

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 8



23 JULY 2023

WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together
to celebrate the eighth Sunday of Pentecost.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

May this flame remind us of the light of wisdom.
May the warmth of its glow remind us
of the warmth of God's empowering love.

(Adapt. Vernon Marshall).

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE LAND

We acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

OPENING SENTENCES

Generative God,
you are the love
of each living creature.
You are the warmth
of the rising sun!

You are the whiteness
of the moon at night
You are the the life
of the growing earth

You are the strength
of the waves of the sea.

Speak to us this day O God
Speak to us your truth.
Dwell with us in this time O God

Dwell with us in love.

Adapted: J Philip Newell, Celtic Prayers, Iona

HYMN **Great Artist** *[Tune, TiS 107]*

1. Great Artist, each dawn
you paint gold and vermilion;
You shape Uluru, mountain gorge, beaches, plains;
You plant every hill
with grevillea and wattle.
Teach us to trace your footprints
in this dry brown land.

2. Through Noah, you gave peoples
bow for a covenant;
From Ur, you called Abram;
you worked with Israel -
In history, in exile,
they learned your grace and justice.
Help us perceive your presence
in our history too.

3. Here too in Australia
the ancient ones met you;
You taught them your law -
to protect mother Earth,
To care for each other,
enjoy in peace earth's goodness.
May we discern in these
your self-unveiling too.

4. In Jesus, the Christ,
you came sharing our stories;
A Jew, one of us, gentle stranger to all;
He taught us respect every person,
pale or darker.
Heal by his wounds the scars
our words and deeds have wrought.

5. Great God of the people
of this land and Hebrew,
The Parent of Jesus -
we know you are one.
Now help us see you
in our neighbour and our landscape.
With this soil and its people,
make us one, we pray.

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PRAYER

Nurturing God, like seeds,
though we are different,
we grow in the same field
and together we are nourished
and nurtured by the sun.
We sway in the wind
and are refreshed by the rain.
In our hearts we know
that we are a mystery
and that we grow towards
what you call us to be.

When we deprive others
of that same opportunity,
forgive us, merciful God.
When we want to uproot
those whom we believe
do not belong in our part of the field,
forgive us, merciful God.
When we label others as good or bad
rather than accept them
for who they are,
forgive us, merciful God.

When we deny that we ourselves
are a mixture of weeds and wheat,
forgive us, merciful God.

When we are afraid to look
into the fields of our own lives
to see what is growing there,
forgive us, merciful God.

Nuturing God, enable us to empower
the uprooted and rejected,
the lonely and the outcast,
and to develop and grow
the good in ourselves,
in others and in the world. Amen!

Adapted: Moira Laidlaw

GOSPEL Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43 (Inclusive Text)

Jesus put a parable before the crowds: The realm of God may be compared to a sower who sowed good seed in a field. While everybody was asleep an enemy came, sowed weeds all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the weeds appeared as well.

The owner's servants came and said: 'Was it not good seed that you sowed in your field?

If so, where does the weeds come from?'

'Some enemy has done this', the owner answered.

And the servants said:

'Do you want us to go and weed it out?'

No, because when you weed out the weeds you might pull up the wheat with it.

Let them both grow until the harvest.

And at harvest time I will tell the reapers:

'First collect the weeds and tie it in bundles to be burnt,
then gather the wheat into my barn'.

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Human One; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the realm of God; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and

the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Human One will send his angels, and they will collect out of God's realm all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Parent God. Let anyone with ears listen!

RESPONSE In these words God speaks to us!

May they come alive in our living! Amen!

REFLECTION

HYMN *God With Joy we look around us* (Tune: **431** TiS)

God with joy we look around us
At your world's diversity.
Folk of every kind surround us
And you call your church to see;
All are made in your own image!
All are people whom you love.

In the times we've hurt each other,
Christ, we've hurt the ones you bless.
Hating sister, cursing brother,
We've denied what you express;
All are made in your own image!
All are people whom you love!

God, you sent a Saviour to us,
Breaking walls that would divide.
By your Spirit, now work through us
As we witness side by side;
All are made in your own image!
All are people whom you love!

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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

HYMN *When God's spirit*

1. When God's spirit lends a lightness
to the songs we want to sing,
when we celebrate the brightness
that the love of God can bring;
then the grace of God surprises,
and our faith in God grows strong,
as the praise that we have sought for
is re-echoed in our song.

2. Here in song we find a freedom,
music wings our words on high,
now we know this is the season,
now we know the reason why
life is filled with exaltation,
joy inspires each love and life,
lifts beyond our expectation,
brings an end to former strife.

3 On beyond our pain and sorrow,
walking onward into light,
we will greet a new tomorrow
colours flaming out of night.

Light is dawning on the future,
guiding us within this maze;
love and grace will hold and nurture,
forming faith, reclaiming praise.

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PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Creator and Sustainer God,
We thank You for those who supply us
with the necessities of life,
especially, today, we pray for farmers and all who bring us our food.

***Merciful and gracious God
Hear our prayer***

We pray for doctors,
both those who look after our bodies
and those who tend minds.
We pray for all who are ill
or who have long term ill health:
for those who suffer from pain in their bodies
and those who suffer in mind and spirit.
Bring them healing and a better quality of life.

***Merciful and gracious God
Hear our prayer***

We pray for leaders, in our community, in our nation, and around the world.
Give them wisdom, keep them honest,
and may they care for all the people whom they are called to serve.

***Merciful and gracious God
Hear our prayer***

Creator of all races and ethnicities,
enable us see that a diverse church and community
deepens our lives and to know you more deeply.
Open our hearts and minds to embrace
all things necessary for a truly inclusive, intercultural church.

God who creates diversity: hear our prayer.

Guard us from fear of the “other,”
from the fear that our own security is threatened
if we become truly willing to make the table for all.
Open us to live out what we profess to believe:
That our true security is in You
and in your call to justice and peace,
That we are a part of your global family,
That, because of your Incarnation,
the human dignity of everyone is sacred,
and that we are constantly called
to conversion and inclusive community.

God who creates diversity: hear our prayer.

Journey with us God,
as we create new ways of being a truly inclusive church -
give us the courage to breakdown structures that divide
and open our hearts to be challenged by difference.
Give us the spirit to embrace diversity and difference.

God who creates diversity: hear our prayer

We pray that you help us recognise
any forms of prejudice in our hearts,
and in our legal systems and social structures.

Forgive us for our sins of exclusion.

Heal our souls and spirits.

Ground us in compassion for all through your grace.

God who creates diversity: hear our prayer.

Enable us take the steps you call us to take
To build a more just community and inclusive church,
Where difference is respected
and all rejoice in the common good.

Through the mercy of God, we pray. ***Amen.*** (Fie Marino)

HYMN *Shalom* (TiS 778)

Shalom to you now
Shalom my friends
May God’s full mercies

Bless you my friends
In all your living
And through your loving
Christ be your Shalom,
Christ be your Shalom.

Elise S Eslinger

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BLESSING AND SENDING

May the God who shakes heaven and earth,
whose Spirit blows through
the valleys and the hills;
whom death could not contain
and who lives to disturb and bring us life;
bless us with the power to endure,
to hope and to love.

Amen.