into life.

Like a father who has taught us,
grasped our hand and been our guide,
lifted us and healed our sorrows,
God has walked with us in life.

Though as children we have wandered,
placed our trust in power and might,

**left behind our brothers, sisters,
God still calls us into life.**

**When we offer food and comfort,
grasp our neighbour's hand in love,
tread the path of peace and justice,
God still walks with us in life.**

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Psalm 107:1–9, 43

¹O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble

³and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

⁴Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town;

⁵hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

⁶Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress;

⁷he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.

⁸Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

⁹For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

43 Let those who are wise give heed to these things and consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

A Reading from the Christian Gospels

Luke 12:13–21

13Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” **14** But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” **15** And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” **16** Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. **17** And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ **18** Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ **20** But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ **21** So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

**Choir/Sing: *Count your blessings Johnson Oatman, Jr., pub.1897
Edwin O. Excell, 1897(Public Domain)***

<https://youtu.be/Hb4JBNDWhOA?si=gyXT-n3Tw8DSfbj4>

**1. Choir only) *When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.***

(Chorus)

Count your blessings;

Name them one by one.

Count your blessings;

See what God has done.

Count your blessings;

Name them one by one.

Count your many blessings;

See what God has done.

2. (Choir only) Are you ever burdened with a load of care?

Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?

Count your many blessings; ev'ry doubt will fly,

And you will be singing as the days go by.

Count your blessings;

Name them one by one.

Count your blessings;

See what God has done.

Count your blessings;

Name them one by one.

Count your many blessings;

See what God has done.

3.

(Choir) When you look at others with their lands of gold,

Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;

(Congregation) Count your many blessings, money cannot buy

Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

**(Together) Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.**

4.

**(Congregation) So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;**

**(Choir) Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.**

(Together)

**Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.**

Offering

Creator God,

**please accept these gifts as a token of our thanks for your work in
this place.**

Amen.

Reflection

Giving Thanks to God

Luke 12:13–21, Psalm 107:1–9, 43

I heard about a church minister who was trying to raise money for a new Holy Communion table for his church. One Sunday morning, he stood up and said, “If anyone gives \$1,000 today, you can pick out three hymns!” A little old lady at the back of the church raised her hand. The pastor was excited and said, “Thank you so much! Go ahead and pick your three hymns.” She looked around the congregation, pointed, and said, “All right. I’ll take him, him, and him!” Funny, isn’t it? She thought she could pick three men for \$1,000! But don’t worry—that’s definitely not going to happen here this morning. That little story reminds us that money can have power, even in funny and unexpected ways. And let’s be honest—money is important in our lives. Some people say: “I work for money. I live for money. Money is the purpose of my life. Money is my number one priority. Without money, we can’t do anything.” And we understand that. After all, money is a tool. Historically, money was a means of exchange. It was created to help measure the value of things and trade them for something of equal or similar worth. It’s simply a tool we use to exchange one thing for another. So money is significant for us simply because we exchange it for what we value. For example, as we value life and taste, we need to pay money for food. We value education, and so we pay to go to school and for the books as well. We value entertainment so we pay money for movies and music concerts. We value the ministries of the church and the spread of the gospel, and so we offer our money to the church and other ministries. So money itself isn’t evil. But as Jesus said in Luke 12:34: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” In other words, what you do with your money shows what you love. It reveals what truly matters to you. Where your money goes—your heart goes too. We spend money on what we value—what we treasure in our hearts.

This morning's gospel reading from Luke 12 tells us about a man who came to Jesus with a financial problem. His brother wouldn't share the inheritance. In Jesus' time, people often brought their legal problems to rabbis. Maybe this man thought, "Jesus is a fair man. Surely he will help me get what I deserve." But Jesus replied that he didn't come to settle such disputes. Instead, he warned him—and all of us: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Then he told a story—a parable. A rich man had a big harvest. So big, in fact, that he didn't have enough room to store it. So he said, "I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones! Then I'll store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself: 'Lucky me! I've got everything I need for years. Eat, drink, relax, and enjoy life!'" But that night, God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you've prepared for yourself?" Reflecting on the story, this man does not think about his neighbours or others who may be in need. He does not think about how he can help others with the abundance he has been blessed with. This man only thinks about loading up what he has been blessed with for himself and celebrating his good fortune. The rich man only wants more and more for himself. He puts his trust in money and believes it can secure his future. In the Christian's perspective, as we understand, money and possession is one of the gifts of God. It is from God. God gives us many gifts and blessings in our lives such as money, time, talents, love, and family etc. And everything you have is a gift from God, including your own life. Money is just one of them. Jesus tells us that we need to watch out for any form of greed that may come to us and we must not get caught up, trying to possess more and more.

Let me tell you about an old friend of mine from primary school. He lives in the Philippines now. One weekend, he went to the beach. The sky was blue, the wind was soft, and the sunshine made him feel alive. So he took a photo and posted it on Facebook. But the comments weren't about the view. People wrote things like: "Who's that fat guy?" "Look at that belly!" "You need a diet!" "Go exercise!" They were joking, of course—they were close friends. Still, they completely missed the beauty he was trying to share. He replied, "Don't look at my tummy—look at the ocean! Look at the

sky! Look at the view!” But someone joked, “Sorry, we can’t see the view—your belly’s too big!” I didn’t say anything... honestly, his body and mine aren’t that different! But when I saw the photo, I didn’t just laugh. I saw something deeper. My friend was trying to share the beauty of God’s creation—the peace and joy he felt in that moment. What a shame his friends only looked at the outside. It made me think: How often do we overlook the blessings in our lives, because we’re too focused on things that don’t really matter? Just a few years ago, that same friend had a high-paying job. People admired him. But he was betrayed by someone close. Deeply hurt, he left everything and moved to the Philippines. There, in nature—in the waves, in the sky, in God’s creation—he found healing. That’s what life with God looks like. We go through pain. We lose things. But we also find healing, hope, and purpose. Money might make life more comfortable—but it doesn’t give life meaning. That’s the deeper truth Jesus wants us to understand. Having more barns, more stuff, more security—won’t give us peace. But being rich toward God will. So what does it mean to be rich toward God? It means:

To open our hearts to God.

To thank God for every blessing, big or small.

To remember where everything truly comes from.

To use what we have—not just for ourselves, but for others.

Brothers and sisters in Christ! Jesus told this parable to remind us that life is not about storing up more and more things for ourselves. The rich man thought he was secure because of his wealth. But he forgot to be rich toward God. He forgot to give thanks. He forgot that everything he had came from God. Psalm 107 says, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.” It also says that God satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. This is true for us, too. God has not only given us what we need—God has given us grace, community, and a future with hope. So let us not live like the rich man in the parable, building bigger barns for ourselves. Let’s be people who recognize God’s blessings—not just in our bank accounts, but in the air we breathe, the friendships we cherish, the meals we enjoy, and the

God who never stops loving us. Let us be people who give thanks every day. Amen.

Announcements

Prayers for Others

**Loving God,
please help us be grateful for what we have,
generous with others,
and willing to share all the things
that we have been blessed with.**

**Gracious God,
please help us to be thankful for what we have,
using our words to cry out to you
in good times and bad
and working to be a blessing to those around us.**

**Merciful God,
Please help us to be satisfied with the things we have.
Help us to understand how rich we are.
Help us to be thankful and to give praise,
now and evermore.
Amen.**

Sing: SoG 790 / ATW 463 Goodness is stronger than evil (Desmond Tutu / John Bell)

<https://youtu.be/s1ydJ4JTEYw?si=DvvHYgoSF1-8eQHT>

Goodness is stronger than evil;

love is stronger than hate;

light is stronger than darkness;

life is stronger than death.

Victory is ours, victory is ours through him who loved us.

Victory is ours, victory is ours through him who loved us.

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Blessing/Benediction

As you leave this place,

may your lips continue to give thanks to God.

May your heart be thankful.

May your hands be open and willing to share

your gifts, time, talent and riches

with your friends, family and neighbours, ‘

all to the glory of God

now and evermore.

Amen.

**Exit Song: Praise with joy the world's creator J. Bell; G Maule,
Together in Song 179, CCLI 3351325**

<https://youtu.be/NsChSjp4tpE?si=cltZlkxMpiGfsC7S>

Praise to God, the world's Creator,

source of life and growth and breath,

cradling in her arms her children,

holding them from birth to death.

In our bodies, in our living,

**strength and truth of all we do,
God is present, working with us,
making us creators too.**

**Praise to God our saving Wisdom,
meeting us with love and grace,
helping us to grow in wholeness,
giving freedom, room, and space.
In our hurting, in our risking,
in the thoughts we dare not name,
God is present, growing with us,
healing us from sin and shame.**

**Praise to God, the Spirit in us,
prompting hidden depths of prayer,
firing us to long for justice,
reaching out with tender care.
In our searching, in our loving,
in our struggles to be free,
God is present, living in us,
pointing us to what shall be.**

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