



**uniting
church**

in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

**Parramatta City
Uniting Church**

PENTECOST 17

The Parable of
the Generous Landowner



Jesus calls for restorative justice.

Not violent, exclusionary, punitive behavior.

He became the forgiving victim
so we would stop creating victims ...

Richard Rohr

Combined Service

24 September 2023

OPENING Lali

INTROIT Leigh Fijian Choir

WELCOME & NOTICES
LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Today we light this candle proclaiming the transforming power of God. Today we celebrate the richness and diversity of life.

Christ is alive and living among us!
The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge this land that God has created and blessed.
We pay our respects to the traditional owners and elders of the Barramattagal clan of the Dharug nation, the first inhabitants of this place.
We honour their custodianship of the land on which we gather today and offer our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

SONG *Pass me not, Oh gentle Saviour* **Leigh Fijian Youth Choir**

OPENING SENTENCES

O God, source of human dignity,
in whose image we are created,
 May your Spirit of love and compassion
 pour upon us as living water.
Enable us to reverence each person,
to reach out to those in need,
to value and appreciate those who differ from us,
 to share our nations resources,
 to receive the gifts
 offered by people from other cultures.
Grant us the voice and courage
to speak out against injustice,
to stand for the oppressed, and embrace the marginalised.

***Remind us, O God, that we are all one
in the Body of Christ. Amen***

HYMN *O for a thousand tongues (TiS, 210)*

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of our God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
such music in the sinner's ears,
is life, and health, and peace.

3 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free:
Christ's life can make the foulest clean,
Christ's life availed for me.

4 He speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive,
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Charles Wesley 1702-1788 Public Domain

PRAYER

It is mystery that is beyond us, Jesus,
that our clumsy attempts at goodness,
our frail and faltering labours,
could make any contribution to Your saving work in our world.
Yet, You dignify and bless us
by inviting us into Your service,
and assuring us that what we do does matter.
And then, You add the gifts of joy, fulfilment, creativity
and Your own support and care.

***O God, your graciousness is infinite
We are grateful for you inclusive love.***

But sometimes we forget this grace,
and we begin to look around us.
We start to notice strange co-workers
who are doing things differently:

Some seem less committed than we are,
and others have come into Your service late,
after years of caring only for themselves;
Some appear to make mistakes
more than any valuable contribution they may offer;
and others seem to work against You by the way they live,
or the wrong things they believe...

Forgive us when we judge and denigrate the service of others,
and when we expect You to value and reward our work
more than anyone else.

*Forgive us when we challenge Your selection of labourers,
and when we question how You choose
to distribute Your grace.*

*Restore to us the joy of simple, faithful service,
and teach us to leave the recruitment,
and the results,
to You.
Amen*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 20: 1-16

Matthew 20: 1-16

“For the Realm of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.³When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here

idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’ ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

RESPONSE

In these words God speaks to us!
May they come alive in our living!
Amen!

REFLECTION

HYMN & OFFERING

Christ, be our light
Remain seated whilst we sing, your offerings for the work of God’s people,
and God’s mission elsewhere, will be received.

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Bernadette Farrell 1957-

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OFFERING

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***

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

At every hour of the day

We have the opportunity
To extend God's graciousness beyond the bounds of expectation.

Loving God,
We pray for the workers of the world,
labourers who toil so that others may eat, and have enough.

We pray for fair labour practices,
Fair trade and equal justice for
Those in the office and on the line.

Loving God,
We pray for those who do not have the work they deserve or desire.

Help us to acknowledge and transform systems
that deny people a living wage
And the dignity of self-determination.

Loving God,
We pray for those who have lost hope and faith

In a world that favours the few
and leaves the many standing idly by.
Give us wisdom to work together
Towards a world in which everyone may flourish.

We know pray for our congregation and community:
The people pray

Amen

HYMN *Teach me to dance*

Refrain

*Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart
Teach Me To Move In The Power Of Your Spirit
Teach Me To Walk In The Light Of Your Presence
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

*Teach Me To Love With Your Heart Of Compassion
Teach Me To Trust In The Word Of Your Promise
Teach Me To Hope In The Day Of Your Coming
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

1. You Wrote The Rhythm Of Life
Created Heaven And Earth
In You Is Joy Without Measure
So, Like A Child In Your Sight
I Dance To See Your Delight
For I Was Made For Your Pleasure, Pleasure

Refrain

*Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart
Teach Me To Move In The Power Of Your Spirit
Teach Me To Walk In The Light Of Your Presence
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

*Teach Me To Love With Your Heart Of Compassion
Teach Me To Trust In The Word Of Your Promise
Teach Me To Hope In The Day Of Your Coming
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

2. Let All My Movements Express
A Heart That Loves To Say 'Yes'

A Will That Leaps To Obey You
Let All My Energy Blaze
To See The Joy In Your Face
Let My Whole Being Praise You, Praise You

Refrain

*Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart
Teach Me To Move In The Power Of Your Spirit
Teach Me To Walk In The Light Of Your Presence
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

*Teach Me To Love With Your Heart Of Compassion
Teach Me To Trust In The Word Of Your Promise
Teach Me To Hope In The Day Of Your Coming
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart
Teach Me To Dance To The Beat Of Your Heart*

*Steve Thompson 1952 and Graham Kendrick 1950-
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BLESSING

God brings the people out with joy:
there is enough for all,
food as if from heaven, in abundance.
Let God unleash a spirit of generosity within and amongst us,
so that we are the ones to invite others to a world of sharing,
where no one is left behind or without.

God be your fire by night and your shade by day.
Christ be your guide to a promised land of enough for all.
Spirit be your companion,
turning your complaints to wonder and your fear to love.
Amen.

BLESSING SONG

For you (Deep stillness)

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland,

for you, deep blue of the desert skies,
for you, flame red of the rocks and stones,
for you, sweet water from hidden springs.
From the edges seek the heartlands,
and when you're burnt by the journey,
may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit
soothe and replenish you.

In the name of Christ,
in the name of Christ.

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland,
for you, deep blue of the desert skies,
for you, flame red of the rocks and stones,
for you, sweet water from hidden springs.
From the edges seek the heartlands,
and when you're burnt by the journey,
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In the name of Christ,
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