

Parramatta City
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 23



Be aware
of what you are doing
& not doing

5 November 2023

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

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

We light this candle to celebrate the inherent worth and dignity
of every person and to share that love
which is ultimately beyond even our cherished reason,
that love which unites us. (Adapt/SSstock)

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that we are on the land of the Burramattagal people
of the Darug Nation and that the Spirit was in the land revealing
God to them through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and
grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the
Burramattagal people and gave them particular insights into God's
ways. Therefore, we honour the wisdom of the Burramattagal Elders
and their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work
together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

(Using words from the Preamble to the Uniting Church Constitution)

OPENING SENTENCES

When we stand at the edge of fear and worry,

God invites us to step into the waters of faith and trust.

When we stand at the edge of the world's pain and need,

Jesus invites us to step into the land of humble service.

When we stand at the edge of our hunger and thirst:

the Spirit invites us to sit at the Table of grace.

(Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies)

HYMN "When Earth Wakes from Out of Sleep"

(Tune: 'Lucerna Laudoniae', 88.88.88)

1. When Earth wakes from out of sleep

With a terrifying shake,

Does our faith lie torn apart

Like the dwellings we forsake?

Cosmic God, each process shows

Parts of wisdom Earth well knows.

2. Once we thought that earthquakes came
From a god to punish wrong;
Now we know they place Earth's plates
Where for now they should belong.
Cosmic God, each process shows
Parts of wisdom Earth well knows.

3. If we think that all that comes
Is made solely for our good,
We have placed ourselves above
Cosmic ways and livelihood.
Cosmic God, each process shows
Parts of wisdom Earth well knows.

4. If Earth's plates now need to move,
Its great need exceeds our own,
And it does not take account
Where we choose to make our home.
Cosmic God, each process shows
Parts of wisdom Earth well knows.

5. For the answers we return
To the Cosmos and its ways,
Ways that humble all our pride,
Ways that fill our hearts with praise.
Cosmic God of everything,
Your great mystery now we sing.

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WORDS OF GRACE & CHANGE

Teach us the courage, O God,
to turn from what seems so natural, so safe:
the way of grasping power,
and befriending the powerful,
in the hope of protection and security.

Teach us the humility, O God,
to turn from what is so enticing, so persuasive:
the way of accumulating things,
and trusting in wealth,
in the hope of comfort and life

***Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of true security, true wealth,
the way of Christ, the servant,
the way of weakness and simplicity.***

Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of caring for the neglected,
feeding the hungry,
housing the homeless,
protecting the threatened,
***and challenging the powerful,
the foolish way of the Gospel,
that brings salvation to all.***
Amen.

(Sacredise)

SCRIPTURE READINGS Matthew 23:1-12 (Inclusive Text)

Jesus said to the crowds and to the disciples:
‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses chair;
therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it;
but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.
‘They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,
and lay them on the shoulders of others;
but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.
‘They do all their deeds to be seen by others,
for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.
‘They love to have the place of honour at banquets
and the best seats in the synagogues,
and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,
and to have people call them rabbi.
‘But you are not to be called rabbi,

for you have one teacher, and you are all students.
And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father – the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called teacher, for you have one teacher, the Messiah.

‘The greatest among you will be your servant.
All who exalt themselves will be humbled,
and all who humble themselves will be exalted’.

RESPONSE

In these words God speaks to us!

May they come alive in our living! Amen!

REFLECTION

HYMN *"Everything That Has Voice"*
(Tune: 'Sing for Peace', Marty Haugen)

1. Everything that has voice,
sing for peace,
speak for peace,
given chance, given choice,
work for peace,
write for peace,
resonating everywhere,
echoing our common care:
everything that has voice,
sing for peace!

2. All the world longs for peace
cries for peace,
dies for peace,
let the children, every place
sleep in peace,
grow in peace,
home and country safe to be

where the spirit rises free,
all the world longs for peace,
cries for peace.

3. Everyone who has breath,
you and I,
passers-by,
every tenant of the earth
plant for peace,
gather for peace,
cultivate a neighbourhood
cherishing our neighbours' good:
everyone who has breath,
live for peace!

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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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL & PALESTINE

*"They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain..." —Isaiah 11:9*

God of Comfort,
send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives
are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.
You are the Advocate of the oppressed

and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.
Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression.
Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

God of Justice,

give strength to those whose long work for a just peace
might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.
Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work
and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model
unity and reconciliation across lines of division.
Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace & pursue it.
Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

God of Love,

we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures.
War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.
Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.
Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.
We beg for love and compassion to prevail
on all your holy mountains.

God of Hope,

we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv,
Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot,
so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.
Come again to breathe peace on your peoples
that all may recognize you.

God of Mercy,

even now work on the hearts of combatants
to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation,
restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms,
especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians,
deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine
their future together.

God of the Nations,

let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency.
Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit
vulnerability for their own distorted ends.
Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.
Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.
Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.
Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

*Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,
even when we don't have clear answers,
so that we may still offer ourselves nonviolently
for the cause of peace. Amen.*

Rose Marie Berger, a senior editor of Sojourners magazine.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE

We offer prayers for our community!

HYMN “Faith is an Energy” (Tune: ‘Forest Green’)

1. A faith renewed is on the move;
This faith cannot stand still;
It brings to life an energy;
Enhances life's good-will;
It is not built on certainty;
It craves no rigid creed;
Yet stirring deep within this faith
Is blossom from its seed.

2. A faith renewed is future bound;
Not stagnant in the past;
It looks for new, exciting paths
In which life can be cast;
We honour and respect the word
Which in our past was taught,
But venture forth to new frontiers -
The promptings of new thought.

3. A faith renewed is our response
To issues of our day;
With energy we face our time;
We do not turn away;
This energy is such a gift
To each and everyone;
This faith enlightens every day
As wondrous as the sun.

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COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Holy Table of Jesus Christ
Welcomes each of us as honoured guests:
all of us, each of us
who come in humble faith.
In eating and drinking
this life-giving sacrament
we are fed by God's love.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

May the God of generosity
Giver of the Bread of abundant life
and all things new be with you!

And also with you!

God of grace and tenderness,
even when we look for Jesus
for all the wrong reasons,
he offers the bread of life to us;
though we offer the cross to him,
he graces us with life;
though we would divide each other
by class, race, gender, or condition,
he calls us to oneness in you.

Holy God of wonder,
feed us with the bread of life,
so we might feed those
who know true hunger;
as your justice shines

in the shadows of our hearts,
may we light the way
for the lost and despised;
as you speak in truth
of your love for us,
may we be the voice
for the unloved and forgotten;
as you reshape our brokenness
into wholeness,
may we bind up
the wounds of our world.

And so we give you thanks
with the faithful
of every time and place,
joining with the whole creation
in the eternal hymn :

*Holy, holy, holy,
God of power and vulnerability,
heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver of life.
Blessed is the One
who comes
in the name of our God.
Come and deliver us,
God the giver the Bread of Life.*

THE INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
“This is my body, which is for you.

Do this to remember me”
In the same way, after supper,
Jesus took the cup and again giving thanks, said:
“This cup is the sign
of my new covenant with you.
Do this as often as you drink it to remember me.”

THE INVOCATION

Be present risen Jesus Christ,
by your Holy Spirit, as you were with your disciples
and make yourself known to us
in the breaking of the bread,
for you live and reign with the Creator
and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. *Amen.*

THE JESUS PRAYER

*Indwelling God,
infused throughout all existence,
we honour you with many names.*

*Your realm is within the human heart.
We accept life for all that it can be,
on earth as throughout all creation.*

*May we continue to draw sustenance from this earth,
and may we receive forgiveness equal to our own.*

*May we ever move from separation toward union,
to live in grace,
with love in our hearts,
forever and ever.
Amen.*

(Fred F. Keip)

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the life-blood of Christ.
The gifts of God for the people of God.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD AND WINE

The body of Christ given for us.
The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

God of amazing grace,
in the sunshine of Summer
we are grateful for your presence.
We pray your presence
will feed and strengthen us
to follow in the way of Jesus,
in our world. Amen.

BLESSING

The love of the faithful Creator,
The peace of the wounded Healer,
The joy of the challenging Spirit,
The hope of the Three-in-One
surround and encourage us
today, tonight, and forever.
May the blessing of God – the Creator, the Healer,
and the Spirit, be with us and remain with us always.

Amen.

(Source: The pattern of our days – Iona)

SONG *Come as you are (TiS 693)*

Come as you are, that's how I want you.
Come as you are, feel quite at home.

Close to my heart, loved and forgiven
Come as you are, why stand alone?

No need to fear, love sets no limits.
No need to fear, love never end.
Don't run away, shamed, and disheartened.
Rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to call strugglers, not just the virtuous.
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail to live by my promise
Why do you think I'd love you the less?

Come as you are, that's how I love you.
Come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I bear you.
All will be well, just come as you are.

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