

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

9 August 2026

Pentecost 11

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.

***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.***

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the deep watch of the night,
when the shore is a distant memory,
We look for the One who moves upon the deep.
Not as a ghost of our fears, but as the anchor of our souls.
Come, let us ready our hearts to meet with Jesus.
***Let us come to the edge of our boats,
guided by trust, by hope,
opening our lives to the adventure of love.***

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for bringing us together this morning.

As we begin our worship, please quiet our busy minds
and open our hearts to your voice.

Just as the disciples met Jesus in the middle of their storm,
may we truly experience and encounter him here in our worship today.

Step into our lives during this service and fill us with your peace and presence.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

HYMN: Be Still P&W 527

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear.

In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.

How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.

No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The wind is loud; our faith is small.

We stare at the waves and forget your call.

Forgive us, Lord of the Water.

We cling to the boat, afraid to step out.
We sink in the depths of our own doubt.
Forgive us, Lord of the Water.

Reach out your hand.
Catch us as we sink.
Still, the storm within us. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

When the disciples were terrified in the storm, Jesus came to them and said,
'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'
When we sink in our weakness and confess our sins,
Jesus reaches out his hand to lift us up and bring us peace.

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: My God is so big

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
there's nothing my God cannot do. (repeat)

The mountains are his, the rivers are his,
the stars are his handiwork too.

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,
there's nothing my God cannot do.

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The Service of the Word

BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28

1 Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. 2 These are the descendants of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children because he was the son of his old age, and he made him an ornamented robe. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." 14 So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, 15 and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" 16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." 17 The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. 18 They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them they conspired to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. 23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the ornamented robe that he wore, 24 and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. 25 Then they sat down to eat, and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. 28 When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Matthew 14:22–33

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were

terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

REFLECTION

I'd like to start this morning with a simple story. One night, a house caught fire, and a young boy was forced to escape to the roof. The father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son, "Jump! I'll catch you!" The father knew the boy had to jump to save his life. All the boy could see, however, was flame, smoke, and blackness. Naturally, he was terrified to leave the roof. His father kept yelling, "Jump! I will catch you!" But the boy protested, "Daddy, I can't see you!" And the father replied, "But I can see you, and that's all that matters." Where does our faith fit in during the difficult times, the times of testing, the times of storms? There are some who say: if you have faith, life will be smooth sailing. If you have faith, God will cure all your ills and guard you from every danger. If you have enough faith, if you stay close to God... everything will go well.

In our Scripture reading this morning from Matthew, we discover that this is not necessarily true. Last week, we read about Jesus feeding the 5,000. Right after that miracle, Jesus sends the crowd home and tells his disciples to get into the boat and cross the lake ahead of him, while he goes up on a mountain alone to pray. A few hours later, late at night, the disciples find themselves caught in a strong wind storm out on the water. The waves are beating against the boat, and they are struggling to make progress. In the middle of the night, Jesus comes walking on the water toward them. At first, the disciples are frightened and think he is a ghost, but Jesus immediately reassures them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." We all know what happens next in the story. Peter asks Jesus if he can walk on the water, steps out of the boat, but starts to sink when he gets scared. Jesus reaches out, saves him, and as soon as they get back into the boat, the storm stops and the sea becomes completely calm.

This is a story many of us have known since childhood. But when we look closer, it speaks directly to where we live every day. Like that young boy on the burning roof, or like Peter looking at the rough waves, when we face hard times, all we tend to see is the smoke, the darkness, and the danger around us. Think about your own life for

a moment. Looking back, there were certainly many happy and joy-filled seasons. But we have also walked through times that were deeply painful and hard to bear. Think about your journey as parents. Raising your children and watching them grow is one of the most rewarding parts of life, but it comes with heavy burdens, doesn't it? Think about those sleepless nights, the quiet tears you cried when no one was watching, and the endless, silent worries about their health, their future, and their path in life. Think about the unexpected life events—a sudden illness, financial pressure, loneliness, or the grief of losing someone you loved deeply. Life can feel like rowing a small boat against a wind that is completely against you. You work hard, you try your best, but you feel exhausted and overwhelmed. I know this feeling very personally. When I first moved to Australia from Korea, life as an immigrant was truly difficult. Everything was unfamiliar—the language, the culture, the isolation, and the complete uncertainty about the future. There were days when I felt like I was in the middle of a dark, cold ocean with no land in sight. I didn't know how things would turn out, and I felt small and helpless. And I experienced that deep sense of grief and despair during the pandemic. Just a few weeks after visiting my mother in Korea, I returned to Australia, only to receive the heartbreaking phone call late one night that she had passed away. Being so far away, unable to be by her side, I felt a deep, painful wave of sadness and powerlessness. Everything felt completely dark. In those dark seasons, my heart cried out, "Lord, I can't see you! Where are you in this?"

But Jesus speaks the exact same word to us that the father spoke to his frightened child on the roof: "You may not see me in the darkness... but I can see you. And that is all that matters." Notice where Jesus was before he walked on the water. He was on the mountain praying. But when the disciples were in distress, he didn't stay at a comfortable distance. He came down and stepped right into their storm. We see this truth so clearly when we look at the history of this land we live in—Australia. Think about our First Nations brothers and sisters, the Aboriginal people. For generations, they faced unimaginable storms—dispossession, the loss of their lands, and the painful history of the Stolen Generations. Their boat was tossed in the darkest of nights. But when the world turned away, Jesus did not ignore their pain. Indigenous Christian leaders like Reverend Bill Hollingsworth and members of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) testify to this truth. They confess that even in the midst of deep historical pain and grief, Jesus met them. He spoke dignity, healing, and living hope into their hearts when they felt completely forgotten. This is why we, as the Uniting Church, walk alongside our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in covenant. It is not just social activism or political support. It is because we have witnessed how Jesus steps into the darkest human suffering and brings true reconciliation and peace.

This brings us to a fundamental question for us as a church today. Here in Australia, we are surrounded by many wonderful community groups and charities. They work

hard to feed the hungry, care for the lonely, and fight for social justice. What they do is good, noble, and necessary. And as a church, we do the exact same thing. We care deeply about our local community. We reach out to those who are struggling, we feed those in need, we walk alongside the lonely, and we actively stand up for social justice right here where God has placed us. But what is the difference between a good community service organization and the Church of Jesus Christ? Are we just another social club doing good deeds? No, my friends. There is a profound, eternal difference. What we bring to our neighbours is not merely practical help; it is the living Gospel of Jesus Christ. A meal can fill an empty stomach for a day. Financial aid can relieve a temporary burden. But only Jesus can reach into a drowning human soul and transform it forever. Only the Gospel can take away the deep fear of death and replace despair with eternal hope. When Jesus steps into a person's life, everything changes. The broken-hearted find real comfort, the lost find their true identity, and those drowning in anxiety find a safe place to stand. Practical kindness is essential, but the greatest gift we can ever offer to our family, our neighbours, and our community is Jesus himself. It is the life-changing news that God loves them, that he sees them in their darkest hour, and that he is holding out his hand to save them. When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind died down, and deep peace filled the air.

Jesus does not promise us a life without trouble. We will still face hard days and unexpected storms. But when Jesus is in our boat, the storm no longer has the final say over our lives. If you are facing a heavy wind today—if you are worried about your children, your health, or your future—you don't need a complicated prayer. Just pray Peter's simple prayer: "Lord, save me." You don't need to see the whole path ahead. You just need to remember that he sees you. Fix your eyes on Jesus today. Let him step into your heart and into your home. Receive his peace, and let us go out as a church—not just doing good deeds, but boldly sharing the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ with a world that so desperately needs hope. Amen.

HYMN: Just as I am TiS 584 (Verses 1, 2, 4, and 6)

Just as I am, without one plea
but that your blood was shed for me,
and that you would my Saviour be,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, you will receive,
Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
here for a season, then above
O Lamb of God, I come.

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OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God,
Thank you for your endless blessings
and for guiding us through every storm of life.
We bring these gifts to you today with thankful hearts.
Bless these offerings, and use them to share your love, peace, and hope
with our community and the world.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Gracious God,
you meet us in the middle of our storms
and quiet our fears.
Today, we bring before you a world
in need of your peace, presence, and healing touch.

Lord, we pray for those suffering
from severe hunger, poverty, and illness.
In their dark and painful moments,
come to them and provide for their needs.

Lord, in the middle of their storm,
Meet them and hold them close.

God, we lift up nations torn apart by war and conflict.
We pray for all innocent victims

and those who have lost loved ones to violence.
Be their safe refuge and still the storms of hatred.

Lord, in the middle of their storm,
Bring Your peace and remember them.

We pray for our church family—
those here today and those who are absent.
Lord, you know who is feeling sick, lonely,
or overwhelmed by personal trials right now.

Lord, in the middle of their storm,
Meet them and calm their fears.

Lord, guide the future of our church.
Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus,
and make us a beacon of your love and hope
to our community and the world.

Lord, through every storm ahead,
Guide us and strengthen our faith.

All these prayers we offer in the precious name of Jesus,
who calms the sea and walks with us always.
All: ***Amen.***

Let us pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us
***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

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'
This is not my table, and it is not the church's table.
This is the table of Jesus Christ.
He prepares it for all of us, especially for those who are tired, burdened,
or walking through the storms of life.

You do not need to be perfect to come.
You only need to come as you are.
So come, eat, and drink.
Receive his peace, and know that you are deeply loved.
Everyone is welcome.

COMMUNION HYMN: You are holy TiS 753

You are holy, you are whole.
You are always ever more than we ever understand.
You are always at hand.
Blessed are you coming near;
blessed are you coming here
to your church in wine and bread,
raised from soil, raised from dead.

*You are holy, you are wholeness,
you are present, let the cosmos praise you, Lord!
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah, our 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.

We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature.
We praise you for forming us in your image and calling us to be your people.
We thank you that you did not abandon us in our rebellion against your love,

but sent prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation.

Above all we thank you for sending Jesus, your Son,
to deliver us from the way of sin and death
by the obedience of his life,
by his suffering upon the cross,
and by his resurrection from the dead.
We praise you that he now reigns with you in glory
and ever lives to pray for us.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit,
who leads us into truth, defends us in adversity,
and out of every people unites us into one holy church.
Therefore, with the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth
we worship and glorify you, God most holy, and we sing with joy.

***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 give thanks to God that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, before he suffered,
gave us this memorial of his sacrifice until he comes again.

The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed,
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.***

Eternal God, let your Holy Spirit move in power over us
and over these earthly gifts of bread and wine,
that our sharing of them may be for us
the communion of the body and blood of Christ,
and that we may become one in him.
May his coming in glory find us ever watchful in prayer,
strong in truth and love, and faithful in the breaking of the bread.

Then, at last, all peoples will be free, all divisions healed,
and with your whole creation we will sing your praise,
through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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

Thank you, Lord, for feeding us with your peace and love at this table.
As we leave this place, keep our faith strong in every storm,
and help us share your grace with everyone we meet.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

The Sending Forth of the People of God
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HYMN: Beauty for brokenness TiS 690

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord in the suffering, this is our prayer,
bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.

Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

(Refrain)

*God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.

(Refrain)

Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.

(Refrain)

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BLESSING

Go in peace,
knowing that you do not face the storms of life alone.
May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
and may his grace guide your steps in the week ahead.

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 God's blessing

May God's blessing surround you each day,
as you trust Him and walk in His way.

May His presence within
guard and keep you from sin,
go in peace, go in joy, go in love.

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