

Service at Kogarah Uniting Church – 11th October 2026 @ 10am

Pentecost 20 - God's Wide-Open Table

Acknowledgement of Country

It is sometimes hard to remember the events of recent days, let alone the months and years that have passed.

How staggering it is to hold in our hearts and minds the profound history of these lands, with all the stories and connections, that the Biddigal people of the Eora Nation have carried on Country here over many thousands of years.

We take a moment to appreciate and acknowledge this, honouring the Elders and the generations that have come before, that are here now, and those that will follow.

Lighting the Christ Candle

(點燃基督蠟燭)

God is here!

God is always here!

上帝在这里

上帝永远在这里

God is with us!

God is always with us!

上帝与我们同在，

上帝永远与我们同在

Saying who we are

(KUC 我们的身份宣言)

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

We come with busy minds, full hands, and many distractions. Yet, Jesus came to us with great news—life hums with a grand invitation to awaken to love; to a feast already prepared, a table opened wider than expected, a celebration of love that calls us in. Today, we invite God to meet us in our busyness, our preoccupations, and our fears.

As we gather, we tune our senses into the sounds and smells of God's wide-open table and take our place in the feast of grace.

Call to Worship

The table is set, and the doors are wide open.

We come, just as we are.

Not because we have earned a seat, but because we are invited.

From the busy streets and the quiet corners, we come.

Let us set down our burdens

and receive the joy of God.

The feast of God is ready.

Let us worship God.

Sing: TiS474 / AoV1-012 *Here in this place new light is streaming / Gather us in* (Marty Haugen).

<https://youtu.be/lbNXqjwh8is?si=1LCXBIRgeQaT2623>

**Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.**

**We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.**

Here we will take of wine and the water, here we will take the bread of new birth,

here you shall call your sons and your daughters,

call us anew to be salt of the earth.

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,

give us to eat the bread that is you;

nourish us well and teach us to fashion

lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,

not in some heaven light years away,

but here in this space, the new light is shining,

now is the kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in, and hold us forever;

gather us in, and make us your own;

gather us in, all peoples together,

fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

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Opening Prayer

Loving God,

host of the great feast.

You invite the good and the bad,

the tired and the brave,

the anxious and the hopeful,

to sit at your table.

In this hour, quiet our busy minds.

Help us to set down what weighs on us

and receive your loving presence.

May your Spirit be the music we hear

and your wisdom the bread we share.

Amen.

Sing: AoV2-020 / ATAR665 *Come to the feast of Heaven and Earth / Table of Plenty* (Dan Schutte)

https://youtu.be/t8O_PwPIKA?si=EbqZCGbrWB2S-v7X

Refrain

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

My God will provide for all that we need,

here at the table of plenty.

O come and sit at my table

where saints and sinners are friends.

I wait to welcome the lost and lonely

to share the cup of my love.

O come and eat without money;

come to drink without price.

My feast of gladness will feed your spirit

with faith and fullness of life.

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

***My God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.***

**My bread will ever sustain you
through days of sorrow and woe.**

**My wine will flow like a sea of gladness
to flood the depths of your soul.**

**Your fields will flower in fullness;
your homes will flourish in peace.**

**For I, the giver of home and harvest,
will send my rain on the soil.**

Come to the feast of heaven and earth!

Come to the table of plenty!

***My God will provide for all that we need,
here at the table of plenty.***

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Prayer of Confession

Loving God,
we confess that we often make excuses.
We become too busy with our own plans,
preoccupied with what we can manage,
and distracted from your invitation.

We confess that we sometimes stand at the edge of the feast,
judging who belongs,
or trying to come on our own terms.
Forgive us for narrowing our lives
around our own small concerns,
while your banquet of grace is spread before us.

A moment of silence.

Words of Grace

Hear the good news:
God does not ask for our credentials.
God meets us with mercy and calls us into grace.
In Christ we are clothed with love,
Welcomed into joy,
And invited to live as guests of God's feast.
We are forgiven.
We are welcome,

Thanks be to God.

We pass the Peace

Readings from the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 25:1-10

1.O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. ²For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. ³Therefore strong peoples will glorify

you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. ⁴For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, ⁵the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

⁶On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. ⁷And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. ⁸Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. ¹⁰For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain. The Moabites shall be trodden down in their place as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.

A wilderness prayer

Loving God,

when the wilderness is long

and we can't see you with us,

we choose to trust you.

When we are afraid

and want something to hold tight,

help us remember

that you are always holding us,

we choose to trust you.

Psalm 106:1–6, 19–23

¹Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord, or declare all his praise?

³Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

⁴Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; help me when you deliver them;

⁵that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage.

⁶Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly.

¹⁹They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast image.

²⁰They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

²¹They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt,

²²wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

²³Therefore he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

Readings from the Christian Scriptures

Philippians 4:1–9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. ²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your

minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22:1–14

2 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Offering

Generous God,
everything we have is a gift from your hand.
We bring these offerings—
our money, our time, and our lives—
not as payment for a place at your table,

but as a way to join in your feast.

Use these gifts to widen the circle of welcome
and share your grace with the world.

Amen.

Sing: ATW 475 / NCYC'01 / SP&P008 ***Come to the banquet there's a place for you*** (Faye White)

https://youtu.be/czRLWLOoqj8?si=UGTADm3_M0f0QaKK

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Though you maybe have no money,
though you maybe feel unworthy,
in your strength or in your weakness
you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

See, you are an honoured guest,
from constant serving you may rest;
so sit you down, be fed and blessed,
for you are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Woman, wise one, mother, maiden,
see your plate with food is laden
and your place is set and waiting.
You are welcome, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

**Worker, father, little boy,
old man or youth without employ,
come rest your worry, here is joy,
and you are welcome, come.**

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

**Whether you've been lost or faithful,
whether you've been wise or wasteful,
here's a place of rest and grace,
and you are welcome, come.**

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

**Here is one who runs to meet you,
loving arms stretched out to greet you.
Do not let your fear defeat you.
You are welcome, come.**

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

**Willing hands have made this bread
with yeast and salt and labour shared.
Let all the hungry ones be fed.
It's time for feasting, come.**

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

Abundant wine, enough for all!

Our generous, loving host has called.

The cup of blessing now is poured

for sweet communion, come.

Come to the banquet, there's a place for you.

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Reflection The Invitation that requires our response (Rev Natahsa He)

<https://saltbushcommunity.uca.org.au/resources/the-word-around-the-bush/pentecost-20-the-invitation-that-requires-our-response-matthew-221-14/>

Announcements

Prayers for Others

God of the wide-open table,

we pray for those who feel uninvited, unseen, or forgotten.

For those who are hungry in body,

may they find food, justice, and shared resources.

For those who are hungry in spirit,

may they find friendship, belonging, and hope.

We pray for those

living through the deep despair of loneliness, violence, grief, or war.

Let your mercy enter the hard places of our world.

Teach us to be a people who make room,

who pull the table wider,

and recognise every person as a fellow guest

in the feast of your love.

Loving God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

**MV 145 / CP418 / SP&P123 *Draw the circle wide* (Gordon Light) Video
Strathdee)**

<https://youtu.be/liM0flTqD6s?si=0yw71L5LFGftoen7>

Blessing/Benediction

As you leave this place,

go clothed in Christ's love.

Wear Christ's peace in the marketplaces.

Wear Christ's kindness in your home.

Wear Christ's joy in the wilderness.

The feast of God continues

wherever grace is shared.

May the God who welcomes you,

Christ who clothes you in love,

and the Spirit who sends you in joy,

bless and keep you.

Amen.

Sing: ***For everyone born*** S. Murray/B. Mann Seasons 4-14

<https://youtu.be/UeXC9jDUaNQ?si=uLLWSPkNistfMU1Z>

For everyone born, a place at the table,

for everyone born, clean water and bread,

a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,

for everyone born, a star overhead,

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair,
*and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:*
*yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong,

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free,
*and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:*
*yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,

for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace,
*and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:*
*yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*