

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church



Human voices wake us
& we drown. *T S Eliot*

20 August 2023

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

LIGHTING OF THE 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.

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal 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

Grace us,
God in Community,
with love which is never exhausted,
with mercy ever flowing.

Craft us
new hearts
from the fragments
of your Calvary-broken own.

***Grasp us
close in your healing embrace,
feeding us with the Spirit's peace.***

Buoy us
in the sustainable wonder
of your dreams for us,
Holy in One. ***Amen.***

Thom M Shuman, Lectionary Liturgie

HYMN We Are Many (Tune: 'Hamilton')

1. We are many, we are one,
and the work of Christ is done
when we learn to live
in true community,
as the stars that fill the night,
as a flock of birds in flight,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine;
as the branches of a tree,
as the waves upon the sea,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine.

2. All division is made whole
when we honour every soul,
find the life of God
in every you and me,
as the fingers of a hand,
as the grains that form the sand,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine;
as the threads upon a loom,
as a field of flowers in bloom,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine.

3. We will join creation's song,
make a world where all belong,
build as one in peace
and loving harmony,
as the voices of a choir,
as the flames within a fire,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine;
as the snowflakes in the snow,
as the colours of a bow,
as the cluster of the grapes
upon the vine.

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PRAYER

For our incapacity
to feel the sufferings of others,
and our tendency
to live comfortably with injustice,
God forgive us.

For the self-righteousness
which denies guilt
and the self-interest
that strangles compassion.
God forgive us.

For our failings to form
inclusive community,
for our lack of understanding
of those different to own culture,
We ask your mercy.
Amen!

WORDS OF GRACE

God's love reaches
to the ends of creation,
and mends all brokenness.
God's grace tenderly,
gently, completely
makes us new people.
Thanks be to God!
Amen.

READING **Matthew 15. 21-28**

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Master, help me."²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's

food and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷ She said, “Yes, Master, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

RESPONSE

In these sacred readings we hear God speak
Thank you O God for your words of life.

REFLECTION

HYMN **Inspired by love and anger** (*TiS 457, tune*)

1. Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,
Informed of God's own bias, we ask him once again:

"How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?"

2. From those forever victims of heartless human greed,
Their cruel plight composes a litany of need:

"Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?"

3. From those forever shackled to what their wealth can buy,
The fear of lost advantage provoke the bitter cry:

"Don't query our position! Don't criticise our wealth!
Don't mention those exploited by politics and stealth!"

4. To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age,
We offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:

"When will the wronged be righted? When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?"

5. God asks, "Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?

And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?

And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?

And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?"

6. Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat,
Attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote,

A saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools

Has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.

John L Bell, Graham Maule

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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 OTHERS

Wind of God, keep on blowing.
Sail over the barriers that we build
that divide ourselves from each other.

Pick up your seeds
of freedom and truth
wherever they flourish,
***carry them across frontiers
to be planted in other soil,
to begin fresh and new forms.***

Fire of God, keep on burning,
smoulder in the hearts of people
where oppression keeps them chained
where our social constructs devalue their humanity.

Hear these our prayers, O God.
We pray for our congregation

Tongue of God,
speak peace where nations meet,
justice where intolerance lives and ideas clash,
***change and mercy
where power reigns***

*healing where minds and bodies hurt,
and love where people seek unity.
Amen.*

Adapted, Graham Cook, Say One for Me, 1990

HYMN

God of justice, God of mercy Tune 217 (i), Hyfrydol

1. God of Justice, God of mercy,
make us merciful and just!
Help us see all your creation
As from you a sacred trust.
And when people cry in anguish
For their own or other's pain,
Show us ways to make a difference,
O dear God, make us humane!

2. You have formed us,
God of rainbows,
In your image for your will,
Seeing our diverse reflections,
Trusting you, we marvel still;
For our colours, strengths and talents
Show what one alone would lack,
Calling us to work together -
Brown, red, golden, white and black.

3. Grant all people work with meaning,
Strength to care for those they love.
Food for table, truth for telling,
Challenges to rise above.
But remind us, God of justice,
This is now our work, our call!
Changing life's oppressive systems
Into ones empowering all.

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BLESSING

May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

May God bless you with a holy anger toward injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really can make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

BIDDING **May the feet of God walk with you** TiS 779

May the feet of God
walk with you,
and God's hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and God's ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and God's breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and God's love bring you home.

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