

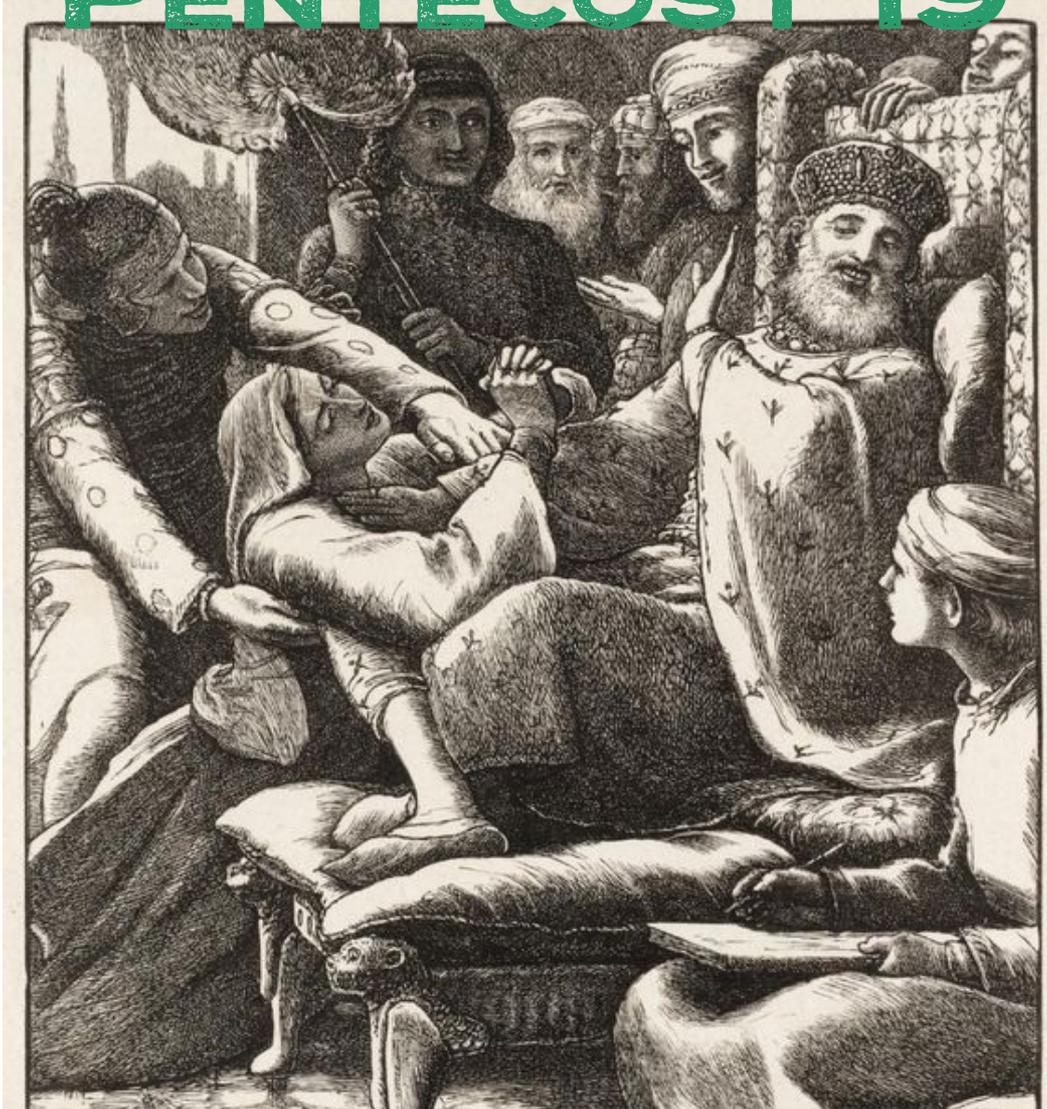


uniting  
church

in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 19



THE PERSISTENT WIDOW  
& THE HEARTLESS JUDGE

16 October 2022

## WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday.

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

Today we light this candle on this Sunday in celebration of the dignity of all people, without limits.

*The candle is lit*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, and pay our respects to their elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the living Burrumattagal people today.

## GATHERING PRAYER

Gracious God,  
in the debris and litter of the world,  
you clear a place where we can be planted:  
producing justice and hope among the oppressed;  
*expressing righteousness which receives  
even our enemies in peace.*

Jesus Christ,  
you break up the stony ground of our hearts,  
so grace might be planted.  
You touch our hearts and minds to inspire us  
*so we can stand as new people  
on the far shores  
on your coming realm of compassion and justice.*

Holy Spirit,  
you accompany us,  
walking with us on the paths of life with its complexity,  
encouraging us to face divisions  
and challenges to just and right living,  
*especially to empower  
the excluded, the poor and the needy.*  
*Amen!*

**HYMN**    *God of dawn (Tune153)*

God of dawn, each day's renewal  
brings the world into your light.  
As your sun defeats the shadows,  
drives away the darkest night:  
we would greet this new beginning  
as your call to start again,  
lead us on with hope and courage,  
make your will and purpose plain.

Christ, you walked the world as we do,  
knew its human pain and loss.  
As your love broke through the barriers  
by your death upon the cross;  
we still speak your gospel message,  
though two thousand years have gone.  
Help us now translate its meaning  
in this present world of wrong.

Holy Spirit, inspiration,  
light and truth and root of prayer,  
as your challenge moves us forward  
taking us we know not where:  
we will follow your direction,  
though the way may not be clear.  
Shape us, change, recreate us,  
so the future holds no fear.

Praise to God, who spoke creation,  
giving life to time and space.  
Praise to Christ, whose living presence  
showed the world your human face.  
Praise the Spirit, daily witness  
to you ever-loving way.  
Take us now and reawake us,  
challenge us to use this day.

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## PRAYER FOR NEW RELATIONSHIPS

There are times, O God,  
when we would turn the other way,  
rather than encountering  
the challenges of your life.  
We fear your fierce defence  
of the powerless  
and we fear what you may call us to do in response.

*Silent reflection*

Have mercy on us, O God.  
***Even as you call us again,  
come to us with your kindness, we pray.***

When we judge others  
and fail to recognise your friends  
because they are different from us:

*Silent reflection*

Have mercy on us, O God.  
***Even as you call us again,  
come to us with your kindness, we pray.***

If we have reduced the journey of faith  
to an easy walk through welcoming places,  
or have chosen silence  
when you call us to speak for others:

*Silent reflection*

Have mercy on us, O God.  
***Even as you call us again,  
come to us with your kindness, we pray.  
Amen!***

## ASSURANCE *Come home to ourselves*

May all that is unforgiven in you  
Be released.  
May your fears yield

Their deepest tranquilities.  
May all that is unlived in you,  
Blossom into a future,  
Graced with love.

*(Source: John O'Donohue, To Bless the Space between us)*

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS** Luke 18:1-8 (Inclusive Text)

Jesus told the disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart.

'There was a judge in a certain town,' Jesus said,  
'who had neither fear of God nor respect for persons.  
'In the same town there was a widow  
who kept coming to the judge and saying,  
"I want justice from you against my enemy!"  
'For a long time the judge refused, but at last said,  
"Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for persons,  
but since she keeps pestering me  
I must give this widow her just rights,  
or she will persist in coming and worry me to death."  
And Jesus said,  
'You notice what the unjust judge has to say?  
Now will not God see justice done to the chosen who cry out  
day and night even when God delays to help them?  
'I promise you, God will see justice done to them, and done speedily.  
But when the Promised One comes,  
will any faith be found on earth?'

### **2 Timothy 3:14-4:5** (NRSV, Anglicised)

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 15 and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and is[a] useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge

you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

## RESPONSE

*O God our nurturer,  
may your word live in us.  
**And colour our living. Amen!***

## REFLECTION

### HYMN *I the Lord and Sea and Sky (TiS 658)*

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard My people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin,  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear My light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart  
I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have born my peoples pain.  
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak My word to them,

Whom shall I send?  
Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them,  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide,  
Till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give My life to them,  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me.  
I will hold Your people in my heart

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## OFFERING PRAYER

Receive and bless these gifts and our lives, O God,  
which we offer in response to your love  
revealed so clearly in Jesus.

As he planted the seeds of love and life in our lives,  
strengthen us to nourish others with the fruits  
of our faith made visible through these gifts,  
our love and our witness.

*In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRAYER FOR OTHERS

O Jesus Christ, Spirit breathing compassion,  
trusted one, who loves us all,  
enlarge our hope we pray.

We do not call for false positives  
in the face of trials and tragedies.  
We pray instead for the wisdom  
to stand beside others  
in genuine caring and empathy,  
walking with them so that they are held  
and strengthened for what lies before them.

***Give to us a wider view  
of what love might mean, O Christ.***

May we see many answers to our prayers,  
rather than insisting that our own petitions  
as the only acceptable responses to what lies before us.  
May we see gifts of courage  
and endurance,  
the love of supportive friends  
and family,  
or other offerings  
which you may give to us,  
as worthy responses to our requests for healing.

We pray now in thanks for the good  
and for those who struggle each day within the world:  
*the people pray*

Enable us to share  
in the healing of others, O Christ.

***May we spread out the life of your church  
like a cloak of comfort and tenderness,  
warming the lives of those who feel  
left out in the cold and showing your love  
to the lonely and vulnerable.***

For we long to follow your example, Jesus Christ.  
We pray that your church  
always will be seen  
as the source of your Gospel  
in lived life among the people.

*Amen.*

**HYMN**     **A New Commandment** (*TiS, 699*)

A new commandment I give unto you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.  
By this shall all know that you are my disciples,  
if you have love one for another;  
by this shall all know that you are my disciples:  
if you have love one for another. (Sung twice)

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**BLESSING**

Take up the cross of Christ  
and go into the world in faith.

May the God  
who dances in creation  
who embraces us with human love,  
who shakes our lives like thunder,  
bless us  
and drive us out with power  
to fill the world with justice,

*Amen.*

*Janet Morley, All desires known*