



**Pitt Street**  
Uniting Church

*founded 1833*



## **ON GADIGAL LAND**

*always was, always will be*

CONTEMPORARY FAITH – JUSTICE – ENGAGING – COMMUNITY

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9 March 2025

## **Lent 1**



Gidyea woodlands, Munga-Thirri—Simpson Desert, Creative Commons, Pixabay

### WELCOME TO PITT STREET UNITING CHURCH

This is a place of welcome for all people regardless of race, sex, creed, age, cultural background, sexuality, 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 the north side of the church for young children.

## MUSICAL PRELUDE

*A gong sounds – centring prayer / meditation*

## We gather as people of faith

*We stand as we are able.*

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Love divine, all loves excelling

TIS 217

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven to earth come down,  
fix in us your humble dwelling,  
all your faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, you are all compassion,  
pure unbounded love you are,  
visit us with your salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.

Come almighty to deliver,  
let us all your life receive;  
suddenly return and never,  
never more your temples leave:  
you we would be always blessing,  
serve you as your hosts above,  
pray and praise you without ceasing,  
glory in your perfect love.

Finish then your new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be,  
let us see your great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee:  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before you,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

We gather as the season of Lent begins,  
a solemn yet joyful season,  
as we imagine our lives of faith,  
as we reconsider what we want to release,  
what we want to retain and treasure,  
and those most difficult parts of our lives that must stay,  
but that we can perhaps see differently  
when we let the light of Christ shine on them.

Come let us worship our God of love and grace,  
in Christ who makes all things new.

## **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

The Christ candle is lit as we remember the light of God's presence with us.

God alive among us, in every season.

*Light of the world, be with us all*

## **GREETINGS**

*Budyeri Gamarruwa*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge the Gadigal People of the Eora,  
traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet,  
land which was taken from them  
without their consent, treaty or compensation.

*We recommit to walk with First Peoples for justice,  
and give thanks for their custodianship of the land.*

*Please be seated.*

## **PRAYERS OF AWARENESS AND CONFESSION**

As a tree sheds old unhealthy bark  
allowing its trunk to grow and  
the whole tree to flourish,  
so we allow old and outworn layers  
to fall away, as we prepare for renewal.

***We prepare for renewal in Christ.***

As the snake sheds its skin to heal and grow,  
leaving behind an old and empty shell of itself,  
moving on with a vibrant new form,  
so we leave behind old layers  
and watch for the new to emerge.

***We prepare for renewal in Christ.***

As the hermit crab outgrows its familiar home  
and leaves behind its constrictions  
bravely making the journey to a new and unknown place,  
so we prepare to leave behind confining spaces in our lives,  
waiting for Christ to make all things new.

***We prepare for renewal in Christ.***

As all of creation goes through seasons of  
change and transition,  
so we accept and welcome the seasons  
of change and transition, in our church seasons  
and in our lives.

***We prepare for renewal in Christ.***

***Amen.***

*Please remain seated to sing.*

**SONG**

As the deer pants for the water

TiS 703 (*sung twice*)

As the deer pants for the water,  
so my soul longs after you.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship you.  
You alone are my strength and shield,  
to you alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship you.

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

May we know that we are held in the loving arms of God  
as we face this time of inner change and renewal.  
May we let go with grace the things  
we are moved by the Spirit to jettison.  
May we release with joy all that stands in the way of  
increasing intimacy with God through Christ our redeemer.  
May we know God's grace and mercy  
as we face the challenges of change.

***Thanks be to God.***

**THREEFOLD AMEN***(sung twice)***SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE**

May the peace of Christ, in whom all things are made new, be with you  
now and always.

***And also with you.***

*We are invited to share a sign of peace with others.*

# We listen for God's Word

## A Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

For words of faith in ancient texts.

*We give thanks.*

## A Reading from the Epistles: Romans 10:8-13

For words of wisdom from the early church.

*We give thanks.*

*We stand as we are able.*

## HYMN

There's a wideness in God's mercy

TiS 136

There's a wideness in God's mercy  
like the wideness of the sea  
and forgiveness in their justice  
sealed for us on Calvary.

There is plentiful redemption  
in the blood that has been shed;  
there is joy for all the members  
in the sorrows of the Head.

For the love of God is broader  
than the measures of our mind;  
and the heart of the eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.

But we make God's love too narrow  
by false limits of our own,  
and we magnify God's strictness  
with a zeal they will not own.

If our love were but more simple,  
we should take God at their word;  
and our lives would be illumined  
by the goodness of our God.

*Please be seated.*

## A Reading from the Gospel of Luke: Luke 4:1-13

For words of challenge and inspiration in Scripture.  
***We give thanks.***

### REFLECTION

Lionel Robson

*We stand as we are able.*

### HYMN

For you, deep stillness

Words: Julie Perrin  
Music: Robin Mann  
(sung twice)

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.

*Please be seated.*

## We respond in love

### PRAYERS THE WAY

Gracious, merciful and loving God,  
we come before you in prayer  
as we enter a time of reflection and renewal,  
and as our world is undergoing great shifts,  
causing many people to reconsider  
what is most important, what is most valuable  
what to release, what to retain,  
what to ignore, and what is worth standing up for.

***Loving God, bless our world with your grace and wisdom.***

Gracious and loving God,  
as you give us the courage to look at  
needed changes in our own lives,  
give us also the courage to look at  
the dark places in our world.

Guide us as we reflect and discern what we can do  
in response to the disruption, suffering and hardship  
we see in the world around us, near and far.

Open our hearts to share your compassion,  
stir our will to do what we can to ease suffering.

***Loving God, bless our world with your grace and wisdom.***

In our circle of prayer today we pray for:

- The people and lands of Ireland; United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

We are thankful for the many distinct cultures in these islands and how literature, music, dance, and other traditions rooted here, have enriched people around the world.

We pray for resolving differences and political tensions over how Great Britain should relate to the rest of Europe.

- Here in Sydney we pray for the people and ministries of our neighbouring Anglican Parish of St Andrew's Cathedral and their Dean, Sandy Grant.

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:*

***Holy God,  
in your love we live and move and have our being.  
May your vision for the world come to pass  
and may we always be grateful for your provision.  
Help us to overcome our misperceptions  
as we forgive those who misunderstand us.  
Give us wisdom to recognise our missteps  
and the humility to make amends,  
for we long only for closeness to you,  
our creating, redeeming and sustaining God,  
all we will ever need.  
Amen.***

## OFFERING

Sharing in God's compassion and mercy,  
walking in Christ's generous spirit,  
we bring gifts of thanksgiving and solidarity  
to spread God's hope and love in our world.

*We stand as we are able.*

## HYMN

Great is your faithfulness

TIS 154

Great is your faithfulness, God our provider,  
in you no shadow of turning we see;  
you never fail and your love is unchanging:  
as you have been you forever will be.

*Chorus: Great is your faithfulness,  
great is your faithfulness  
morning by morning new mercies we see;  
all we have needed your hand has provided:  
great is your faithfulness, Lord God, to me.*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in eloquent witness  
to your great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Chorus:*

Pardon for sin and a peace that's enduring  
your living presence to cheer and to guide,  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow –  
these are the blessings your love will provide.

*Chorus*

*Please be seated.*

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Loving God, provider and sustainer of lives.  
***Accept these offerings with our gratitude  
for all you have given us  
and we pray that their benefit will be multiplied  
as they go where they are needed. Amen.***

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

# **We go out to the world God loves**

## **SENDING OUT AND BLESSING**

As we step out into this season of Lent,  
may we know God's abiding love and grace  
***and share love and grace with those we meet.***  
May we know the steadfast integrity of Christ  
***and hold to what we know is true and just.***  
May we know the Spirit's transforming power  
***and be guided by our inner light.***

And may we find in these weeks  
an increasing awareness of the closeness of God,  
the companionship of Christ,  
and the peace of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*We stand as we are able.*

**HYMN**

Love is his word

TiS 534

Love is his word, love is his way,  
feasting with friends, fasting alone,  
living and dying, rising again,  
love, only love, is his way.

*Refrain:*

*Richer than gold is the love of my God  
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is the way, love is his name,  
we are his own, chosen and called,  
sisters and brothers, cousins and kin,  
Love, only love, is his name.

*Refrain*

Love is his name, love is his law.  
Hear his command, all who are his:  
'Love one another, I have loved you.'  
Love, only love, is his law.

*Refrain*

*Richer than gold is the love of my God  
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is the law, love is his word:  
love of the Lord, Creator and Word,  
love of the Spirit, God ever one.  
Love, only love, is his word.

*Refrain*

## MUSICAL POSTLUDE

Peter Bennett

*Those attending Pitt Street are warmly invited to stay for refreshments.*

*Those attending Zoom are warmly invited to stay for a community time online to meet with others and share news.*