

Parramatta City  
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial  
Uniting Church

## PENTECOST 19



LEARNING & CELEBRATING  
THE LIFE OF GOD  
IN THE VINEYARD FOR EVERYONE!

8 October 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 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**

God of life, in your hand we find our lives.

Be present with us in this time together.

Let your Spirit mould us, shape us and remake us  
this morning and every day

until we conform to the shape that you call us to take;

the shape of love known and shown in Jesus the Christ.

***Amen.***

*(Source: Rev Jennie Gordon)*

**HYMN** *God has spoken by his prophets (158 TiS)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rbR63VCTg4>

1 God has spoken by the prophets,  
spoken his unchanging Word,  
each from age to age proclaiming  
God, the one, the righteous Lord.  
In the world's despair and turmoil  
one firm anchor holds us fast:  
God is King, his throne eternal,  
God the first and God the last.

2 God has spoken by Christ Jesus,  
Christ, the everlasting Son,  
brightness of the Father's glory,  
with the Father ever one;  
spoken by the Word incarnate,  
God from God, before time was;  
Light from Light, to earth descending,  
he reveals our God to us.

3 God is speaking by his Spirit,  
speaking to our hearts again,  
in the ageless Word declaring  
his own message, now as then.  
Thro' the rise and fall of nations  
one sure faith is standing fast:  
God abides, his Word unchanging,  
God the first and God the last.

*Author: G. W. Briggs (1952)*

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## **WORDS OF GRACE & CHANGE**

The law is easy, Jesus,  
lists to be made,  
items ticked as each is fulfilled;

Love is messy,  
people to be heard and seen,  
consequences and compassion to be considered;

But we've lived too long by law –  
the law of the sword  
taking lives to achieve our goals;  
the law of the market  
seeking gain without thought of the impact  
the law of religion  
handing out judgement in your name;

But, the poor and the weak,  
the diseased and the lonely,  
the rejected and marginalised  
find no healing in our laws;

*So teach us to love, Jesus, as you do,  
enough to defend the helpless  
and overturn the tables of the powerful;  
enough to give ourselves  
so others may live.  
Teach us to love, Jesus, as you do.  
Amen.*

(Sacredise)

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS** Matthew 21:33-46 (Inclusive Text)

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people:

Listen to another parable.

There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower.

Then the landowner leased it to tenants and went to another country.

When the harvest time had come, the owner sent slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.

But the tenants seized the slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

Again the owner sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

Finally the owner sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

So Jesus asked the chief priests and elders,

"Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

The chief priests and elders said to Jesus,

'The owner will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give the produce at the harvest time.'



Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was God's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?

'Therefore I tell you, the realm of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of it'. ...

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

## RESPONSE

In these words God speaks to us!

*May they come alive in our living!    Amen!*

## REFLECTION

**HYMN**    *When I needed a neighbour were you there? (TiS, 629)*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grnEc0vhtyo>

1. When I needed a neighbour  
Were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
Were you there?

2. I was hungry and thirsty  
Were you there, were you there?  
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
Were you there?

3. I was cold, I was naked  
Were you there, were you there?  
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
Were you there?

4. When I needed a shelter  
Were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a shelter were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
Were you there?

5. When I needed a healer  
Were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a healer, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
Were you there?

6. Wherever you travel  
I'll be there, I'll be there  
Wherever you travel, I'll be there  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter  
I'll be there

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## OFFERING

God of compassion and relationship,  
you work with us to bring forth  
life in the midst of death,  
healing in the midst hate and anger,  
and hope in the darkest places  
of our despair.  
You desire our wholeness,  
And invite our company  
to bring healing and life to others.  
May the gifts  
we offer to you this morning  
bring life and healing to us all. **Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRAYER FOR ALL PLACES & PEOPLE

O Jesus Christ, bring your wise love into our lives,  
as we go into a new day.

***May we be surprised and challenged  
by goodness in unexpected people  
and affirming of what we see in their example.***

May we, your church,  
be known as those who love all sorts of neighbours  
and give a lead in our community,  
breaking through boundaries of distance and difference.

We pray now for our community  
*The people pray*

Invite us a greater wisdom and clarity, O God,  
in how we spend our time and resources,  
helping us to see what really matters  
and what could be laid aside, we pray.  
Then lead us beyond praying and into action,  
even when issues are complex and demanding.  
Give to us a faith which dares to stop  
in the midst of the community around us  
and point to struggling people who are being ignored  
in the busyness and pre-occupations of our society.  
***Enable us to hold in love those lying beside the road  
and to make safe places to carry them  
for renewal and healing.***

For we know that we have barely begun  
the true loving of our neighbours,  
as a church and as a community.

***Guide us and give to us your creativity, O God,  
that the world may be a different place. Amen.***  
*Dorothy McRae McMahan*

**HYMN**      "God gives us a future" (TiS, 687)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaeaR8j2fuM>

1. God gives us a future,  
daring us to go  
into dreams and dangers  
on a path unknown.  
We will face tomorrow  
in the Spirit's power,  
we will let God change us,  
for new life starts now.

2. We must leave behind us  
sins of yesterday,  
for God's new beginning  
is a better way.  
Fear and doubt and habit  
must not hold us back:  
God gives hope, and insight,  
and the strength we lack.

3. Holy Spirit, teach us  
how to read the signs,  
how to meet the challenge  
of our troubled times.  
Love us into action,  
stir us into prayer,  
till we choose God's life,  
and find our future there.

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**BLESSING**

May the Spirit which flows through all creation,  
that speaks through the prophets and the poets,  
and which acts through those who care,  
be with us here today, and awaken us  
to the unconquerable power of life.                      (CReed/wah)



**HYMN**

*Shalom* (TiS 778)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiH\\_HdkWs74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiH_HdkWs74)

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 S Eslinger*

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