

Pitt Street Uniting Church

*A Congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia
Founded 1833*



SUNDAY GATHERING

ON GADIGAL LAND

always was, always will be

CONTEMPORARY FAITH – JUSTICE – ENGAGING – COMMUNITY

12 May 2024

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Ascension Sunday

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



The Ascension by Robert Shaw

Welcome to Pitt Street Uniting Church

This is a place of welcome for all people regardless of race, sex, creed, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Wherever you are on your faith journey,
wherever you have come from and wherever you are going to,
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe, you are welcome here.

All we ask for is mutual respect.

Please join in the congregational responses printed in ***bold italics***.
We will sing the hymns without announcement. Stand if you are able, but feel free to remain seated if that is more comfortable for you.

A quiet activity area is available at on the northern side of the church
young children.

MUSICAL PRELUDE

A gong sounds – centring prayer / meditation

We gather as people of Faith

THE INVITATION

Come into this sacred space.
Come bringing all of who you are.
Rest and quiet your week-worn spirit,
for you are here to touch again eternal springs
of hope and renewal.
Let us open ourselves to the source of life, love and justice.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Words: Brian Wren
Tune: Bunessan TiS 156

God, the All-Holy, Maker and Mother,
gladly we gather, bringing in prayer
old hurts for healing, new hopes for holding,
giving, receiving loving and care.

Spirit, All-Seeing, knitting and blending
joy in desiring friendship and ease,
make our belonging loyal and lasting,
so that our pledging freshens and frees.

Christ, All-Completing, Nature enfolding,
evil exhausting in love's embrace,
weaving and mending, make every ending
God's new beginning glowing with grace.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Loving God open our hearts
so that we may feel the breath and play of your spirit.
Unclench our hands
*so that we may reach out to one another,
and touch and be healed.*
Open our lips
that we may drink in the delight and wonder of life.
Open our eyes
so that we may see Christ in friend and stranger.
Breathe your spirit into us,
and touch our lives with the life of Christ.

Please remain standing as you are able.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As we gather, we acknowledge that we meet on sacred land,
cared for over tens of thousands of years by its traditional custodians.
*We honour the Gadigal people of the Eora nation,
their elders past and present,
and we pay our respects to all First Nations people
in our communities.*

Please be seated.

GREETINGS

Budyeri Gamarruwa

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

Let us pray.

We open now to the power of resurrection,
to the loving presence
flowing through the cosmos
and through us,
rolling away stones from the mouths of tombs,
rising up out of death,
faithful servant
of eternal life.

We open to the healing power
of our Easter God,
Hidden Wholeness,
weaving tapestries
from what we thought
were merely tattered and torn ends,
death's detritus.

The grave cloths lie,
emptied of form,
in a cave designed for despair
yet telling a different and deeper truth:
that death is but a portal through which
divine emptiness slips away
and into the future,
beckoning us to go to Galilee –
those places and times in our lives
when our hearts first burned with hope –
and await instructions for our Easter mission.

***Help us to know that you are never finished with us:
in Christ we are ever emerging,
dying and rising with Him,
in faithful resonance
with the strange, intimate presence,
causing our hearts to burn with hope
that the best is yet to come.
Amen.***

*A time of silence is kept.
Please remain seated to sing.*

SONG (Taizé)

(sung twice)

My peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Trouble not your hearts.
6 My peace I leave you, my peace I give you: be not a - afraid.

*My peace I leave you, my peace I give you: trouble not your hearts.
My peace I leave you, my peace I give you: be not afraid.*

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION

May we who come in faith and hope hear the words of assurance.
The Risen Christ makes all things new.
Beyond fear there is confidence.
Beyond despair there is hope.
Beyond shame there is honour and wholeness.
Beyond violence there is peace.
Hold fast to this word and grow in trust.

Amen.

GLORIA (Taizé)

(sung twice)

Gloria, gloria (canon)

♩. = 80

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex-cel - sis De - o!
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Music: J. Berthier
© Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, F-71250 Taizé-Communauté

SHARING CHRIST'S PEACE

May the peace of God be with you now and always!

And also with you!

*We are invited to greet one another sharing a sign
of the peace of Christ.*

HYMN

Words: Brian Wren; Arr: Fred Graham

Tune: Yarnton

We are not our own, Earth forms us
Human leaves on nature's growing vine
Fruit of many generations
Seeds of life divine

We are not alone, Earth names us
Past and present
Peoples near and far
Family and friends and strangers
Show us who we are

Through a human life God finds us
Dying living love is fully known
And in bread and wine reminds us
We are not our own

Therefore let us make thanksgiving
And with justice willing and aware
Give to earth and all things living
Liturgies of care

And if love's encounters lead us
On a way uncertain and unknown
All the saints with prayer surround us
We are not alone

Let us be a house of welcome
Living stone upholding living stone
Gladly showing all our neighbors
We are not our own.

Please be seated.

We listen for God's Word

A Contemporary Reading: from *The Collage of God* by Mark Oakley

A Reading from the New Testament: from Acts 1:1-11

For the stories of the early Christian community,
Thanks be to God!

A Reading from the Gospels: from St Luke 24:44-53

For the good news of Divine love,
Thanks be to God!

SUNG RESPONSE

TiS 720 (sung twice)

Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu- jah!
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu- jah!
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu- jah!
Hal-le-lu- jah, Hal-le-lu- jah!

REFLECTION

David Gill

We share a time of silent reflection.

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN The head that once was crowned with thorns

TiS 378

The head that once was crowned with thorns
is crowned with glory now;
a royal diadem adorns
the mighty victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords
is his, is his by right,
the King of kings and Lord of lords
and heav'n's eternal light,

The joy of all who dwell above,
the joy of all below,
to whom he manifests his love
and grants his name to know.

To them the cross, with all its shame,
with all its grace, is given,
their name an everlasting name,
their joy the joy of heaven.

They suffer with the Lord below,
they reign with him above,
their profit and their joy to know
the mystery of his love.

The cross he bore is life and health
though shame and death to him
his people's hope his people's wealth
Their everlasting theme

*Please remain standing as you are able,
as together we affirm our faith.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We are not alone;

We live in God's world.

We believe in God:

Who has created and is creating,

Who has come in Jesus, the word made flesh,

To reconcile and make new,

Who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

To celebrate God's presence,

To live with respect in Creation,

To love and serve others,

To seek justice and resist evil,

To proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

Our judge and our hope.

***In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.***

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND SOLIDARITY

Helen Boerma

We hold a time of silence together to offer our own prayers,
to reflect upon what has been in our media headlines and whatever
rests heavy on our hearts ...

*Please feel free to offer your own prayers, in silence,
or (if on Zoom) via the chat facility.*

JESUS PRAYER

*In the spirit of Jesus we gather up all our prayers and, in these words,
or in those of our own language or tradition, we say:*

***God of Love, within, among, and beyond us,
we celebrate your many names.***

***Your wisdom come. Your will be done,
unfolding from the depths.***

Each day You give us what we need.

You remind us of our limits so that we may let go.

You support us in our power that we may act with courage.

For you are the dwelling place within us,

the empowerment around us, and the celebration among us.

As it was in the very beginning, may it be now, and always. Amen.

OFFERING

We bring our offerings
as we seek to walk more closely in the Way of Christ,
loving God,
and loving all God's creation as ourselves.

BANK DETAILS FOR ELECTRONIC OFFERING

Account name: Giving Direct

BSB: 634-634. Account: 100025916

Reference: your name

Donation Tap Point is available at the back of the Church.

Contact the Church Office if you would like information about planned giving.

Please stand as you are able.

God of freedom, God of justice,
God whose love is strong as death,
God who saw the dark of prison,
God who knew the price of faith:
touch our world of sad oppression
with your Spirit's healing breath.

Rid the earth of torture's terror,
God whose hands were nailed to wood;
hear the cries of pain and protest,
God who shed the tears and blood;
move in us the power of pity,
restless for the common good.

Make in us a captive conscience
quick to hear, to act, to plead;
make us truly sisters, brothers
of whatever race or creed:
teach us to be fully human,
open to each other's need.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*Gracious God, show us
how to be frugal, till all are fed;
how to weep, till all can cry;
how to be meek, till all can stand in pride;
how to mourn, till all are comforted;
how to be restless, till all find peace;
how to claim less, till all find justice.
Amen.*

Going out into the world God loves

SENDING OUT

At the edges of our borders
you wait,
and at our territorial lines
you linger,
because the place where
we touch
beyond our boundaries
is where you take
your delight.

And when we learn to read
the landscape of our fears,
and when we come to know
the terrain of every sorrow,
then will we turn
our fences into bridges
and our boarders into
paths of peace.

BLESSING

And so...
may the Risen Christ
who gives himself to us
with abandon
enfold you with
His extravagant love.
now and always.

Praise the God who changes places,
leaves the lofty seat,
welcomes us with warm embraces,
stoops to wash our feet.

*Friends be strong!
Hold your heads high!
Freedom is our song!
Alleluia!*

Praise the rabbi, speaking, doing
all that God intends,
dying, rising, faith renewing,
calling us his friends.

*Friends be strong!
Hold your heads high!
Freedom is our song!
Alleluia!*

Praise the Breath of Love, whose freedom
spreads our waking wings,
lifting every blight and burden
till the spirit sings:

*Friends be strong!
Hold your heads high!
Freedom is our song!
Alleluia!*

Praise, until we join the singing
far beyond our sight,
with the Ending-and-Beginning,
dancing in the light.

*Friends be strong!
Hold your heads high!
Freedom is our song!
Alleluia!*

*Following the Postlude, all onsite are invited to refreshments
and those on Zoom to have a time of sharing online.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our organist for the music.

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Prayers of Awareness based on Bruce Sanguin, *If Darwin Prayed*, pp. 74 and 80

Contemporary Reading from *The Collage of God*, Mark Oakley, Canterbury Press, Norwich 2012,
p.57

Hymn, Christ High Ascended (Hymn 324) from *Worship and Rejoice*, Hope Publishing Company
2001

Affirmation of Faith: United Church of Canada.

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Tennessee, p.299.