

WELCOME

Welcome everyone as we join together again. From rooms, and homes, from the church and no matter where we are, we come together. Tomorrow, Sunday 27th July, we celebrate 29 years since the opening of the current church building. We are thankful to God and for all of the people who have been a part of this church.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come all ye people/U ya-i mose

(from Zimbabwe)

SHONA:

Uyai mose,
tinamate Mwari;
uyai mose,
tinamate Mwari;
uyai mose,
tinamate Mwari;
uyai mose zvino.

ENGLISH:

Come all you people,
come and praise your Maker;
come all you people,
come and praise your Maker;
come all you people,
come and praise your Maker;
come now and worship the Lord.

C.C.L.I. No. 237097

Come now and worship the Lord

We come to join with countless millions of people across the world. We join with those who can sing in their own homes and those who gather in churches unable to sing at this time of Covid. Yet no matter what we do or where we are, whether we can sing or whether we can't our spirits join in a song of praise.

SONG **TiS 53 Come sing praises**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN-AnV91VBO> music only

1. Come sing praises to the Lord above
rock of our salvation, God of love;
with delight into God's presence move,
for the Lord our God is king!
*God is king above the mountains high,
the ocean deep, the land and sky;
mighty continents and islands lie*

within the hollow of God's hand.

2. Come to worship him and bow the knee,
praise our shepherd with humility;
humble creatures in his hand are we –
sing the praise of God the king!
God is king...
3. Hear the story of God's people now,
you with stubborn hearts who will not bow;
learn what happened long ago and how
God can show you who is king.
God is king...
4. Forty years God kept the prize away,
made them wander till they would obey,
exiled all of them until the day
they would honour God as king.
God is king...

Words Michael Arnold Perry/Music Micheal Perry C.C.L.I. No. 237097

PRAYER

Eternal God, we come, young and old, from different places and diverse backgrounds to offer this time of worship to you. Help us to so focus our thoughts on you that we experience afresh your grace, mercy and love as fresh gifts in our lives.

We come with thanksgiving for 29 years in our church building, and the faithful people who planted this church so many years ago. We thank you for your presence and your call for us to be engaging in your mission in the world. We give you praise just as countless others have over the years. You have blessed us and you continue to bless us.

We praise you for blessing us in this way and for revealing your love in Jesus Christ. With his endless love flowing through us, and the Holy Spirit guiding us, may our love for you and all you created never cease.

God, source of loving kindness and strength, we worship you.

Jesus, foundation of our faith, we worship you.

Holy Spirit, ground of our very being, we worship you.

(silence)

TiS 689 The Sorrowing song

(Australia)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WxtpPCUDMc> words and music

*Lord, hear my praying, listen to me;
you know there's evil in what I see.
I know I'm part of all that is wrong:
still, won't you hear my sorrowing song?*

*Children are crying, hungry for food,
sick from diseases – God, are you good?
People are homeless, lost and alone:
God, are you hiding? Where have you gone?*

*Why do the rich ones steal from the poor?
Why do they build their weapons of war?
How can you sand the torture and pain,
hope disappearing, freedom in chains?*

*Jesus, remind us that you are found
with those who cry, with those who are bound:
where there is suffering, you will be there –
help us to follow: Lord, hear my prayer.*

Words and music Robin Mann

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Let us celebrate the assurance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners
And so, I declare to you: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven .

Thanks be to God!

TiS 720 Halle halle halle (3 x starting slowly then becoming more joyful)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds8hSP4I-SE> music only

Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Carribean traditional

STORY

Changes afoot

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly.

One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Until it suddenly stopped making any progress and looked like it was stuck. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shrivelled wings.

The man didn't think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But that didn't happen. The butterfly spent the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and a swollen body.

Despite the kind heart of the man, he didn't understand that the restricting cocoon and the struggle needed by the butterfly to get itself through the small opening; were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings. To prepare itself for flying once it was out of the cocoon.

The changes we have in life, and the struggles we sometimes are challenged by help us become stronger and to grow. The changes we are experiencing in the world and in Westmead, and in Parramatta Mission can and will make all of us stronger- if we can trust that God is with us.

READINGS

Genesis 29: 15-28

¹⁵ Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. ¹⁸ Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹ Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."

²² So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. ²³ But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. ²⁴ And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

²⁵ When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

²⁶ Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. ²⁷ Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.”

²⁸ And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

This is God’s word,

Let us give thanks to God

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

This is God’s word,

Let us give thanks to God

Reflective music- *On screen*

*You are my hiding place,
you always fill my heart
with songs of deliverance.
Whenever I am afraid I will trust in you.
I will trust in you; let the weak say,
‘I am strong in the strength of the Lord.’*

Words and Music Michael Ledner

SERMON ***The Kingdom of Heaven- Hidden yet revealed***

SONG **TiS 64 The great love of God** **(Thailand)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sdMssEBQoI> music only

The great love of God
is revealed in the Son,
who came to this earth
to redeem every one.

That love, like a stream
flowing clear to the sea,
makes clean every heart
that from sin would be free.

It binds the whole world,
every barrier it breaks,
the hills it lays low,
and the mountains it shakes.

It's yours, it is ours,
O how lavishly giv'n!
the pearl of great price,
and the treasure of heav'n.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray.

To you, God of Christ Jesus and our, we bring our concern for our sisters and brothers in all the world.

To you who seek justice and mercy, we pray for all who are wronged and neglected, and for those to work and suffer to right wrongs, champion the oppressed, and rescue the lost. We pray for strength and wisdom as people stand up in solidarity and in action in support of people.

Merciful God, work through our prayers,
Just God, work through our deeds...

To you Loving God, who fosters health of body and mind, we pray for the diseased, badly injured, deranged or spiritually dying, and also for all your human agents of healing and comfort. In this time of Covid 19 we pray especially for those who are afraid, for those who care, and for the countless others who wonder when will it all end.

Merciful God, work through our prayers,
Just God, work through our deeds...

To you who God of creation, we know you want the church to be at one in prayer and mission, we pray for the church in its divided and scattered condition, and also for those who work tirelessly for reconciliation. We recognise there are things that divide us, but instead of letting us use difference as a weapon, may we use it as a way to make us all richer.

Merciful God, work through our prayers,
Just God, work through our deeds...

To you who seeks the salvation of the world from evil and alienation, we pray for those without faith and hope, and for your servants who humbly and lovingly spread the Gospel of Jesus. May those of faith spread healthy seeds of the good news of Jesus Christ. May the words and actions be ones which bring reconciliation and health, rather than harm and exclusion. Help us to be faithful in our own witness as we seek to serve you, serve you and worship you in our lives.

Merciful God, work through our prayers,
Just God, work through our deeds...

To you God of liberation, who want each of us here to live with freedom and confidence, we pray for any among us who are feeling crushed by circumstances over which they seem to have no control, and we also pray for those of us who unobtrusively minister to each other like angels of mercy. Help us to be sensitive and caring in all that we say and do.

Merciful God, work through our prayers,

Just God, work through our deeds.

We give thanks for the visions of the people of Westmead in the past, and we pray for the leading of your Spirit as we move into the future, with uncertainty of our own but the certainty that you are always with us.

Most loving God, we pray with faith and with thanksgiving, knowing that you are already doing things far beyond our capacity to understand or imagine. Through Christ Jesus our persistent Saviour.

Prayers adapted from Rev Bruce Prewer

Amen!

...And now, let us join with the Christians of all nations in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples as we say

***Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.***

***And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever, Amen.***

OFFERING

Loving God, to the treasures of creation you have added the gems of the Spirit and the great pearl of the Gospel. Give us the wisdom to cherish your gifts, to share their bounty, and to glory in your generosity. Through Christ Jesus, in the power of your Spirit, to the praise of your inimitable love.

Amen!

Rev Bruce Prewer

PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of the Lord be with you

And also with you

SONG TiS 624 Christ be my leader

(Scottish traditional)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ym8iB29G6IU> music only

Christ be my leader by night as by day;

safe through the darkness, for he is the way.
Gladly I follow, my future his care,
darkness is daylight when Jesus is there.

Christ be my teacher in age as in youth,
drifting or doubting, for he is the truth.
Grant me to trust him, though shifting as sand,
doubt cannot daunt me; in Jesus I stand.

Christ be my Saviour in calm as in strife;
death cannot hold me, for he is the life.
Nor darkness nor doubting nor sin and its stain
can touch my salvation: with Jesus I reign.

Words Timothy Dudley-Smith/Music traditional Scottish C.C.L.I. No. 237097

BENEDICTION

As you go from this place may you be inspired to discover new treasures, and make some of your own.

May you bear the seed of God's kingdom in your words and in your actions.

May the Holy Spirit fill and inspire you with the wonderful knowledge that nothing is able to separate you from the love of God in Jesus Christ.