

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

10 May 2026

Easter 6

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 on this land, we pay our respects to the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation, who have lived, worked and played on this country for thousands of years. We bring to mind their elders, past and present, and their place in passing on story and song, language and lore. May we commit ourselves to ongoing peace, joy, love, and hope as we grow in relationship as 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

“If you love me” Jesus says.

We show that we do by loving.

“If you love me” Jesus says.

We show that we do by sharing.

“If you love me” Jesus says.

We show that we do by serving.

“If you love me” Jesus says.

We show that we do by worshipping.

So let us worship God.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God,
we thank you for this beautiful Mother's Day
and for the gift of your family gathered here.
We ask that you open our hearts today.
By your Holy Spirit, speak to us through your Word.
Comfort those who are tired,
strengthen those who are searching,
and remind every one of us that we are never alone.
May your presence be felt among us,
bringing peace to the restless and joy to the weary.
Guide us now as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

HYMN: All are welcome Seasons 9-8 (Verses 1, 2, 3, and 5)

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Gracious God,
We come before you today, knowing that we are not perfect.
We have been busy with our own lives and have often forgotten you.
We have spoken unkind words and failed to love our neighbours as ourselves.
Forgiving God,
Forgive us for trying to do everything in our own strength.
Wash away our mistakes and renew our hearts by your Holy Spirit.
Help us to walk in your peace and share your grace with others.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel. God's love is wider than any ocean,
and his mercy has no end. He does not hold our past against us, but welcomes us
home with open arms.
Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

HYMN: As the deer pants TIS 703

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.
You alone are my strength and shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.
You alone are my strength and shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

You're my friend and you are my brother
even though you are a king.
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything.
You alone are my strength and shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

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PRAYER FOR MOTHERS

Gracious God,
we thank you today for the gift of mothers and for the hearts that nurture us.

We thank you for their love, their strength, and their prayers.

We ask for your blessing upon the mothers in our congregation.
Fill them with your wisdom and peace.

Lord, strengthen them and sustain them in your grace.

We lift up mothers around the world who are in pain today,
especially those in poverty and hunger.

Lord, provide for them and give them hope.

We pray for mothers facing the terrors of war and violence,
seeking only to protect their children.

Lord, be their shield and bring them safely to peace.

Comfort those who grieve the loss of a child,
and those for whom this day is difficult.

May they feel your presence as a Friend who never leaves them.

Help us to honour and support all mothers,
reflecting your unfailing and tender love for us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Psalm 66:8–20

8 Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, 9 who has kept us among the living and has not let our feet slip. 10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. 11 You brought us into the net; you laid burdens on our backs; 12 you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place. 13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows, 14 those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. 15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatted calves, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah 16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me. 17 I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue. 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. 19 But truly God has listened; he has heard the words of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.

John 14:15–21

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see

me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

REFLECTION

Today is Mother’s Day. It’s a day to celebrate the incredible women in our lives, but we also know that motherhood—and parenting in general—requires a huge amount of patience. I heard a story recently about a kindergarten teacher who was struggling to help one of her students put his boots on. It was a real workout! She was pulling, he was pushing, and they just didn't want to go on. By the time the second boot was finally on, she was exhausted. But then, the little boy looked down and said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were! So, she struggled to pull them off and then worked just as hard to get them back on the right feet. That’s when the boy announced, "Teacher, these aren't my boots." She bit her tongue, trying not to scream, "Why didn't you say so?" as she struggled to pull the ill-fitting boots off one more time. And then, the boy calmly added, "They're my brother's boots. My Mum made me wear them." That is the kind of daily "ministry" of patience that so many mothers and grandmothers provide! In a book called "Dear God: Children's Letters to God," some children shared their thoughts that I think fit today perfectly. One boy named Timmy wrote: "Dear God, Girls are weird. Except for my mum. Love you, Timmy." Another little girl named Rebecca wrote: "Dear God, thank you for my parents, my sister, and my grandparents. They are real warm and special. I forgive you for my brother Phil. I guess you didn't finish working on him yet." But there was one letter that really touched my heart. A boy named Stephen wrote: "Dear God, my mum and my father are divorced for 3 years. Nobody's perfect. If we were, we wouldn't need you around here. I wish my mum and dad knew this." Stephen’s words are so true, aren't they? "If we were perfect, we wouldn't need you around here." The truth is, we aren't perfect. We live in a world where things get broken, people get separated, and we often feel like we are struggling to swim in a very big, very deep ocean.

I was thinking about this during the week, and a very famous story came to mind. I’m sure many of you, and definitely your grandkids, know the story of a little clownfish named Nemo. The movie Finding Nemo starts in a way that feels very familiar to us—it’s set right here in the Great Barrier Reef. But then, the story takes a scary turn. Little Nemo gets separated from his father and ends up in a tiny fish tank in a dentist’s office, overlooking Sydney Harbour. There is a moment where Nemo looks out the glass at the massive harbour outside. He can see the ocean, but he can’t touch it. He feels completely disconnected. He’s scared, he’s tired, and he thinks to himself, "I am just one tiny fish in a very big world. I am lost, and I am all

alone." I wonder if any of you have felt like that in your spiritual life lately? Sometimes life can feel like that fish tank. We look at the "vastness" of our problems—maybe it's a health concern, a worry about our children, or just the heavy weight of the news we see on TV—and we feel stuck. We feel small. We start to wonder, "Does God even know which 'tank' I'm in? Does he know I'm struggling down here?" But what Nemo didn't realize—and what we often forget—is that while he was feeling lost and invisible, his father, Marlin, was already on the move. Marlin didn't stay home. He didn't give up. He swam across the entire ocean, fought off sharks, survived stinging jellyfish, and rode the East Australian Current with the turtles—all because his son was too precious to leave behind.

In our Gospel reading today from John 14, we find the disciples in a very similar "fish tank" moment. Jesus has just told them that he is leaving. For three years, they've walked with him, prayed with him, and seen miracles. He was their everything. And suddenly, their world is turned upside down. They are terrified. They feel like they are about to be abandoned in a dangerous world. But listen to the heart of Jesus in verse 18. He says to them—and he says to us today: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." This is such a powerful promise for us. Jesus isn't a distant teacher who leaves us a textbook and says, "Good luck, hope you figure it out." No. He says, "I am not leaving you as orphans." He is telling us that God isn't watching from a distance; He is a Father and Mother who enters the water with us. And then he promises something even more incredible. He says he will send "another Advocate," the Holy Spirit. In the movie, when Nemo's father was exhausted and didn't know which way to go, he met friends like Dory and the sea turtles. They guided him, they encouraged him, and they gave him the strength to keep swimming.

The Holy Spirit is our ultimate "Paraclete"—that's the Greek word Jesus used. It literally means "one who walks right beside you." Think about that for a moment. The Holy Spirit is your Advocate. When you feel attacked by guilt or discouraged by your own mistakes, the Spirit whispers the truth to your heart: "You are loved. You are forgiven. You are a child of God." He is your Counsellor. When you are facing a difficult decision at work or a conflict in your family and you don't know which way to turn, the Spirit nudges you toward wisdom. And he is your Comforter. When you are hurting, when you are grieving, when you are lying awake at night in that "tiny fish tank" of worry, the Spirit brings a peace that the world simply cannot explain. I remember a time in my own life when I felt completely lost. I was stressed, and I was trying to do everything by myself. I was "swimming solo," and I was drowning. But when I finally started relying on the presence of the Holy Spirit, everything shifted. I realized life wasn't a competition; it was a journey I was taking with God. I found myself saying, "You know what? Life is actually worth living after all!" Friends, as Stephen said in his letter, we aren't perfect. That's why we need God. And the good news is that God has given us the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. There is a famous

line in Finding Nemo: "Just keep swimming." But we don't swim by our own willpower. We swim because we have a Friend who is the current in our souls.

I want to leave you with a personal story. Many years ago, after I had just finished my mandatory military service in South Korea, I went to visit the mother of one of my dearest friends. She was like a mother to me as well, a faithful woman from my home church in Korea. At that time, she was battling terminal cancer and was very weak. I remember sitting there with my friend by her bedside when the doctor came in to check on her. The doctor, seeing how difficult her situation was, gently asked her, "Are you scared? Are you afraid of what lies ahead?" I will never forget her face. She looked at the doctor, and then at us, and she simply smiled—a peace filled her face that I couldn't explain. She said, "No, Doctor. I am not afraid. I have a Friend who is walking this path with me right now." She wasn't talking about me or her son. She was talking about the Holy Spirit. She knew, in the depths of her soul, that she was not an orphan. She knew that even in the deepest, darkest ocean of her illness, she was never, ever alone. So today, as we honour our mothers and celebrate God's love, remember this: You are not a lost fish in a big tank. You are a beloved child of God. The Holy Spirit is your Advocate, your Counsellor, and your constant Friend. Because he lives, you also will live. You will never have to swim alone again. Praise God. Amen.

HYMN: In Christ alone All Together 615

In Christ alone my heart is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross, as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For every sin on Him was laid.
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,

Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

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OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for these gifts.
Thank you for everything you have provided.
May we use them all with wisdom to share your love in this place.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Gracious God, we lift up our world to you—
a world that is so beautiful, yet so broken.
We pray for regions torn apart by the darkness of war and violence.
We remember those suffering from famine and hunger,
especially the children who cry out for bread.
Lord, in your mercy, bring peace where there is conflict
and comfort where there is despair.
Let your justice roll down like waters.

Lord, we pray for our own church family.
We lift up those among us who are feeling lonely,
those who are struggling with illness in body or spirit,

and those carrying heavy burdens of worry and anxiety.
Be the 'Constant Friend' who walks beside them in their quietest hours.
May they feel the warmth of your presence
and the strength of our community's love.

We thank you for every person who walks through our doors.
We pray for all who visit our church throughout the week,
and for every program that takes place in this place.
May this church be a place of safety, joy,
and connection for everyone in our neighbourhood.

In a special way, we pray for our new ministry
reaching out to our Chinese brothers and sisters.
We thank you for this new beginning.
Grant us wisdom, open hearts, and a spirit of true hospitality
as we share your love across cultures and languages.
May this ministry be a bridge of grace and a testimony of your kingdom.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, both those spoken aloud
and those kept in the silence of our hearts.
We offer them all to you, trusting in your unfailing love.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, 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

Let us draw near to the holy table.
This is the table our Lord has prepared for those who love him.

Jesus said,
"Come to me,
all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

"I am the bread of life;
Those who come to me shall not hunger,
and those who believe in me shall never thirst."

COMMUNION HYMN: Lord Jesus Christ TiS 526

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
you are one with us, Mary's son;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing, living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day,
teach us how to pray, Son of God;
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance, Lord, of you:
into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
born as one of us, Mary's son;
led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free,
living Lord Jesus, help us see you are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you,
live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your power breaks through, living Lord.

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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.

Loving God,

you made this world marvelous for us to enjoy.

You gave Jesus to be our Savior and friend and to bring us to you.

You sent your Spirit to make us one family in Christ.

For these gifts of your love we thank you,

and we join with angels and saints in this joyful hymn of praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

For your kindness to us and your goodness to all, we give you thanks.

We thank you that you showed your love

by sending your Son, who gave his life for us,

and rose again from death, and lives to pray for us forever.

We thank you that he has taken away

all that separates us from you

and has made us friends with you and with one another.

We thank you that he has brought us together

at this table, to strengthen us by his love.

We remember that Jesus, gathered at table with his friends

in a time of struggle and fear shared a meal with his followers.

Taking the bread, he gave thanks, broke it,

and offered it to them with these words:

'This is my body broken for you.

Remember me whenever you eat.'

After the meal, taking the cup of wine, he gave thanks,

and offered it to them with these words:

'This is my blood poured out for you,

Remember me whenever you drink.'

And so, we eat and drink in memory of Jesus and his great love.
And in this simple meal, we acknowledge the living Jesus.
We celebrate the life and rest he gives us, even today.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Send down your Holy Spirit
that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with him for ever
and bring us with the whole creation
to your eternal kingdom.

***Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor are yours,
almighty Father, 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

Loving God,

We thank you for this holy meal.

Through this bread and cup, you have fed our souls
and reminded us that we belong to you.

As we go out into the world,

help us to share your grace with everyone we meet.

May we be voices of peace and hands of comfort to those in need.
Keep us faithful to your call,
and lead us by your Spirit in the week ahead. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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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.*

BLESSING

Go out into the world in peace.
Be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good.
Honor all people, and remember that you are never alone,
for the Lord is your constant Friend who walks the path with you.

On this special day,
may you carry the warmth of God's love to your families and your neighbours.

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: May You Find Peace Seasons 7-26

May you find peace,
may you find hope,
may you find joy this day.
May you find love,
may you find rest
here in this place together.

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