



Pitt Street
Uniting Church

founded 1833



ON GADIGAL LAND

always was, always will be

CONTEMPORARY FAITH – JUSTICE – ENGAGING – COMMUNITY

30 March 2025

4th Sunday in Lent
Transgender Day of Visibility



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.

Gathering as a people of Spirit

GATHERING WORDS

In this season of Lent,
we gather here to celebrate life's beauty
and find healing for its pain;
to honour our kinship with each other and with the earth;
and to create a more compassionate world,
beginning with ourselves.
Let us celebrate life held in Divine Presence.

HYMN OF PRAISE (from our tradition)

TiS 72

From all who dwell below the skies
let our Creator's praise arise.

Hallelujah!

Let the Redeemer's name be sung
through every land, by every tongue.

Hallelujah!

Eternal are your mercies, Lord,
eternal truth attends your word:

Hallelujah!

Your praise shall sound from shore to shore
till suns shall rise and set no more.

Hallelujah!

Please remain standing as you are able.

ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY – TOWARDS JUST RELATIONSHIPS

As we gather, we acknowledge the original custodians of this place, the Gadigal people of the Eora, and all First Nations peoples in our communities, their elders past and present. We grieve the unjust loss of their lands, taken without consent, treaty or compensation.

From their beginnings, the Spirit of God has dwelled with the First Peoples of this ancient land.

***We honour the Gadigal people of the Eora
and commit ourselves to work for just reconciliation.***

OPENING RESPONSES

Whoever you are, God's word to you is,

Welcome home!

Wherever you have been, God's word to you is,

Welcome home!

Whatever you have done, God's word to you is,

Welcome home!

In the midst of fear, anxiety, or confusion,

Welcome home!

Whether you feel you deserve it or not,

Welcome home!

Please be seated.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Christ candle is lit as we remember the light of God's Love shining even in the darkness of deep pain and shame; and even in the wider world where so much seems to be falling apart.

God alive among us, present in every expression of love,

Light of the World be with us.

GREETINGS

Budyeri gamarruwa

COLLECT FOR THE DAY

God of all genders and none,
Source of all our glorious difference and true harmony,
Bearer of all our pain and Spirit of transformation,
we give thanks that you have created us in your own image,
in the “many-splendoured” forms of our human diversity.

Transform the violence, pain and struggles of the past and present,
bring new life out of death, hopelessness and despair,
and empower us with your grace, strength and joy.

In the name of the Christ incarnate in a thousand places and more.

Amen.

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.

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

Holy One,
your love for us is fathomless.
We can neither comprehend it
nor can we ever penetrate its depths.

Yet we insist on measuring ourselves
by the worst in us,
by the slipups and shame-filled moments.
Release us from our worn-out scripts,
which imprison us,
lock up life,
and leave us languishing in death.

You call us from disgrace to dignity,
and await the return of our prodigal souls
with outstretched arms,
a royal robe,
and the finest champagne:
instead of lessons to put us in our place,
you adorn our faces with kisses,
reminding us who we are
in your welcoming eyes.

***Thanks be to God.
Amen.***

CHANT As the deer pants for the water

TiS 703

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 each created in God's image:
Fearfully and wonderfully made;
eternally embraced by love; called into divine life.
Let us be a people of courage, compassion and joy
knowing that we are forgiven and renewed!

Thanks be to God.

SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE

Christ is our Peace, reconciling us together with all creation.
May the peace of the Christ be with you.

And also with you.

You are invited to share a sign of peace with others.

HYMN Sing the world that God imagines

Words: Amanda Udis-Kessler

Tune: Ode to Joy TiS 152

Sing the world that God imagines.
Sing of justice, joy, and peace.
Sing of welcome offered freely.
Sing of loves unending feast.
What we sing can call us onward.
What we sing can make demands.
As we sing, we live God's future,
heart and soul and mind and hands.

Sing the world that God imagines.
Sing of all the hungry fed.
Sing the freeing of the captives.
Sing of wine and sing of bread.
What we sing can stir our spirits.
What we sing can help us care.
Sing the holy invitation.
Sing of wonder everywhere.

Build the world that God imagines.
Birth a day of hope restored.
Gather in the lost and lonely.
Heal the sick and tend the poor,
Ours the work of co-creation,
ours the season to rejoice.
Join in love's imagination.
Take your place and raise your voice.

Please be seated.

We Listen for God's Word

FOR WISDOM FOUND IN TEXTS

PSALM 32

(as reinterpreted by Nan C. Merrill)

I invite you to join in the reading of a responsive Psalm.

Blessed are you whose wrongdoings
have been forgiven,
whose shame has been forgotten.

***Blessed are you in whom Love Divine
finds a home,
and whose spirit radiates truth.***

When I acknowledged not my shortcomings,
I became ill through all my defences.

***And day and night, guilt weighed heavy
constricting my heart;
My spirit became dry as desert bones.***

I admitted my faults to the Most High,
and I made known my regret;
I cried out, "Forgive me, O Comforter,
for those times I have sinned
in my thoughts, my words
and my deeds";

***And the Beloved created within me
a clean and open heart.***

Therefore, let everyone who is sincere
give thanks to the Beloved;
for whenever we feel paralysed
by fear,

we shall be embraced by Love.

Dwelling in the Heart of the Beloved,
we are free from distress,
we are free to live creatively.

O my Beloved. You are my guide.
You teach me to walk in the Light.

***Be watchful of me, counsel me as
I listen to You in the silence.***

I pray for the gifts of inner peace
and wisdom,
for the grace to reverence all of Creation.

Many are the heartaches of those
separated from Love;
***steadfast love abides with those
who surrender their lives into
the hands of the Beloved.***

Be glad and rejoice! Let your life
give witness to Love's Way;
***and shout for joy, all you upright
of heart.***

Thanks be to God.

Amen!

A Contemporary Reading: *Blessing the Questions* from Jan Richardson

For words of insight in contemporary spirituality,
We give thanks.

A Reading from the Gospels: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

For words of challenge and inspiration in scripture.
We give thanks.

HYMN

Faith will not grow from words alone

TIS 691

Faith will not grow from words alone,
 from proofs provided, scripture known;
 our faith must feel its way about,
 and live with question-marks and doubt.

The pattern Jesus showed, we share:
 life comes through death, hope through despair.
 God is made known in brokenness,
 and faith feeds on God's emptiness.

The church still tells how Jesus came
 through death to glorious life again –
 the strangest story! Yet, maybe,
 our faith will thrive on mystery.

Faith takes the little that we know,
 and calls for hope, and tells us: Go!
 Love and take courage, come what may;
 Christ will be with us on the way.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND SOLIDARITY

God of Love, from whom all things come and in whom all things belong,
 we pray for a deeper awareness of our intimate interconnection
 with all that lives and breathes.

***May we grow in knowledge
 that we belong in your abundant love.***

We pray for all who are marginalised, oppressed, or excluded:
 for all who are lonely, anxious, or bearing great burdens.

May they know that they belong in your abundant love.

We pray for individuals, all sentient creatures, who are abused,
 violated or threatened:
 for all of our planet which is subject to environmental destruction.

***May humanity grow in awareness
 that everything belongs in your abundant love.***

We pray for a renewing of faith, of politics, and of our culture:
for all who lead or shape our lives and world;
for all with whom we are connected;
and for all from whom we are divided or alienated.

May your love draw us all into deeper visions of belonging.

We pray in silence for all that rests heavy on our hearts and minds.

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

Blessed are you
 who bear the light
 in unbearable times,
who testify
to its endurance
amid the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
 when everything seems
 in shadow
and grief.

Blessed are you
in whom
 the light lives,
 in whom
 the brightness blazes – your heart
 a chapel,
 an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
 shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith
 in stubborn hope,
 in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.
Amen.

JESUS' PRAYER

In the spirit of Jesus, in these words, or in those of your own language of tradition, we pray:

***God of Love, alive within, among and beyond us,
Your name be holy. Your wisdom come.
Your will be done, unfolding from the depths.
Each day give us what we need.
Remind us of our limits so that we may let go.
Support us in your power that we may act with courage.
For you the dwelling place within us,
the empowerment around us, and the celebration among us.
As it was in the beginning, may it be now, and always. Amen.***

OFFERING

Let us share our offerings
as a loving expression of our response to God's call.

We stand, as we are able, to sing as our offerings are collected.

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.

We give thanks for the gifts of food (for the Wayside Chapel and Exodus Foundation) and money, and gifts given to support the mission of the church through automatic payment.

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.

Chorus:

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

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.

Chorus

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

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

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

Chorus

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

Chorus

Please remain standing as you are able.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***Creative Spirit,
as we bring our gifts of hand and heart,
inspire us to bring to life your vision of a church
where everyone has a place to stand,
a society where everyone is valued and understood,
where the gifts of the Spirit bud and flower
and bear the Spirit's fruit.
Amen.***

Please be seated.

COMMUNITY GREETINGS

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN

Community of Christ

Words: Shirley Erena Murray

Tune: Leoni TiS 473

Community of Christ,
who make the Cross your own,
live out your creed and risk your life
for God alone:
the God who wears your face
to whom all worlds belong,
whose children are of every race
and every song.

Community of Christ,
look past the Church's door
and see the refugee, the hungry,
and the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed,
the jobless in your street,
take towel and water, that you wash
your neighbour's feet.

Community of Christ,
through whom the word must sound –
cry out for justice and for peace
the whole world round:
disarm the powers that war
and all that can destroy,
turn bombs to bread, and tears of
anguish into joy.

When menace melts away,
so shall God's will be done,
the climate of the world be peace
and Christ its Sun;
our currency be love
and kindness our law,
our food and faith be shared as one
for evermore.

Please remain standing as you are able.

We go out to the world God loves

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

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 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 be turn
our fences into bridges
and our borders
into paths of peace.

And so ...

May the Christ
Who gives himself to us
with abandon
enfold you with
his extravagant love.
Now and always.

SUNG AMEN

African American

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NB. Christax is used on occasions within Pitt Street Uniting Church liturgies to affirm the all gender and beyond gender nature of the God of Christian tradition

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Collect from *Prayer Resources for the Transgender Day of Visibility, 2024*

Prayer of Awareness from Bruce Sanguin, *If Darwin Prayed*, p136

Jesus Prayer adapted from Miriam Therese Winter

Contemporary Reading and Commissioning from *Circle of Grace* by Jan Richardson



There's a global challenge driving poverty, inequality and injustice.

Climate change.

It affects every one of us, but not equally. Those who contribute least to climate change are the most affected.

The only way to tackle it is together – we all have a part to play.

Register now to take on a 40-day challenge.

Transform the way you eat, shop, travel, or use energy.

Set a fundraising goal and inspire your family and friends to sponsor you.

Register at <https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/event/40-for-future/home>

Hosted by:



Who Owns The Holy Land?



Endorsed by:









A panel discussion hosted by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN)

Thursday 3 April, 6.30pm – 8pm
St Paul's Anglican Church, Burwood

- What is the role of religion in the ongoing violence between Israelis and Palestinians?
- Are Jews and Muslims historic enemies?
- What is the role of Palestinian Christians in the Palestinian national movement?

A panel discussion hosted by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN). Muslim, Jewish and Christian voices share their stories and visions for peace.

Panellists:

- **Yousef al-Reemawi:** Palestinian musician and scholar. Founder of the Averroes Centre of Arab Culture and the Palestine Remembered program on Radio 3CR.
- **Nachshon Amir:** former Israeli army combat officer who was raised in a religious nationalist family but has been an active member of Free Palestine Melbourne for the past four years.
- **Reem Borrows:** Board Director of Palestine Australia Relief and Action and author of From the River to the Sea: Humanising Freedom.

Moderator:

- **Ahmed Alabadla:** A Palestinian from Gaza, co-founder of Palestine Justice Movement Sydney and creator of Red Inverted Triangle Palestinian podcast.

Tickets: <https://events.humanitix.com/who-owns-the-holy-land-sydney>