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## **PARRAMATTA CITY UNITING CHURCH**

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023

# **Holding Space for Hope**



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### **WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Warami budyari, warami mittagar – Good morning, hello friends!

We are welcomed in the language of the Darug nation upon whose land we gather and worship today. Since time immemorial, the Burramattagal people have lived and cared for this place. We acknowledge them and pay our respects to their ancient culture, to their elders past and present and emerging. We give thanks to God for First Nations people across this vast land, and we commit ourselves to the ongoing call to justice and to reconciliation.

### **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Each Sunday we begin this time of worship by lighting the Christ candle - for Jesus is the Light and the Hope of the World.

*The candle is lit.*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

God of calls to us today:

May we have the faith to go where God leads us.

God calls us today:

May we be a people of hope, working for justice and peace to build up the reign of God on earth.

Jesus, the son of the Living God, calls us now:

May we worship God, follow Jesus, and be moved by the Spirit to do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God, now and always.

**Amen.**

**SONG:** "Gather us in" (TIS 474) (# *Three verses only*)

Here in this place new light is streaming, Now is the darkness vanished away  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, Brought here to you in the light of this day

*Gather us in, the lost and forsaken Gather us in, the blind and the lame  
Call to us now and we shall awaken We shall arise at the sound of our name*

We are the young, our lives are a mystery, We are the old who yearn for your face  
We have been sung throughout all of history, Called to be light to the whole human race

*Gather us in, the rich and the haughty  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly  
Give us the courage to enter the song*

Not in the dark of buildings confining  
Not in some heaven light years away  
But here in this place the new light is shining  
Now is the kingdom, now is the day

*Gather us in and hold us forever  
Gather us in and make us your own  
Gather us in, all peoples together  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones*

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## **PRAYERS**

Ever faithful God, we come before you with thanksgiving, deeply grateful for the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown toward us,

When we call out, you are there. When we are anxious or tired, you give us strength to go on. When we find ourselves in trouble, you sustain us.

And so, we come before you with gratitude and praise, offering you the worship of our hearts and lives.

But as we do so we are conscious we have let you down you in many ways.

We fail to do justice. We fail to show mercy. We have forgotten to be kind and generous.

Wake us up to see the violence, the injustice and the sheer lack of grace in our world today.

Forgive us and help us to turn to you, to live into your ways of justice, peace and mercy. Amen.

And friends, God knows our hearts, and God hears our prayers.

God will help us onto right paths. God forgives. God restores us to do God's work in this world.

Know that you are a beloved child of God, and that there is always time to do something new.

Amen. *(prayers adapted from Rev Mindi Welton-Mitchell: Rev-o-lution Worship Resources)*

## **THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you.  
And also with you.

*(We share the peace with one another)*

**SONG:** "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (TIS 745)

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God And His righteousness, And all these things shall be added unto you  
Allelu Alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you Seek and ye shall find, Knock and it shall be opened unto you  
Allelu Alleluia

We shall not live by bread alone But by every word, That proceeds from the mouth of the Lord,  
Allelu Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia  
Al - le - lu - ia  
Al - le - lu - ia  
Al - le - lu Al - le - lu - ia

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## **BIBLE READING: Exodus 1:8 - 2:10**

<sup>8</sup>Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup>He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. <sup>10</sup>Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." <sup>11</sup>Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. <sup>12</sup>But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites.

<sup>13</sup>The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, <sup>14</sup>and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

<sup>15</sup>The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup>“When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. <sup>18</sup>So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” <sup>19</sup>The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” <sup>20</sup>So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. <sup>22</sup>Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

<sup>2</sup>Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup>The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup>When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. <sup>4</sup>His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. ‘This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Yes.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, ‘because’, she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’

**The Word of Life:**  
Thanks be to God.

### **REFLECTION: “But they let the boys live”**

#### **RESPONSE**

Holy God, we hold space for hope Hope of healing of all that is broken in our communities, our nation and in the world. We long for a world where the weak and vulnerable, the lonely and the forgotten, the excluded and the oppressed will be valued, included and receive justice.

**Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer**

We hold space for hope, Hope for encouragement when you do not seem present or when the things of life just seem too much. We long to know you better and to trust in your mercy and help.

**Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer**

We hold space for hope, Hope for healing in midst of global pandemics, economic hardship. violence, abuse, and the climate crisis. We long for a world where there will be peace, where bullies, abusers and warmongers will be silenced, and those who suffer will be safe.

**Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer**

We hold space for hope, Hope for the blessing of community as we worship in this place. We long for a world where everyone can gather to break bread together.

**Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer**

We hold space for hope, Hope for the needs and the concerns of each person here. Last week we brought our laments to you. We offer them to you in the hope that you will continue to reach out to us and show us the way.

**Lord in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Healing God, mend all that is broken, make your loving presence known, forgive us when we fail you and, as you gave hope to your people of old. Holy God, we hold space for hope: give us hope for the future.

**Amen.**

*(This response was adapted from: [Holding Space for Hope: A Liturgy of Hope and Healing – Virtual Chapel of St. Phoebe – Episcopal Diocese of Virginia \(virtual-chapel.com\)](#))*

**SONG:** “All my hope on God is founded” (TIS 560)  
(# Four verses only)

All my hope on God is founded, all my trust he will renew;  
through all change and chance he guides me, only good and only true:  
God unknown, he alone calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory, sword and crown betray our trust;  
all that human toil can fashion, tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God’s power, hour by hour, is my temple and my tower.

Day by day our mighty giver grants to us his gifts of love;  
in his will our souls find pleasure, leading to our home above:  
love shall stand at his hand, joy shall wait for his command.

Still from Earth to God eternal sacrifice of praise be done;  
high above all praises praising for the gift of Christ his Son:  
hear Christ’s call, one and all – we who follow shall not fall.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

We proclaim our faith not only in words, but with our lives and these gifts we offer to you.  
O God, we pray that, through the giving of these gifts, others might be transformed by your grace, your hope, and your peace. Amen.

*(Adapted from: Liturgy for August 24, 2014 <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>)*

### **PRAYER FOR OTHERS**

*(# With the bidding; “In your mercy”, invite the congregation to respond:  
“Hear our prayer”)*

Gracious God, like the Israelites in the wilderness, we too have known your love, and experienced your care and provision.

You invite us to extend that love to the world around us— to care for others as deeply as we care for ourselves. And so, we bring the needs of our world before You now.

In Your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the many who do not have enough: enough food to eat, or shelter to keep warm; enough employment, or money to pay their bills; enough medicine or medical care.

Lord, in Your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We also pray for those who have more than enough, but who still struggle to find meaning and purpose in life; who indulge in dangerous or self-serving activities to dull their pain or loneliness.

Lord, in Your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God, your grace reaches out to all of us. You call us to live as citizens of heaven, working together with one heart and mind. Strengthen us to live in a manner worthy of the Good News we have received, offering our lives in service of your kingdom, where the last are first, and the first are last, and there is grace enough for all.

Lord, in Your mercy, **Hear our prayer. Amen.**

*(Christine Longhurst: [re:Worship \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](re:Worship (re-worship.blogspot.com)))*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

### **INVITATION**

Jesus invites us all to his supper.

This is a table of hope as, in this special meal, we are assured that the Spirit of the living Christ is with us now and always to restore and renew. Therefore, let us join together in praise and thanksgiving:

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, O God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Out of fear and anxiety, out of anguish and pain, you breathe life into our weary ways. Even in the worst of times, you remain steadfast and true.

In you there is hope:  
For you love us with a love that is abundant, generous, and unconditional.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your son Jesus Christ, who redeems us all. He welcomed those deemed strangers, and he challenged the status quo. He delivered, fed, and cared for those whom society ignored. And he continues to offer hope to a world shadowed in darkness.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honour and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**Amen**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.  
Amen.**

## **BREAKING THE BREAD**

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

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

*(The communion stewards are invited to come forward)*

## **DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREAD AND CUP**

*(People are invited to come forward and receive the bread and the cups which will be served by communion stewards)*

The body of Christ broken for you.

The blood of Christ given for you.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Loving God, at this table you graciously feed us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

May we who have reached out our hands to receive this sacrament - be strengthened in your service;

May we who have sung your praises - tell of your glory and truth in our lives;

My we who have seen the greatness of your love - see you face to face in your kingdom of justice, mercy, peace and love.

*(Christine Longhurst: [re:Worship](http://re:Worship) ([re-worship.blogspot.com](http://re-worship.blogspot.com)))*

**SONG:** "Make me a channel of your peace" (TIS 607)

Make me a channel of your peace Where there is hatred let me bring your love  
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord And where there is doubt true faith in you.

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand To be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of your peace Where there is despair in life let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness only light And where there's sadness ever joy.

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
It is in giving of ourselves that we receive And in dying that we are born to eternal life.

*(adaptation of the Prayer of [Saint Francis of Assisi](#) - All rights reserved. With permission One License A-604457)*

## **BLESSING**

Jesus, Son of the living God, help us to remember that you are alive in us.

May we be a people of hope, bearing witness to your enduring love, justice and peace.

Go with us now, as we step forward into the week to come.

And may the grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep you, this day and for ever.

Amen.

**SONG:** "Shalom to you" (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 Shoemaker Eslinger 1942- All rights reserved. With permission One License A-604457)*