

Parramatta City  
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church



**Walking on the waters of life's storms**  
creating a place of people,  
with failings and disagreements  
who still look out for one another;  
where we can all belong!

**10 September 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**

We long to find a place to relax, O God,  
to lean into the welcome and the love of real friends  
who stay true no matter who we are or what we've done.  
We want to be known – not just our names, but our selves,  
our dreams and longings, our fears and failings  
and be warmly, unrestrainedly welcomed.  
We yearn to know the joy of opening our arms to others  
and seeing them melt and grow soft in the safety  
of our acceptance.  
And you have created a place like this for us  
a place of people, with failings and disagreements  
who still look out for one another;  
a place of difference and struggle  
where we can all belong;  
a place of faith and deep doubt,  
a place of awkward stumbling toward Christlikeness;  
a place of worship, of mystery and of rest.  
And though we can't always see it,

although sometimes it doesn't feel like it;  
this is the place – here.  
Not the buildings and the furniture – no, these people  
who gather each week in your name  
and try so hard to remember each other's  
And for this place, and your being with us  
we give our heartfelt gratitude and devotion.  
Amen.

**HYMN** *Christ, you teach us of your Kingdom*  
(Tune: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*)

1. Christ, you teach us of your Kingdom  
And the common life we share.  
You remind us, "Be like children!"  
So we offer you our prayer:  
Make us gentle, make us humble,  
May we cause no one to stumble,  
Sheltered in your church's care  
Sheltered in your church's care.

6+6+

2. Shepherd, every lamb is cherished —  
Even those who go astray.  
You want none of us to perish  
Nor to wander from your way.  
When a sister or a brother  
Sins against you or another,  
Give us helpful words to say,  
Give us helpful words to say.

3. Let your love be our foundation  
When we need to challenge sin;  
May our quiet conversations  
Be the places we begin.  
For our judging and complaining  
And our gossip and our blaming  
Won't bring sinners home again.  
Won't bring sinners home again.

4. May we seek your will together,  
Bound together by rebirth.  
May we care for one another,  
Knowing every sinner's worth.  
Two or three — united, praying,  
Two or three — your love obeying,  
Are your voice and hands on earth.  
Are your voice and hands on earth.

*Text: © 2014 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.  
A6044575 All rights reserved*

*One License*

## **PRAYER**

*If a brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault  
when the two of you are alone. Matthew 18.15*

Well, don't go for "sin" or "fault:"  
it's too easy, and useless, to judge.  
But pay attention to "hurt."  
Defy that voice of false politeness  
and the repression of the truth.  
If someone hurts you,  
go toward them, not away,  
and name the hurt.  
Neither hide nor retaliate, even politely:  
simply, gently tell the truth.

***Let us claim your part of it,  
even if just to receive it,  
and to give them access to their part of it.  
Not to nail them, not to relieve yourself,  
but because you love them.  
Be prepared to listen—  
to their journey, and to your own.***

Think of it as opening a door  
to a place neither of you have gone before,

and can't without the other.  
Think of it as opening the door  
to that Jesus place.  
Imagine how refreshing the air would be  
in a community of open, caring honesty,  
without that hidden bucket of hurts  
fermenting under the kitchen sink.

***In the dark places where our hurts lie  
is the tomb from which Christ rises, alive,  
the very Christ who,  
wherever two or three are gathered in his love,  
is among us.***

*(Source: Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Unfolding Light)*

## **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**

### **Lev 19:17-18**

"You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am Yahweh."

### **Matthew 15. 21-28 (Adapted version)**

<sup>15</sup> "If your brother or sister fails you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the ekklesia, your community, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the community, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax

collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Parent God in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three 'convene to hear a case' in Jesus' name, Jesus is there as well."

## RESPONSE

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

## SONG

*if i could start today again PAUL KELLY*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNdYj\\_j9xmU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNdYj_j9xmU)

All the kings and queens  
Of the Bible  
They could not turn back time  
So what chance have I  
Of a miracle  
In this life of mine?

I only want one day  
So unsay the things I said  
Undo the thing I did  
Twenty four little hours  
Oh God please wipe them all away  
And I promise I will change

If I could start today again

I know I'm not the milk and honey kind  
Today I proved it true  
But when the red mist falls around my eyes  
I know not what I do  
Please give me back today  
And I won't say the things I said  
Or do the thing I did  
Every minute every hour

The replays just the same  
And I can't stand the shame

Let me start today again

I only want one day  
One lousy day  
That's all  
Of every day that's been before  
Since time began  
I know my prayer's in vain  
But for a second I'll pretend  
That I can start today again

## REFLECTION

### **HYMN**     *Brother sister let me serve you (TiS 650)*

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the nighttime of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I wil! weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,

born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

*Richard Gillard, With permission One License A6044575  
All rights reserved*

## 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 resouce 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)*

## NOTICES

### PRAYER FOR OTHERS

*When we pray for the church and the world,  
we lock in to the loving things God wants for humanity.*

Let us pray.

Loving God, Friend of the neglected and the despised folk,  
Friend also of the cherished and honoured ones,  
we offer to you our prayers for this world  
for which Christ gave his all.

We pray for the overthrow of the arrogant and cruel,  
and for discontent in the souls of the greedy and the careless.

***We pray for the uplifting of the meek and merciful,  
and for the encouragement of the poor and the pure.***

We pray for the recovery of the bruised and the lost,  
and the peace of those who thirst for righteousness.



***We pray for the feeding of the hungry in body or spirit,  
and for the healing of those who are dis-eased in body  
or mind.***

We pray for the comfort of the suffering and the grieving,  
and for the befriending of the lonely timid,  
or socially awkward people.

***We pray for the humbling of the church if it becomes  
proud,  
and for courage wherever it is shunned or persecuted.***

We pray for the strong and the weak in this congregation,  
and for the spiritual health of all other churches in the  
community.

We now pray for our congregation:

*The people pray*

You, Holy Friend, are more eager to give than we are to receive.  
Deal firmly with us your friends gathered here now,  
that we get rid of everything that clutters our souls,  
and make way for all the new blessings you have in store for us.

***Through Christ Jesus our Compassionate Companion.  
Amen!***

*Adapted: Bruce Prewer*

**HYMN**     ***Put On Love in Perfect Measure*** (Tune: Hyfrodol)

1. Put on love in perfect measure  
Chosen people, holy, loved.  
Clothe with kindness, God's compassion  
Tol'rance, each one God's beloved.  
All forgiven, all forgiving  
In the grace of Christ our Friend  
Bound as one in perfect measure  
Above all we put on love.

2. Put on love and patience, gentleness  
Modesty, wear all around  
In our hearts let peace rule deeply  
Peace our call; within, without  
Ever thankful as your body  
May Christ's peace dwell deep in our heart  
Bound as one in perfect measure  
As your people  
Each playing our part.

3. Let the word of Christ dwell richly  
Teach each other on the way  
May our doing, saying, living  
Be in Jesus' name, we pray  
Giving thanks to God, Creator  
Singing psalms and songs in praise  
Bound as one in perfect measure  
Clothed with love  
Through all our days.

*(Source: David MacGregor, Together to Celebrate)  
With permission One License A6044575 All rights reserved*

## **BLESSING**

Go into the world with no debt but love,  
for love will not harm, will do no wrong  
to your neighbour.  
Go into the world with no law but love,  
and you will keep God's commandments  
of love and honour.  
Go into the world with no prayer but love,  
and God will be with you, Christ  
will be in you, Spirit will be around you.

***Amen***

*(Source: Sarah Agnew, Pray the Story)*

**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.

*AUBREY PODLICH, With permission One License A6044575  
All rights reserved.*