

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 10



COMPASSION FOR THE SHEPHERDLESS!
building community
sharing resources
changing conditions

6 AUGUST 2023

WELCOME A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

Today we light this candle which announces that the crucified risen Christ breathes love into reconciliation, inspiring transformed relationships.

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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

Host at the feast of life,
where the people gather in hope
and all have enough and more:

***Jesus Christ,
abundance of compassion.***

Affirming Spirit of Christ,
who takes the little that we offer
and expands it
beyond our wildest dreams:

***Holy Spirit,
spirit of abundant compassion.***

Centre of all life,
filling the universe with promise,
and weaving symbols
of gracious community:

***Creator God,
God of abundance.***

***We gather to celebrate
our relationship!***

HYMN *God's love gives freedom (Tune: 217 (i) TiS)*

God is love. Our gospel story.
Told so we might comprehend;
Through Christ's life we see God's glory.
Not as despot, but as friend.
Seen as humble, seen as serving.
Not omnipotent, severe;
But as love to undeserving.
Not as distant, but so near.

God is love, we need not tremble.
God forgives and does not blame.
We, confessing, don't resemble
Those weighed down by guilt and shame.
Punishment for past wrong-doing,
In God's dealings, has no place.
Love in constant, keeps pursuing
Humankind of every race.

God is love and love gives freedom;
Freedom from all fear and guilt.
God is love and love gives welcome;
Broken lives can be rebuilt.
And this love grows even stronger
As disciples live this way.
For to love and serve one's neighbour
Is to do God's will each day.

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WORDS OF GRACE & CHANGE

Jesus Christ, the Human One,
who walked among the people long ago
and gave to them the confidence to come near,
we pray that we will find that same trust today

as we look at our lives before you.
There are always things which we grieve
in your Holy presence,
failures and mistakes, weaknesses,
or too much confidence
in our own convictions.

***We stay in silence now before you
and reflect on the realities of our lives:***

Silent reflection

We grieve our struggling journeys, Jesus Christ.
May we receive your loving forgiveness, we pray.

Even as your church, the people of God,
we know we are far from perfect.
We are sorry that there are times
when we do not reflect your vision for us.

Silent reflection

We grieve our struggling journeys, Jesus Christ.
May we receive your loving forgiveness, we pray.
Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

As with the tired and hungry
whom the disciples wanted
to turn away unfed,
yet whom Jesus did not discard...
today Jesus refuses to send us away.

The feast of grace and hope
is set before us again,
as a free and liberating gift
of the compassionate Christ,
no matter who we are.

Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 32: 22-31

²²The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.

²⁴Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁷So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." ²⁹Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. ³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." ³¹The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

Mark 6: 34a

As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd;

Matthew 14:13-21

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

RESPONSE

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

SONG **Meet me in the middle of the air**

Paul Kelly & The Storm Water Boys, Foggy Highway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g34-nB3oym4>

i am your true shepherd

i will leave you there

beside still waters

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

i will lay you down

in pastures green and fair

every soul shall be restored

i will meet them in the middle of the air come and meet me in
the middle of the air

through the lonesome valleys

my rod and staff you'll bear

fear not deaths dark shadows

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

with oil i shall annoint you

the table i shall prepare

your cup will runneth over

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

in my house you'll dwell forever

ye shall not want for care

surely goodness and mercy will follow you

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

come and meet me in the middle of the air i will meet you in the
middle of the air

i will meet you in the middle of the air

REFLECTION

HYMN “Where Does Compassion Start?”

(Tune: ‘Love Unknown’, TiS 341)

1. Where does compassion start?
How does compassion grow?
Her seed is at the heart
of every faith we know:
compassion honours others' place,
dethroning self with willing grace.
2. How does compassion thrive
in worlds of greed and grief?
Her goodness stays alive
through those of strong belief:
compassion, luminous and clear,
outshining wastes of war and fear.
3. Where is compassion's role
in cultures, or in creeds?
At centre, with the soul
who feels another's needs:
compassion brings the touch of friend,
a bandage that will bind and mend.
4. Dynamic is the power
that heals, restores and gives,
connecting at the core
with everyone who lives,
transcending culture, colour, race,
compassion builds the house of peace.

(Shirley Erena Murray, 2009. © Hope Publishing)

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OFFERING

As you have done with us, may we share our lives with others,
holding nothing back, but offering our treasures and lives:
that hope may be restored, that healing might touch the broken,
that we resource the hunger of body and soul, that the suffering

might be revived, and that all might know of your steadfast love in their lives. This we pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

(Adaped: Thom Shuman)

PRAYER FOR ALL PLACES & PEOPLE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rot5M9Kirhc&t=196s>

We pray for the lonely ones
knowing that some of us are lonely
and we pray for the heartbroken ones
knowing that some of us are heartbroken
All our hearts and minds are leaning in with clear intention
joining in your way of love in the world
We pray for the wounded
knowing that some of us are wounded
and we pray for the regretful ones
knowing that some of us are regretful
All our hearts and minds are leaning in with clear intention
joining in your way of love in the healing
We pray for the starving ones
knowing that some of us are starving
and we pray for the imprisoned ones
knowing that some of us are imprisoned
All our hearts and minds are leaning in with clear intention
joining in your way of justice in the world
We pray for the dying ones
knowing that some of us are dying
and we pray for the newly born ones
knowing that some of us are arriving
All our hearts and minds are leaning in with clear intention
joining in your way of love in the world. **Amen.**

SONG *Stories told and handed to us*
 (Tune: What a friend we have in Jesus)

1. Stories told and handed to us
 tell of ancient deeds so bold.
But they can forget the lowly –
 those, at margins, stay untold...

Yet with Christ, and at this table,
all are welcomed at this feast.
Christ, help us to centre justice.
Lead your world toward your peace!

2. Whilst we know the name of Isaac,
Abraham and Jacob, too,
Help us carry now Rebekah's,
Sarah's, Rachel's, names anew.
So, with Christ around this table
all are welcomed to this feast!
If you think you're high and mighty
share this table with the least!

3. In God's deep blue sea of islands
life thrives in the dark below.
Let it never be forgotten –
exploitation, greed must go!
As with Christ around this table
life's abundant at this feast!
Bread and wine of life and wonder
all are hungry for your peace!

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COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Holy Table of Jesus Christ
waits for its honoured guests:
all of us who come in humble faith.
Here lies the hospitality of God,
the open heart of Christ
and the dancing life of the Holy Spirit.

***In eating and drinking
this life-giving sacrament***

we are fed by God's love.

THE PEACE

As Jesus departed, he promised that God would gift us
with the Spirit of Truth,
and Jesus gifted us with his Peace!
The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

We thank you, O God,
for the wonder of the threads of hope
which you weave through all creation;
for small signs which you give to us each day,
if only we will look:
for fragile flowers in forest and bushland,
for colour in a rock
and a smile on the face of a child.

We thank you, O God.

We thank you for gifts which wait for us
if we will see them:
in a small kindness from one to another,
in a word of insight from an unexpected place.
Thank you for a brave laugh surviving in sadness
and for faithful love which stand the test of every day.

We thank you for your gifts to us, O God.

We give you thanks that as we stay
and go down deep into the heart of Christ
we may go past our own shadow places
and gently stand on the ground of truth.
We thank you that there, in surprising grace,
lies peace and new things waiting to be born in us,
held within our own longings.

And so we praise you
with the faithful
of every time and place,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

***Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and vulnerability,
heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One who comes
in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.***

THE INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

“This is my body, which is for you.

Do this to remember me”

In the same way, after supper,
Jesus took the cup
and again giving thanks, said:

“This cup is the sign of my new covenant with you.

Do this as often as you drink it
to remember me.”

THE INVOCATION

Be present risen Lord Jesus, by your Holy Spirit,
as you were with your disciples
and make yourself known to us
in the breaking of the bread,
for you live and reign with the Creator

and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever. *Amen.*

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

*Our Parent God, who cares for us,
the wonder of whose presence fills us with awe.
Enable kindness, love and justice
shine in our world.*

*May your secrets be known
here on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us the food and hope
that we need for today.*

*Forgive us our wrongdoing
as we forgive the wrongs
done to us.*

*Protect us from pride and despair
and from the fear and hate
which can swallow us up.*

*In you are truth, meaning, glory and power,
while worlds come and go. Amen.*

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break
is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take
is a sharing in the life blood of Christ.

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

O God we give you grateful thanks for all that lies
within this sacred feast.

May we carry into the world
the bread which brings life
and the wine of compassion
for all who wait in longing.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, *Amen*

HYMN

Sent forth by God's blessing (TiS531)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q9HOEDvBwI>

1. Sent forth by God's blessing,
Our true faith confessing,
The people of God from His dwelling take leave.
The Supper is ended.
O now be extended
The fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of His teaching,
Receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
His grace did invite us,
His love shall unite us
To work for God's kingdom and answer His call.

2. With praise and thanksgiving
To God ever-living,
The tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing,
In love ever caring,
Embracing His children of each tribe and race.
With Your feast You feed us,
With Your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.

Then may all the living
With praise and thanksgiving
Give honor to Christ and His name that we bear.

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BLESSING

May the God of creation
warm your heart
like the campfires of old.
Bring wisdom and peace
as shown to the first peoples of this land.
Shake off the dust from the desert plains
by the refreshing rains
followed by the glow and warmth of the sun.
Let the light of God
show us the right path
and stand tall like the big river gums
drawing life from the ever flowing waters.

*(Source: Uncle Vince Ross,
Victorian Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress)*