***THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT – February 26, 2023 Eastwood Uniting Church***



Closure of Ministry of Rev Dr Amelia Koh-Butler

**Creating Community with the Creator**

*Eastwood Uniting Church is situated on Wallemettegal Country of the Darug-speaking peoples. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders (past and present) and all Indigenous people.*

**call to worship and candle** 예배로 부르심 宣召崇拜

Listen! **God calls you by name here.**

Listen! **There is love that abides here.**

In a world of noise, we do our best to listen. **God is speaking. Amen.**

**welcome and acknowledgement**

**G’day and Welcome** Warami mittigar! [Darug]

**환영합니다** [Korean] 欢迎 致谢 – 神的土地[Chinese]

**Hej kompis** [Swedish] **Guten Tag, Freund** [German] **Ciao amico** [Italian]

# **song Christ, be our light** 求主作我光 | 基督是光 | 中文字幕

**prayer of confession** 고백의 기도对忏悔的祈祷

**Holy God, we treat your Word like the radio—we tune in and out when we choose.**

**Our minds are full of ads, emails, news updates, and notifications.**

**In the clutter, we gravitate toward the voices we know—**

**ignoring the voices being silenced, ignoring your voice.**

**Forgive us for failing to listen. Forgive us for getting caught in distractions.**

**Forgive us for forgetting what your voice sounds like.**

**Drain the distractions from our minds. Help us turn once again toward you. Amen.**

**words of forgiveness**

When we tune God out and prioritize other voices,  
when we do all the talking and fail to listen, we are *still* held by God.

Our sins are forgiven. Nothing could ever separate us from God’s love.

So with joy, we say:

I am loved! **I am loved!**

I am held in grace! **I am held in grace!**

I belong to God. **I belong to God.**  **Amen.**

**Song God is so good [x3] - God’s so good to me!**

좋으신 하나님 **[x3]**

# 神真美好 [x3]

# **The Living Word of God – Encountering Jesus Christ**

**readings** Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

15 Then YHWH took the earth creature and settled it in the garden of Eden so that it might cultivate and care for the land. 16 YHWH commanded the earth creature, “You may eat as much as you like from any of the trees of the garden— 17 except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. You must not eat from that tree, for on the day you eat from that tree, that is the day you will die—yes, die.”

3:1 But the snake was even more naked: the most cunning§ of all the animals that YHWH had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from the trees in the garden?” 2 The woman answered the snake, “We may eat fruit from all the other trees in the garden. 3 But of the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘Don’t eat it and don’t touch it, or you will die.’” 4 The snake said to the woman, “Die? You won’t die! 5 God knows well that on the day that you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil!” 6 The woman knew that the tree was enticing to the eye, and now saw that the fruit was good to eat—that it was desirable for the knowledge it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to the man beside her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible (p. 19). Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.

Matthew 4:1-11

4 :1 Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil. 2 After fasting for forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry. 3 Then the tempter approached and said, “If you are the Only Begotten, command these stones to turn into bread.” 4 Jesus replied, “Scripture has it, ‘We live not on bread alone

but on every utterance that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” 5 Next the Devil took Jesus to the Holy City, set him on the parapet of the Temple 6 and said, “If you are the Only Begotten, throw yourself down. Scripture has it, ‘God will tell the angels to take care of you; with their hands they will support you that you may never stumble on a stone.’ ”

7 Jesus answered, “Scripture also says, ‘Do not put God to the test.’ ” 8 The Devil then took Jesus up a very high mountain and displayed all the dominions of the world in their magnificence, 9 promising, “All these I will give you if you fall down and worship me.” 10 At this, Jesus said to the Devil, “Away with you, Satan! Scripture says, ‘You will worship the Most High God; God alone will you adore.’ ” 11 At that the Devil left, and angels came and attended Jesus.

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible (pp. 2128-2129). Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.

For the words showing us truth, **Thanks be to God. 하나님께 감사** 感谢上帝

**sermon: the eve of misunderstanding – the battle of faith and knowledge**

**offering and affirmation of faith**

In a world of noise, **we believe God speaks.**

In a world of chaos, **we believe God sings.**

In a world of temptation, **we believe God is heals.**

Church, who will you listen to? **We listen to God—Creator, Friend, and Guide.**

Church, what will you listen for? **We listen for water in the desert,**

**for the wind of the Spirit,  
for the laughter of children,  
for the sound of open doors,**

**and for God’s loving voice. Amen.**

**song TiS 687 God gives us a future** [Camberwell]

# **Empowering by the Holy Spirit**

**closure of ministry** Presbytery Chairperson Ian Lawrence

*[by Rev Peter Gador-Whyte, for the Assembly Worship Working Group]*

The Church lives by the power of Jesus – the Word of God -

and God always provide a witness to that Word.

Two years ago, the Presbytery of Sydney Central Coast

inducted Amelia Koh-Butler as a minister of the Word here.

We witnessed your promises to worship, to be part of the work of God,

and to witness to Jesus in the community, by word and action.

The Presbytery believes that God has called Amelia to minister in another place.

We have affirmed her call to *the Council for World Mission.*

We now mark the end of her responsibilities at Eastwood congregation

and send her with God’s blessing:

*[Amelia hands back symbols to Minister-in-Association Rev Kiduk Hwang]*

On behalf of the Presbytery of Sydney Central Coast,

we thank you for your ministry of God’s grace at Eastwood.

We release you from this ministry and commend you to the Council for World Mission.

We will pray for God’s blessing on your continuing ministry.

**prayers** Presbytery Minister Rev Graham Perry

O God, be with those who leave, and with those who stay;

and grant that all of us, by drawing nearer to you,

may always be close to each other in the communion of saints,

always mindful of becoming your body, here on earth.

Gracious God, we thank you for Amelia. We thank you for our shared life together.

We thank you for her service at Eastwood, in the Ryde zone

and in the Presbytery of Sydney Central Coast. Amen

Minister-in-Association Rev Marion Gledhill

You have led *us* all by the Holy Spirit to serve your people,

to build up your Church, and to glorify your name.

We have worked together for the sake of the Gospel.

We have studied your Word together. We have broken bread and given thanks together.

We thank you for bringing servants among us for the ministry of your Church.

We pray Amelia may continue to exemplify, in word and deed, the Gospel of Christ.

Grant that we continue to serve you in the Church on earth,

and come to rejoice in your kin-dom forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Community Minister Rev Tennyson Chan

We pray for the mission at Eastwood. We pray for people who speak many languages.

We pray for the work of CCA [Christian Community Aid].

We pray for our English classes and for Community Café.

We pray for the new groups that we have been developing – English and Bible, Yoga, History Tours, Mentoring – may our vision for intercultural and inclusive ministry continue to be blessed.

UME Mission Enabler Rev Ann Perrin

We thank you, O God, for friendship and the possibilities of the digital age!

We ask you to watch over her family in Sydney and Newcastle as she moves overseas.

May she be confident in your love for us all and wrap everything up into your purposes.

Give her courage as she ventures to new places and encounters different cultures.

As she does so, may she treasure the learnings from this multicultural community. Amen

President-Elect Rev Charissa Suli

God of lands and oceans, we pray for the ministry to which Amelia has been called.

We pray for the Council for World Mission, especially for the work in developing global education and empowerment, which Amelia will oversight.

We pray for scholars and colleges, researchers and practitioners.

We pray for life-long learning to enable your will to be better understood and expressed.

We pray particularly for the Pacific leaders Amelia will work closely with

and the women she will advocate for. Amen

**blessing** Rev Amelia

Thank you for the love, kindness, and support shown to me.

I ask forgiveness for my mistakes. I thankyou for the understanding you have shown.

As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here,

and am especially grateful for your friendship and care, which I will always cherish.

The bible tells us that endings are also new beginnings.

Let us go to serve God, apart, yet ever connected, for the sake of the Gospel of Christ.

***As you have been a blessing to us, go to be a blessing to others*.**

As you have been a blessing to me, so also may you be a blessing to others.

***Continue faithfully in word and deed in all to which God has called you***

May you live a vital faith and offer God’s generous hospitality

***Give and receive comfort as you serve within the Church.***

Give and receive comfort as you serve within the world.

***May God bless your ministry with the Council for World Mission.***

May God bless you in your ministry in Eastwood Uniting Church.

***May God, the Son, be ever with you and guide you.***

As you continue to be God’s people in this place, may God bless you with seeking.  
Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us.  
As you seek and wonder, may you find what you are looking for.   
Peace of God be with you. **Peace of God be with you.**

**Song A Tasmanian Blessing**

May the west wind breathe softly on your shoulder  
and the gentle rain refresh all life around.  
May the light across the mountain paint your world with brighter days

as the tall trees lift their heads from fertile ground.

May the pain of the past meet truth and healing   
and our hoping, loving, giving, bloom and grow.   
May the wonder of our island nurture caring in us all   
and the sacredness of land and living grow.

May the deep waters carry us to others  
and the gleaming skies direct our thoughts above  
may the beauty all around us, fill us body, soul and mind   
and regenerate our world with peace and love. *(c) John Macrae, Hobart 2019*

*Please join us for Morning Tea*

**Resources for Home**

**Eve** – AKB 2017  
  
Mother of mothers, grandmother of all - I will ever make the best apple sauce.  
Marketers beware, this sauce sells: A hissing whisper gave me the recipe,  
So I pass it on to you, what I have been entrusted with – Gifting nana’s finest treasure.  
  
Sexy matriarch, naïve seductress, such are the images, my portraits depict.  
They do not show my talents and skills  
For I was chosen to tend a garden, and oh, how that garden grows!  
Few imagine companion planting - weaving creation’s luscious design.  
   
From those fronds I wove a garment when we were kicked out from our home.  
I copped the blame for Adam’s sin. His action, my shame…?  
What’s the matter with this picture - Where he confesses my deceit, not his own?  
  
Alas, for my garden, hidden in legend, known in my memory, fading to dim.  
Alas, for its promise and its protection. We miss the shelter of its delights.  
Now we’ve been opened to wider creation. Now we must tend to a wondrous wild.  
Beyond the garden is land’s ancient dreaming. Here the aunties and mothers come into their own.  
In every cave, in every bush dwelling, mothers will bring forth all human life.

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**who will you listen to?**

by Lauren Wright Pittman - Inspired by Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

To give insight into my world when creating this piece, I was recovering from an unexpected postpartum surgery. I read the text, and then weeks of internal wrestling ensued. I felt angry, defiant, and it was all personal. Like a rebellious teenager, I poked holes in the text with hopes it would crumble; but why?

In my early faith formation, this narrative was taught as the origin story explaining human nature, sin, suffering, and death.

It was the text I thought of when I had menstrual cramps. I muttered, “Thanks, Eve,” under my breath, blaming her; but I realize I was also blaming myself for my own pain.

It was the text that justified distrust in myself.

So much of my faith was built on this text as though it was foundational in the first place, and consequently, much of my understanding of my faith, myself, and even the gospel itself was coloured by this narrative. While engaging with this text, the pain I was feeling in my body from childbirth complications felt like punishment. I raged against this text because I felt it raging against me.

Beware of the ways deeply-rooted, harmful theology bubbles up in your life. In this case, for me it surfaced as thoughts of shame, self-blame, self-distrust, self-deprecation, and self-hatred.

Ask yourself, “Who will I listen to?” I was giving power to a way of thinking that wasn’t even in line with who God has revealed God’s self to be, and the image of God that I bear.

I decided to create this piece in monochromatic cool tones, contrasting with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (in orange) and God’s wisdom (in gold) surrounding them. In hindsight,

I realize I was visualizing my emotional journey with the text. The cool tones represent the heaviness and confusion I felt with this familiar story, and the high contrast mimics the way this text has made me feel separate and isolated from God. The woman’s expression holds the weight and the pain caused by the ways this text has been used to subjugate women and to prop up destructive doctrines and a distorted gospel. —Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

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**tune in** by Lisle Gwynn Garrity - Inspired by Matthew 4:1-11

The words of the Tempter hover in the background.

The Tempter’s voice lingers like a ringing in Jesus’ ears, saying: “Take charge. Hoard your power. Dominate. Control.”

Somehow, Jesus has deciphered that these words are simply background noise. He closes his eyes and goes inward, wrapping himself in a posture of self-embrace. From this perspective, Jesus essentially says,

“Get behind me, Satan.”

The backdrop of this piece resembles the dust of the desert.

Like sand washing along a beach, the sediment shifts into water in the top left, hinting at what bolsters Jesus in his ministry: his belonging to God. His belovedness washes over him, giving him the courage to defy the deception of the Tempter and tune into his inner wisdom.

In this way, he is given a new song to carry with him, a lullaby from God that goes,

“You, my child, in you, I am well-pleased.” This is a melody for singing, a song for dancing.

What are the voices that linger with you like a ringing in your ears?

What are the messages that try to deceive or devour you?

Let those voices buzz and fade into the background.

Close your eyes, tune in, and embrace yourself.

From your belovedness, what song will you sing?