

# **Kogarah Uniting Church**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

**Pentecost +6**

## **GATHERING**

**Welcome**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

As we gather in this place, we remember the Biddigal people of the Eora Nation who have cared for this land for millennia. We recognise their enduring relationship with this land. We acknowledge the role of their Elders, past and continuing, in its care and the handing down of knowledge, tradition, and story. We accept the call, as the people of God, to pray and work together towards an equitable future.

### **Lighting the Christ Candle**

**God is here!**

***God is always here!***

**God is with us!**

***God is always with us!***

### **Saying who we are**

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

**We are a congregation who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles. We are creating a safe place for the community and sharing the journey of life and faith.**

## **Introduction to Theme**

Today, we gather around the story of Rebekah, who faces the choice to leave what is known and step into an unknown future. Her choice places her in the unfolding story of God's people.

In Matthew's gospel, we hear Jesus' invitation to walk alongside him and share his yoke. As we listen, may we wonder where we are being invited to step forward, and how we might do so with trust.

## **Call to Worship**

Incline your ear to the word of Holy One.  
Let go of the distractions you carry  
and come to worship.

Draw near to the presence of Holy One,  
bringing praise with joy and gladness.  
and let us celebrate together.

**Amen.**

**Sing:** **Come and find the quiet centre** (Shirley Murray) A good song for the beginning of worship. We usually sing it to BEACH SPRING (TiS 493).

<https://youtu.be/to-6eiVwnlg?si=bfXGyrovr7wgv7Lt>

**Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter,  
find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace, and simply be.**

**Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,**

God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare!

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### **Opening Prayer**

Holy One, you are wonderful beyond imagining,  
active in the lives of your people long ago.

**Be active in our lives today.**

In your restless love, you sent Jesus  
who offered rest and an easy yoke

**Help us find rest in you today.**

In your continuing care, you sent your Spirit  
to comfort, help, and sustain your people.

**May we feel her presence today.**

**Amen.**

### **Prayer of Confession**

For the times we have broken from your story  
to follow a narrative of our own,  
**forgive us, O God.**

For the times we have harmed by our actions,  
and times when failure to act was our fault,  
**forgive us, O God.**

For the times we have hurt others with our words  
and caused injury through thoughtless indifference,  
**Forgive us and help us to return to your story.**  
**Amen.**

### **Words of Grace**

We have a God who offers forgiveness and rest for our souls.  
In Christ, we are forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Peace**

## **ENGAGING THE WORD**

### **Readings from the Hebrew Scriptures**

**Genesis 24:34–38, 42–49, 58–67**

<sup>34</sup>So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup>The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup>And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. <sup>37</sup>My master made me

swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; <sup>38</sup>but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

<sup>42</sup>"I came today to the spring, and said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! <sup>43</sup>I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," <sup>44</sup>and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also" —let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.' <sup>45</sup>"Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' <sup>46</sup>She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. <sup>47</sup>Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. <sup>48</sup>Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. <sup>49</sup>Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

**Sing: *MV176 Three things I promise* (Brian Wren / Dan Damon) suggested alternate tunes PROSPECT and WAREHAM. Lyrics.**

<https://youtu.be/F72pg9knfrw?si=JhrfluirrS4GhiMB>

**Three things I promise, Holy God,  
in age and youth, in life and death:**

**to bless your Name, and cling to Christ,  
and listen for the Spirit's breath.**

**Your love unfolded time and space,  
and life, and all that life became,  
and so, with thankful heart and voice,  
through good and ill, I bless your Name.**

**I follow, serve, and cling to Christ  
amid our culture's tides and trends,  
for here your Name is most revealed:  
Majestic Love, and Best of Friends.**

**Enlivened as the Spirit moves  
to cleanse, awaken, and renew,  
I pray that justice, peace, and truth,  
may seed and grow in all I do.**

**If I should live when vigor fades,  
and family and friends are gone,  
three acts of loving faith remain  
when days are slow, and work is done.**

**Revive and guide me, Living God,  
as day by day, until my death,  
I bless your Name, and cling to Christ,  
and listen for the Spirit's breath.**

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**Genesis 24: 58–67**

**<sup>58</sup>And they called Rebekah, and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will.” <sup>59</sup>So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham’s**

servant and his men. <sup>60</sup>And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, “May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.” <sup>61</sup>Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

<sup>62</sup>Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. <sup>63</sup>Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup>And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, <sup>65</sup>and said to the servant, “Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. <sup>66</sup>And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. <sup>67</sup>Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

### **Song of Solomon 2:8–13**

**8**The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. **9**My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice. **10**My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; **11**for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. **12**The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. **13**The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

**Sing:** TiS 654 When love is found and hope comes home (Brian Wren) (O Waly Waly)

Words By [Brian Wren](#)

- 1. When love is found  
and hope comes home,  
sing and be glad  
that two are one.  
When love explodes  
and fills the sky,  
praise God, and share  
our Maker's joy.**
- 2. When love has flowered  
in trust and care,  
build both each day,  
that love may dare  
to reach beyond  
home's warmth and light,  
to serve and strive  
for truth and right.**
- 3. When love is tried  
as loved-ones change,  
hold still to hope,  
though all seems strange,  
till ease returns  
and love grows wise  
through listening ears  
and opened eyes.**
- 4. When love is torn,  
and trust betrayed,  
pray strength to love  
till torments fade,  
till lovers keep  
no score of wrong,  
but hear through pain  
love's Easter song.**
- 5. Praise God for love,**

**praise God for life,  
in age or youth,  
in calm or strife.  
Lift up your hearts!  
Let love be fed  
through death and life  
in broken bread.**

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## **Readings from the Christian Scriptures**

### **Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30**

**<sup>16</sup>“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, <sup>17</sup>‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ <sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup>the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”**

**<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>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. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

### **Offering**

Holy One,

we thank you for all that you have given us. From that abundance, we bring the gifts offered today, both in person and electronically. We also bring before you ourselves—our time, our gifts, and our talents.

Receive all that we offer and help us to listen to where you are calling us to use them.

**Amen.**

### **Reflection**

**Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

**"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Most of us know how this beautiful psalm begins. For a very long time, these words from Psalm 23 have been a constant source of strength and comfort for all of us. I also like the verse 4: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Personally, throughout my life, when life got tough and heavy, I always remembered this verse. And I believe the same is true for many of you. As you have walked through the journeys of your own lives up until this very morning, I am sure this exact verse has been a profound source of comfort and peace during your hardest moments.**

**Speaking of this comfort, there is a song that beautifully captures this feeling, and it is one of my absolute favorites. I wonder, do you know this song? "You Raise Me Up".**

**When I am down, and, oh, my soul, so weary  
When troubles come, and my heart burdened be  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until you come and sit awhile with me**

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up to more than I can be**

**I absolutely love this song. The reason it is so close to my heart is that it brings me profound comfort whenever I am down, when my soul feels so weary, when troubles come, and when my heart is heavily burdened. This song softly reminds me of a beautiful truth: that even at this very moment, God is right here with me. I am never alone in my struggles, because he is always by my side, lifting me up and giving me the strength to stand again.**

**Our gospel reading today contains one of the most familiar passages in the Bible as well. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” For centuries, this passage has been used to comfort the grieving, encourage the struggling, and give hope when all else seems to have failed. We read it; we underline it; we memorize it. Many of us here today have faced, or are still facing, many problems in our lives. We all carry burdens. Some carry physical challenges, chronic illness, or difficult circumstances that cannot be changed. Some carry spiritual burdens. Others carry emotional weight, such as depression, anxiety, the deep heartache of loss, or financial distress. We all have burdens.**

**I am going to tell you about a train crash... On October 5th, 1999, at around 8 AM in London, there was a terrible train incident leaving 26 dead, with more than 12 people**

suffering serious injuries. Two trains were heading towards each other at moderate speeds, drawing closer and closer. You can guess what came next. The two trains crashed into each other head-on. Train carriages were turned over, flames erupted from both trains, and people were screaming and searching for ways out of the trains. A terrible, terrible disaster. Can you imagine being one of the passengers towards the front of the train? Being able to see the oncoming train, but unable to do anything about it? How would you feel? Perhaps helpless? Hopeless? Scared? I know I would feel like I had no control over my life in that situation. This is our life. Too many people today feel that their life is headed toward a crash. Their life feels like two trains headed directly toward each other and there is really nothing they can do about it. Could that be how some of you feel today? Maybe you feel like you are about to crash. Maybe you generally feel happy but sometimes you feel in your life something is missing and you just don't know what it is.

Over the past week, I have spent a lot of time reflecting, deeply wrestling, and praying over this passage from Matthew with these very feelings in mind. I kept asking myself: Who are the weary and burdened in our world today? What is the true meaning of the rest that Jesus promises us? It wasn't because I didn't know who the weary and burdened were. We see them everywhere. We feel it ourselves. And not because I don't understand the word "rest." But I kept asking this question: What does that really mean for us today? What does "rest" actually look like in our real lives? And as I was praying and thinking about it, I began to realise something. The way we think about rest... and the way Jesus Christ talks about rest are actually very different. Because when we think about rest, we usually think, "If my problems go away, then I'll be okay." "If things get better, then I can finally breathe." We think rest means everything becomes easier.

**But the rest Jesus gives is not just about changing your situation. It's about something that happens inside of you. Even when nothing has changed around you, something begins to change within you.**

**Let me give you a picture. Think about a young adult—someone who has just finished high school or uni and is stepping into the real world for the first time. They face pressure, failure, confusion. They feel lost. They feel overwhelmed. Sometimes they cry. Sometimes they feel completely alone. And often, they don't even know who to talk to. But one day, they come home. And they sit down with their parents and begin to open up. The parents may not have all the answers. They can't fix everything. But they listen. They hold them. They cry with them. They carry that weight together. And in that moment, something changes. The situation is still the same. Nothing out there has been fixed. But something inside that young person is different. They feel seen. They feel safe. They feel... not alone anymore. And somehow, they find the strength to go back out into the world again.**

**That is rest. Rest is not escaping your life. Rest is finding strength to live it again. Rest is not the absence of burdens. Rest is no longer carrying them alone. And this is why Jesus says, "Come to me." Because real rest does not begin with a solution. It begins with a relationship. When we come to Jesus, he doesn't always remove every burden right away. But he does something deeper. He carries it with us. And in his presence, we find a strength we didn't have before. So the rest Jesus gives is not just about changing your situation. It's about changing you—so that you are no longer crushed by it. And today, Jesus is still saying to us, "Come to me."**

**So today, let me gently ask you... Where are you right now? Are you tired? Are you carrying something heavy**

**that no one else sees? Are you trying to stay strong... but inside, you feel like you're slowly breaking? You don't have to pretend anymore. Jesus Christ is not asking you to fix yourself first. He is not saying, "Come when you are better." He is simply saying, "Come to me." Come with your burdens. Come with your questions. Come just as you are. Today, maybe nothing around you changes. But if you come to Jesus, something within you can begin to change. And that is where rest begins. So don't stay where you are. Take a step. In your heart, in this moment... come to him. Because he is already waiting for you. Amen.**

## **Announcements**

### **Prayers for Others**

Holy One,  
you welcome the weary and offer rest.  
We bring before you today:  
those wearied by family commitments,  
those drained in the struggle to make ends meet,  
those worn out as they battle health issues,  
those exhausted by continuing war and unrest.

In the silence, we bring other weary ones close to our hearts.

*Silence is held.*

We pray, trusting that you listen.  
**Grant rest to the weary. Amen.**

### **Eternal Spirit**

**Source of all that is and ever shall be, Loving Parent in whom we discern heaven,  
May knowledge of your holiness inspire all peoples.  
And may your commonwealth of peace and freedom flourish on earth, until all of humankind**

heed your call to justice and compassion.  
May we find the bread that we need for today.  
And for the hurts we cause one another may we be  
forgiven as we forgive them theirs.  
In times of trial and temptation, help us to be strong;  
When life seems overwhelming, help us to endure;  
And thus from the yoke of sin deliver us.  
May you reign in the power of human love, Now and  
forever. Amen (Tom Hall)

**Sing:** Guide my feet while I run this race (African-American)  
Seasons 2-19

<https://youtu.be/ew6oUUKWLws?si=fBQomF2AtMFkVy45>

**Guide my feet while I run this race (3x)**

**for I don't want to run this race alone.**

**Hold my hand while I run this race (3x)**

**for I don't want to run this race alone.**

**Stand by me while I run this race (3x)**

**for I don't want to run this race alone.**

**I'm your child while I run this race (3x)...**

**for I don't want to run this race alone.**

**Search my heart while I run this race (3x)**

**for I don't want to run this race alone.**

## **Blessing/Benediction**

As we leave this place,  
we go to take our place in God's unfolding story,  
listening for God's call to guide us,  
accepting Christ's yoke as we walk alongside him,  
and relying on Holy Spirit to strengthen us.

**Amen.**

- **Exit Song: TiS 665 Jesus Christ is waiting** (John Bell) A good hymn that is quite simple to sing. Lyrics [here](#) (scroll down just a little bit). **New words to old tunes.**

[https://youtu.be/CSzEviUc\\_o?si=qQKiBPx9JVUpaqhX](https://youtu.be/CSzEviUc_o?si=qQKiBPx9JVUpaqhX)

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.

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