

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH 19/10/25 00S

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP 宣召

Looking to a new day.

As the prophet Jeremiah looks toward a new beginning, we imagine what the future may contain and how we can work towards flourishing for all.

Come, people of God,

bring your weary and wary hearts.

Carry them into this place

where God joyfully receives you,

strengthens you,

and shows you that you are never alone.

Come, let us worship the God who knows and cares for us.

LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE 点燃基督之烛

God is here...上帝在这里，....God always here 上帝永远在这里；

God is with us...上帝与我们同在，....God is always with us 上帝永远与我们同在。

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES 对第一民族的致敬

As we gather here today, we acknowledge that we are meeting on the lands of the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation, the traditional owners of these lands. We pay our respects to the elders, past and present.

当我们今天聚集在这里时，我们承认我们正在比德加尔族（Bidjegal）人民——伊欧拉民族（Eora Nation）的传统土地上举行聚会。他们是这片土地的原住民。

我们向过去和现在的长者致以敬意。

We commit to listening to their wisdom and working together for truth, treaty and reconciliation.

我们承诺聆听他们的智慧，并共同致力于追求真相、签署条约与实现和解。

SAYING WHO WE ARE 我们的身份宣言

Our vision is to be a loving and caring community, sharing God's love with the world.

我们的愿景是成为一个充满爱心和关怀的群体，把上帝的爱带给这个世界。

We are a congregation who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles.

我们是一个欢迎所有文化背景和生活方式人士的会众。

We are creating a safe place for the community,
and sharing the journey of life and faith.
我们正在建立一个让社区感到安全的空间，一同分享人生与信仰的旅程。

SING: God has spoken by the Prophets

TIS/158

God has spoken by the prophets,
spoken God's unchanging word,
each, from age to age proclaiming
God, the one, the righteous Lord.
In the world's despair and turmoil
one firm anchor holds us fast:
God is king, God's throne eternal,
God the first. and God the last.
God has spoken by Christ Jesus,
Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness in the Father's glory,
with the Father ever one;
spoken by the Word incarnate,
God from God, ere time began,
Light from Light, to earth descending,
God, revealed as Son of Man.

God is speaking by God's Spirit,
speaking to our hearts again,
in the age-long word expounding
God's own message, now as then,
through the rise and fall of nations
one sure faith yet standing fast;
God still speaks, God's word unchanging,
God the first, and God the last.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION 忏悔祷告

Merciful God, you bring our lives in harmony with yours because of your righteousness and justice, your steadfast love, mercy and faithfulness. These are the qualities of your life which were clearly imprinted on Jesus' heart and which have been written on our hearts not in ink but with your Spirit. We are to be living testimonies that the Spirit gives life - life in all its fullness. We confess that while we readily accept the joy of living Spirit-filled lives, we all too often fail to live up to the challenges that brings.

When we fail to translate the language of our hearts into one that includes all people:

Living God, forgive us and renew our hearts with your Spirit.

When we alienate others by our judgmental and hard-hearted attitudes:

Living God, forgive us and renew our lives with your Spirit.

When our witness fails to reveal a heartfelt desire to spread the good news of peace, love, justice and mercy to a world sorely in need of such news:

Living God, forgive us and renew our thoughts with your Spirit

Living God, we come to you in penitence and faith, praying that your love - so clearly communicated by Jesus - will be rewritten on our hearts and revealed in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

SING Let the son of God enfold you TIS/655 verses 3 & 4

Remain seated and sing this song as a continuation of our prayer.

So as you worship God in earnest, lay your burdens at his feet,
and allow God's love to work within your heart.

O let the Holy Spirit fill you and direct your every day,
and you know you'll never be alone again.

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives;
Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives.

So take God's love to those around you,
show them Jesus every day
in the way you serve and live your life for him.

O bring the light into the darkness, show them there's no better way,
than in living life in Jesus' name.

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives;
Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill our lives.

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ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS 赦罪的确据

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away, see, everything has become new! We have been reconciled to God through Christ and all this is from God who does not count our trespasses

against us - but entrusts us with the message of reconciliation. (based on 2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

The good news therefore is this: In Jesus Christ we are renewed, we are loved, and we are forgiven.

PEACE 和平

SING **Thank you for giving me the morning** **TIS/162**

Thank you for giving me the morning,
thank you for every day that's new,
thank you for all my hurts and troubles
I can take to you.

Thank you for all my friends and helpers,
thank you for people everywhere,
thank you for showing me, Lord Jesus,
how to help and care.

Thank you for times of working, playing,
thank you for all that I can do,
thank you for all that's bright and cheerful,
and for music too.

Thank you for comfort in my sadness,
thank you for all who understand,
thank you that your hand holds and leads me everywhere I am.

Thank you for speaking to me, Jesus,
thank you for meeting with me here,
thank you, because you love all people, those both far and near.

Thank you that you're so good and loving, thank you that I am filled with you,
thank you, you make me feel so glad and thankful as I do,
thank you, you make me feel so glad and thankful as I do.

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READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES 宣讀舊約經文

Jeremiah 31: 27-34

²⁷The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. ²⁸And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the Lord. ²⁹In those days they shall no longer say: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." ³⁰But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge. ³¹The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

READING FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES 宣讀新約經文 Luke 18: 1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ²He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' ⁴For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

REFLECTION 証道

Jeremiah 31:27–34, Luke 18:1–8.

You know, prayer is very important in our Christian life. When I look back over my own life, I realize that in every difficult moment — every time I was struggling, confused, or in pain — I turned to God in prayer. At that time, I didn't always understand what God was doing. I often wondered, "Is God really listening?" or "When will he answer?" But now, when I look back, I can clearly see that God was there. He heard every prayer. He guided me step by step, even when I didn't realize it. And he answered my prayers — sometimes not in the way I expected, but always in the way I needed. And you know, when we come together on Sundays for worship, we pray so many times, don't we? Before the service even starts, we gather in the vestry and pray together with the worship leaders. Then we begin the service with the Opening Prayer. We pray the Prayer of Confession. We pray for others — for our friends, families, the church, and the world. We pray the Lord's Prayer together. We pray over our offering. And finally, we finish with the Blessing Prayer. If you count all those prayers, there are so many moments of prayer in just one service! That tells us something — prayer is not just a small part of our worship. It's the very heartbeat of it. Without prayer, our worship loses its spirit. Without prayer, our Christian life loses its power. That's why prayer is not optional — it's essential. It's what connects us to God, renews our strength, and keeps our faith alive.

Let me give you a simple example. Think about your computer. You might have the latest model, and you might have the best internet provider. But if your connection isn't working — if that little Wi-Fi symbol shows no signal — then all that technology becomes useless. You can't send an email, you can't search, you can't connect to anyone. That's exactly how it is with our spiritual lives. God is always there — powerful, loving, ready to move — and we are here, created in his image. But without connection, nothing flows between us. Prayer is that connection. Prayer is the spiritual Wi-Fi that connects us to the heart of God. Without prayer, our faith freezes. But when we pray — even simple, honest prayers — the power of heaven starts to flow again.

This morning's passage in Luke's gospel is exactly about this — about prayer. But not just any kind of prayer — it's about persistent prayer. Jesus is teaching us something very important: Don't give up. Keep praying. Keep believing. Keep trusting. Persistent prayer doesn't mean trying to make God act on our schedule. It means trusting that God is working in his perfect time. Persistence in prayer is helping God work and act in his own timetable, not ours. Jesus

knew that sometimes life doesn't make sense. Sometimes prayers seem unanswered. Sometimes justice feels delayed. And so he told this story — "to show them that they should always pray and not give up." There are only two characters in this short parable: a judge and a widow. The judge was not a good man — Jesus says he didn't fear God, and he didn't care what people thought about him. He had power, but no compassion. He was probably the kind of person who did only what was convenient or profitable for himself. And then, there was the widow. A woman with no husband, no money, no influence — living in a world that didn't protect or respect her. Someone had wronged her badly, and her only hope was this unjust judge. She had no one else to defend her. According to the story, she keeps coming back to the judge's court. It's not likely that she brings with her a high-priced lawyer. It's doubtful that she comes into court with confidence, knowing how to win a case like that. We cannot imagine her raising her voice or pounding the table, demanding help. But the only line she is given in the story is a simple, humble request: "Grant me justice against my opponent." We're not told who her opponent is or what kind of injustice she has suffered. But what we do know is this — she seems to have no advocate, no supporter. And the judge, remember, is described as one "who neither feared God nor had respect for people." He must have been one of the worst characters in the Bible described that way. Particularly, since he has no respect for people, we can hardly expect compassion from him. He regards her only as an annoyance — someone not worth his time. Well then, what weapons does she have against such an adversary? Nothing! She stands helpless before the judge. But not this widow. According to the story, her weapons are patience, persistence, integrity, and a deep sense of justice. And perhaps one more thing — she truly believes that justice will eventually make its way. That faith — that quiet, stubborn faith — is what keeps her standing before that judge again and again.

You know, this reminds me of a movie by Steven Spielberg called *The Terminal*. The American actor Tom Hanks played the leading role. It's based on a true story — a man from a small European country loses his national identity mid-flight because of a sudden military coup back home. When he lands in New York, his visa is no longer valid. So the airport authorities refuse him entry, and he ends up living in the airport terminal — for ten months! His English is poor, so he can't communicate well with the officials. He's treated like nobody. But he never gives up. He keeps believing that things will one day change. In the middle of his own chaos, he even helps other people who are worse off than he is. One time, he puts himself at risk just to help another poor man from another country. Why? Because he believes in

justice, and in friendship, and in keeping his promises. He also keeps trying to enter New York to fulfil a promise he made to his late father. And as time goes by, everyone in the airport begins to notice his kindness, his humility, his persistence. He becomes an unexpected hero — a man whose simple goodness changes the people around him.

It's a beautiful story, and I think there's a lot of similarity between Tom Hanks' character in *The Terminal* and the widow in today's passage. Both of them show patience. Both of them keep going, and both of them hold on to an unshakable belief that one day, justice and goodness will win. Back to our passage — this widow believes that at the end of the day, right will win over wrong, justice will triumph over injustice, and good will conquer evil. Day after day, she comes to the judge's court with her request: "Grant me justice." Day after day, he ignores her. Time and again, he refuses to consider her case. He's certain she'll eventually give up — but not this widow. We don't know how long she keeps coming, but one day, he looks up from his bench, and there she is — again. And he realises that this woman, for all her weakness, is a truly formidable force. Luke gives this parable an introduction that tells us why Jesus told it: "Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not lose heart." And that's exactly why we keep praying — even when we don't see immediate answers. That's why we continue to pray for our world — for those who suffer, for the victims of war, for people living through natural disasters, for families torn apart by poverty or violence, for those who are sick, lonely, or in despair. We may not always understand why such things happen, and we may not see how God is working in the midst of it all. But we keep praying — because we believe. We believe that in God's time, healing will come. Peace will come. Justice will come. God's will will be done — even if we cannot yet see it.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, sometimes we pray and nothing seems to change. Sometimes the silence feels endless. But remember this — silence does not mean absence. God is still listening. God is still working. And God is still faithful.

So keep praying — even when you are tired.

Keep believing — even when you can't see the answer.

Keep hoping — even when hope feels far away.

So, let us pray until hope happens. Let us pray until light breaks through the darkness. Let us pray until the love of God renews our hearts and restores our community again. Amen.

SING**Jesus put this song into our hearts****TIS/670**

Jesus put this song into our hearts,
Jesus put this song into our hearts,
it's a song of joy no-one can take away:
Jesus put this song into our hearts.

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony,
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony,
different faces, different races, he made us one:
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.

Jesus taught us how to be a family,
Jesus taught us how to be a family,
loving one another with the love that he gives:
Jesus taught us how to be a family.

Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing,
Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing,
changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy:
Jesus turned our sorrow into a dance.

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, receive our gifts and help them to be part of your dream for the world. May these gifts and the service of our lives benefit others so fully and graciously, that they will know that your love is clearly written on our hearts. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**家讯报告****PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 为他人代祷**

Loving God,
we cry out to you for justice,
justice for the poor,
justice for the oppressed,
justice for people with physical and mental disabilities,
and justice for all who are marginalised or excluded.

We cry out for justice for Indigenous people,
including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

We cry out for justice for women.
We cry out for justice for children.
We cry out for those who have had to flee their homes,
for refugees and for asylum seekers
and for those who did not make it out of their homes alive.

We cry out for justice for the planet.
We cry out for justice for the animals,
for the land, seas and for the skies.
We cry out for justice today.
Hear our prayers

O God, we pour out our hearts to you!
We share the concerns and worries on our hearts—
the people and situations we have been carrying with us,
those matters that are very near to us,
and those throughout the world.
We bring these to you now...

Silence 靜默時刻

We pray all this in your name, Amen

SING 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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BLESSING 祝福

May God bless you today.
May God bless you with eyes to see.
May God bless you with ears to hear.
May God bless you with a heart to care for the injustice of this world.
And may God bless you with a vision of justice
that never gives up, seeking persistently to spread love and care
this day and always. Amen.

SENDING OUT SONG

SING Where the spirit is there's freedom TIS/421

Where the Spirit is there's freedom.
Where the Spirit is, there is life!
Not by the world can our freedom be nourished,
not by our things, only by Spirit.
Practise, my children, to live by the Spirit,
drop all your masks, take freedom's clothing!

Where the Spirit is there's freedom.
Where the Spirit is, there is life!
Heaven on earth, here we live free to love and to share, carried by joy.
Practise, my children, to live by the Spirit,
daring today to taste God's future!

Where the Spirit is there's freedom.
Where the Spirit is, there is life!

Wounds will be healed, eyes will be opened,
imaging God, reflecting Jesus.
Practise, my children, to live by the Spirit,
heaven is here, time made eternal!

Where the Spirit is there's freedom.
Where the Spirit is, there is life!

PD; words by Per Gunnar Harling