

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH
14 September 2025
Creation 2
Flora and Fauna Sunday

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:

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation, the first inhabitants of this place. We honour their deep care for Creation, and pay our respects to Elders past and present—and to all who continue to uphold culture and care for Country today.

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

Hey, you! Give praise to God!

God dreamed you and called you and here you are!

You plants and forests, praise God as you flower and fruit.

You mammals, insects, reptiles and birds—praise!

God dreamed you and called you and here you are!

So listen out for the Name that is above every Name,

sing out with all the love and joy you can find:

all you are is made by God,

all you have is gift from God.

Calling all creation—come and be found in praise!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Creator, We thank you for the gift of creation —
for trees and flowers, birds and animals,
and all living things that show your beauty.

As we worship today,
Open our hearts to your presence in the world around us.
Teach us to listen to the wisdom of nature.
And lead us to live gently,
with reverence and care for all that you have made.

We offer this time of worship to you,
in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all creation. Amen.

HYMN: How great thou art TiS 155

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works your hand has made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
your power throughout the universe displayed:

(Refrain)

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

(Refrain)

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in

that on the cross, our burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away our sin:
(Refrain)

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: My God, how great thou art!
(Refrain)

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Creator God, you made this world in beauty and balance,
calling it “good” — and calling us to care for it.
But we confess that we have often failed.
We have taken more than we need.
We have treated Your creation as a resource, not a gift.
Lord, have mercy.

We have ignored the cries of endangered animals,
the groaning of polluted lands,
and the suffering of communities most impacted by environmental harm.
We have forgotten that all life is connected.
Christ, have mercy.

We confess our busyness, our blindness,
and the ways we choose convenience over compassion.

Forgive us, O God.
Renew our hearts and change our ways,
that we may live gently, love deeply,
and walk humbly with all creation. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: Our Creator is full of mercy, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven — not only to be made whole, but to be sent out as caretakers of God’s creation.
Thanks be to God.
We are forgiven, renewed, and called to live with love. Amen.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

HYMN: For the fruits of all creation TiS 168

For the fruits of all creation, thanks be to God;
for his gifts to every nation, thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe keeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour, God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour God's will is done;
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

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The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Job 39:1–8, 26–30

1 “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer? 2 Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when they give birth, 3 when they crouch to give birth to their offspring and are delivered of their young? 4 Their young ones become strong; they grow up in the open; they go forth and do not return to them. 5 “Who has let the wild ass go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass, 6 to which I have given the steppe for its home, the salt land for its dwelling place? 7 It scorns the tumult of the city; it does not hear the shouts of the driver. 8 It ranges the mountains as its pasture, and it searches after every green thing.

26 “Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars and spreads its wings toward the south? 27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high? 28 It lives on the rock and makes its home in the fastness of the rocky crag. 29 From there it spies the prey; its eyes see it from far away. 30 Its young ones suck up blood, and where the slain are, there it is.”

Psalm 104:14–23

14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle and plants for people to cultivate, to bring forth food from the earth 15 and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine and bread to strengthen the human heart. 16 The trees of the field are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coneys. 19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. 20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out. 21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. 22 When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens. 23 People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening.

Luke 12:22–31

22 He said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith! 29 And do not keep seeking what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For it is the nations of the world that seek all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

REFLECTION

We're continuing our journey through the Season of Creation. Last Sunday was Ocean Sunday, where we remembered God's presence in the seas. Today is Flora and Fauna Sunday, where we turn our eyes to the plants and animals of the earth — the forests, the flowers, the birds, and the creatures all around us. That means today we're invited to look more closely at the plants and animals of our world, not just as decorations or background, but as something deeply important to God — and to us.

Jesus once said, “Look at the birds. Look at the flowers. They don’t worry like humans do, but God takes care of them.” Now, maybe you’ve heard that before. But have you ever really thought about it? What if birds and flowers are not just pretty things to look at... but are actually teachers? What if nature is speaking — quietly, constantly — and we’ve just been too busy, too anxious, or too distracted to listen? If we pay attention, our Bible readings today — from Luke, Job, and Psalm 104 — open up a new kind of conversation. They ask us: What do we think really matters in life? What kind of knowledge do we chase after? What kind of value do we give to life that isn’t human? In these passages, plants and animals are not just background scenery. They’re not just resources for us to use. They’re not just tools for our comfort or food for our tables. They are part of God’s world, and they are doing God’s work in their own way.

In Psalm 104, we hear how: Grass grows for the cattle. Trees give homes to the birds. Mountains become shelter for wild goats. Water flows to nourish the land. And even wine brings joy to human hearts. Everything is connected. Each part of creation blesses another. And all are cared for by a generous, loving God. But let me ask you something: Do we see nature like this? Or do we only see trees as wood, animals as meat, and land as something to mine, sell, or build on? Let me tell you a story. A few years ago, I walked through part of the Australian bush after a wildfire. Everything was black. The ground was covered in ash. When I walked, dust came up around my feet. The trees were burned. Their branches were bare and broken. Some trees were standing, but just barely. The forest was quiet — no birds, no wind, no sound. And the smell... The air still smelled like smoke and something heavy. It didn’t just look like death. It felt like it. It felt like the forest was gone. But then... I saw something small. A little green leaf, pushing up through the ashes. Bright green — soft, full of life. Just one at first. Then another. And another. A few steps later, I saw small green leaves starting to grow on the branches of a tree. Down by the path, small flowers were blooming — yellow, purple, and pink. And then, in the trees above me... I heard it. A bird. Life was coming back. Not because people helped it. Not because we fixed it. But because God made life strong. Because God made everything connected. Because God gives hope — even after fire. Maybe you’ve had a time like that. When life felt dark. When something precious was lost. When you felt tired, broken, or afraid that nothing good could grow again. And maybe... as a church, we’re going through a time like that now. A season that feels heavy. Where the numbers are down, the budget is tight, the work is a lot, and the energy feels stretched thin. So many needs — and not always enough people or time to meet them. And if we’re honest, sometimes we wonder what the future will look like... or if we’ll make it through. But friends — just like that forest, I believe new life is already beginning to grow. Maybe we can’t see it clearly yet. Maybe it’s still small — a quiet prayer, a new person showing up, a moment of unexpected joy. But God is still working. God is still planting hope. And God is not done with us. We are not the ones who hold it all

together. God is. And even when we feel like we've reached the end, God is already preparing a new beginning. Because that's who God is — the One who brings life out of ashes.

And just like we believe God is not finished with us... we must also remember: God is not finished with the rest of creation either. The forests, the oceans, the animals — they too are part of God's story. And they, too, are crying out for healing. But here's the thing, friends: Nature is strong — yes — but not unbreakable. Koalas, one of Australia's most loved animals, are now endangered in many places. Why? Because their forests — their homes — are being cleared. The Great Barrier Reef, home to thousands of fish and sea creatures, is dying. Why? Because the oceans are warming too fast, and the coral is bleaching. These are not just environmental problems. These are spiritual questions. Do we believe that God loves these creatures too? Do we care for what God calls "good"? In the book of Job, when Job asks God for answers, God doesn't respond with explanations. God responds with questions: "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?" "Do you know where the wild donkeys live?" "Do you know how the eagle finds its nest?" And of course — the answer is no. We don't know. We're not in control. But God knows. God sees. God cares. In Hebrew, the word for "know" — yada — isn't just about facts. It means deep, personal knowing. It means being connected. Paying attention. Understanding with the heart. God is asking us — gently but clearly: "Do you know My creation? Not just its price — but its value?"

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says: "Do not worry. Your Father knows what you need." It sounds simple. But we know it's not. We worry all the time — About money, jobs, health, family, the planet, the future. Sometimes it feels like too much. But Jesus says: "Stop. Look at the birds. Look at the flowers." "They are not anxious. They trust the One who made them." This is not just about peace. It's about wisdom. When we stop and really look at nature, we start to see God's hand again — not just in church, but in every tree, every bird, every cloud in the sky. And then, we begin to ask new questions: How can we live in a way that helps life to grow? What would it look like to bless the Earth instead of just using it? What habits do I need to change? What voices — animal, human, or otherwise — are being silenced in my community?

So, friends, here is your invitation for this week: Look around your neighbourhood. Your street. Your garden. Your church. Your school. What kinds of life are in danger? What part of creation is crying out for help? What relationships — with nature or with people — are breaking? And then ask: "What can I do to bring healing?" Not everything. But something. Because when we act in love toward creation, we are not just "going green" — we are walking with God. Let me close with this: Every flower that blooms, every bird that sings, every tree that grows tall — they are doing exactly what God created them to do. They're not waiting for permission. They are simply living, praising, giving, receiving. And they are inviting us to join them. So let's

open our eyes. Let's open our hearts. Let's care — not just for ourselves — but for all of life. Because our God is not only the God of humans. He is the God of all creation. Amen.

HYMN: All things bright and beautiful TiS 135

(Refrain)

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful –
the Lord God made them all.*

The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call,
(Refrain)

The cold wind in the winter,
the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden –
He made them every one.
(Refrain)

The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum-trees green and tall,
the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall,
(Refrain)

The many-coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert,
on farms or roaming free,
(Refrain)

He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty
who has made all things well.
(Refrain)

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Generous and loving God,
You are the source of all life —
the trees of the field, the birds of the air, the flowers of the earth,
and every good thing we receive.
Today, we bring these gifts with thankful hearts.
Use them — and use us — to care for your creation, to bless those in need,
and to share your love with all the earth.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Loving God, Maker of all life,
You created every living creature and shaped the mountains, seas, forests, and skies.
You see every suffering, every cry, every hidden pain.
Hear us now, as we lift up the world in prayer.

We pray for the people of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Ukraine, Russia, Israel and Palestine — especially those in Gaza and Lebanon — and for the people of Sudan, Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia, the United States, and the countries of Europe, asking for peace, healing, and hope in places torn by conflict, suffering, and uncertainty. We pray for all caught in conflict, those wounded, traumatized, orphaned, or without shelter. Let your peace, which passes all understanding, guard their hearts.

We pray for creation itself. As creation groans under suffering — with forests cut, oceans warming, species endangered — help us to be your agents of care. Give us compassion and resolve to act — to protect, restore, and live gently with all You have made.

We pray for our church family. We pray for those among us who are ill — in body, in mind, or in spirit. For those enduring pain, those isolated by sickness, and those who carry burdens we may not fully see. May your healing touch rest upon them. Give strength where there is weakness, hope where there is despair, comfort where there is sorrow.

We pray for ourselves. Lord, teach us to see beyond our own needs, to recognize the suffering around us, and to respond with love. Help us to speak your hope, to offer what little we have, to stand for justice, to sow peace.

We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ,

Who lived among us, suffered with us, and calls us to follow Him in love. Amen.

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

Come, all you who thirst,
all you who hunger for the bread of life,
all you whose souls cry out for healing;
Come, come to the feast of life.

The Table of Jesus is our place of gathering;
here we are welcomed, wanted, loved,
here there is a place set for us;
Let us come to the feast of life.

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.

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, Father 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

Gracious God,
we thank You for feeding us with the body and blood of Christ.
As we have been nourished at Your table,
send us out to love and serve You,
and to care for all creation,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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HYMN: All Creatures of Our God and King TiS 100 (verses 1, 2, 3, 7)

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing
alleluia, alleluia!
O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Swift-rushing winds that are so strong,
and clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!
Fresh-rising morn, in praise rejoice,
and lights of evening, find a voice:
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
alleluia, alleluia!
O fire, so masterful and bright,
providing us with warmth and light,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness;
O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:

O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

PD; Based on Laudato sia Dio mio Signore
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BLESSING

As we leave today,
may we walk gently on the earth,
listening to the voices of creation,
and joining all living things in praise to our Creator.
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: Behold, behold Season 6 - 10

Behold (behold), behold (behold),
I make all things new,
beginning with you and starting from today.
Behold (behold), behold (behold),
I make all things new,
my promise is true, for I am Christ the way.

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