**United Society Partners in the Gospel – Conference 2022**

OPENING WORSHIP: 25 JULY 2022

Theme: Living Stones, Living Hope

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**CALL TO WORSHIP** (*All standing*)

L: Christ, the cornerstone of our faith, calls us.

**P: We come in faith.**

L: Come, remembering that, in Christ, though rejected we are chosen.

**P: We come in hope.**

L: Come, rejoicing that, in Christ we are living stones, built together into the

 household of God.

**P: We come in Love.**

**OPENING HYMN**

Jesus, Saviour, Lord, lo, to thee I fly;

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam;

thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I:

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.

In the midst of foes I cry to thee,

from the ends of earth wherever I may be;

my strength in helplessness, O answer me:

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.

*Jesus, Saviour, Lord, lo, to thee I fly;*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam;*

*thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I:*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.*

In thy tent give me a dwelling place,

and beneath thy wings may I find sheltering grace;

O lift on me the sunshine of thy face:

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.

*Jesus, Saviour, Lord, lo, to thee I fly;*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam;*

*thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I:*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam*.

O that I my vows to thee may pay,

and that by thy faithfulness to me each day

may live, and on thy love my burdens lay:

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.

*Jesus, Savior, Lord, lo, to thee I fly;*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam;*

*thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I:*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.*

Yesterday, today, fore’er the same,

lo, the heritage of all who bear thy name;

to ransom them from sin the Savior came:

Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.

*Jesus, Saviour, Lord, lo, to thee I fly;*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam;*

*thou the Rock, my refuge that’s higher than I:*

*Saranam, Saranam, Saranam.*

**OPENING PRAYER**

L: A chosen people,

**P: Set apart and set alongside.**

L: A royal priesthood,

**P: Amidst the sacred and the secular.**

L: A holy nation,

**P: Of all nations and all notions**

L: Your own people,

**P: Longing and belonging.**

**All: God of Love, ground of our being, we come to You in praise, proclamation and prayer, led by your Spirit, and through your son Jesus Christ, who promised that we may have life and have it in abundance. Amen.**

**CONFESSION** (Enactment)

*As music is played, seven representatives shall come forward with placards around their neck on which it is written ‘strong’, ‘smooth’, ‘shiny’, ‘precious’, ‘sharp’, ‘large’, and ‘rejected’. Another person shall step forward, lift each one of them* ***(except the rejected stone)*** *with the following words:*

*I choose you, for you are strong.*

*I choose you, for you are smooth.*

*I choose you, for you are shining.*

*I choose you, for you are precious.*

*I choose you, for you are sharp.*

*I choose you, for you are hard.*

*Then the person attempts to build them into a house by having them stand in a circle, arched towards each other, making their hands touch each other. However, despite repeated efforts, the house collapses. Then the ‘rejected’ stone spontaneously rises, walks to the centre and holds all the hands together.*

**Voice-over:** The stone that the builders rejected has become the indispensable one.

L: For rejecting and discriminating against nations, communities, and peoples based on class, caste, race, gender, and ethnicity,

**P: Forgive us, O Lord.**

**Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na**

**(meaning: What have we done?)**

L: For being and becoming nations, communities and peoples that build your household on principles justice, peace, and love,

**P: Shape us, O Lord.**

**Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na**

L: For your ongoing work of restoration, repair and reconciliation

**P: Equip us, O Lord.**

**Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na, Senzeni na**

**P: You have chosen us, O God, to be living stones drawn towards and erected on Christ. Help us, as members of Your body and partakers in Your royal priesthood, to recognise differences, respect diversity and strive for unity. May we together be built into your household of life and love, through Jesus Christ, the Corner Stone of our faith, now and always.** **Amen.**

**INTERCESSIONS:** *(Prayer from the Iona Community)*

L: Let us pray for the breaking in of God’s kingdom in our world today.

Lord God, because Jesus has taught us to trust you in all things, we hold to his word and share his plea.

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where nations budget for war, while Christ says ‘Put down your sword’,

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where countries waste food and covet greed, while Christ says, ‘I was hungry I was thirsty …’

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where the dominant try hard to be tough, because they are afraid to be tender,

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where we, obsessed with being adult, forget to become like children,

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where our prayers falter, our faith weakens, our light grows dim,

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Where Christ calls us,

**All: Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

L: Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us

**All: Open our eyes to see it,**

**our ears to hear it,**

**our hearts to hold it,**

**our hands to serve it. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

Let us pray the **Lord's Prayer** in a language of our choice.

**CLOSING SONG:**

Many are the light beams from the one light.

Our one light is Jesus.

Many are the light beams from the one light;

we are one in Christ.

Many are the branches of the one tree.

Our one tree is Jesus.

Many are the branches of the one tree

We are one in Christ.

Many are the gifts giv’n, love is all on.

Love’s the gift of Jesus.

Many are the gifts giv’n, love is all one

We are one in Christ.

 Many ways to serve God, the Spirit is one;

servant spirit of Jesus.

Many ways to serve God, the Spirit is one;

we are one in Christ.

Many are the members, the body is one;

members all of Jesus.

Many are the members, the body is one;

we are one in Christ.

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**BENEDICTION**

May the Triune God deepen our faith, broaden our vision, and empower us in love, so that as living stones we may be built together into the household of God, and become instruments of God’s living hope today and always. **Amen.**