

# A Destiny Together

## Justice for First Peoples

A Service of Prayer and Sacrament  
The Lawns of the Parliament of Australia

Canberra | 18 March 2014



Uniting Church in Australia Assembly  
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

18 March 2014



A Destiny Together | 17-23 March 2014

An event of the Uniting Church in Australia

## Welcome to Country

Representative of the Ngunnawal People

## Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

Thank you for your welcome to this country.

We honour you and your people for your custodianship of this land, part of God's good creation on which we gather today and pay our respects to your elders, past and present.

As a Christian people we make this affirmation to God:

**You granted humanity the sacred gift of relationship with your creation, God.**

**You call us to respond to this gift with respect caring for the wellbeing of all you have made.**

**We give thanks for those who have heeded your call.**

## Statement of Intent

Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

We are gathered here today, as church, on the lawns in front of Parliament House because we seek justice for Australia's First Peoples.

Today, the Uniting Church in Australia stands with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers because we believe we have a destiny together.

The First Peoples of this land, bearers of the oldest living cultures in the world, stand strong even as they continue to suffer the devastating effects of colonialism, paternalism, racism, injustice and indifference.

We come together today, during this week of prayer and fasting, to share our grief, lament the suffering and dispossession experienced by so many, pray for justice to be done and commit ourselves afresh to living as reconciliation people.

The words of the Prophet Micah:  
“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

## **Greeting**

**Rev. Rronang Garrawurra**

## **Song**

**Great Southland**

This is our nation, this is our land,  
This is our future, this is our hope.  
A land of reaping, a land of harvest,  
This is our land, this is our home.

**Chorus**  
**This is the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit,**  
**A land of red dust plains and summer rains,**  
**To this sun-burnt land we will see a flood,**  
**And to this Great Southland His Spirit comes.**

This is our nation, this is our land,  
This land of plenty, this land of hope.  
The richest harvest is in her peoples,  
We see revival, His Spirit comes.

**Chorus**  
This is our nation, this is our land,  
This lucky country, of dreams gone dry,  
And to these people we see a harvest,  
And to this land, revival comes.

**Chorus**  
Words & Music by Geoff Bullock

## Opening Prayer

Rev. Ronang Garrawurra

God of love,  
you are the creator of this land  
and of all good things.  
Our hope is in you  
because you gave your son Jesus  
to reconcile the world to you.  
We pray for your strength and grace  
to forgive, accept and love one another  
as you love us and forgive and accept us in the sacrifice of your Son.

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## Marking with Ash & Prayer of Confession

### Prayer over the Ash

Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

Loving God,  
you created us from the dust of the earth  
and called us to be bearers of love.  
May these ashes be for us  
a sign of our repentance and grief  
for we have failed to carry your love.  
May they remind us that our hope lies in you,  
for it is by your grace alone  
that we receive eternal life  
in Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

7. From the beginning of colonisation the First Peoples challenged their dispossession and the denial of their proper place in this land. In time this was taken up in the community, in the courts, in the parliaments, in the way history was recorded and told, and in the Uniting Church in Australia.
8. In 1985 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.
9. In 1988 the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress invited the other members of the Church to join in a solemn act of covenanting before God.
10. After much struggle and debate, in 1994 the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia discovered God's call, accepted this invitation and entered into an ever deepening covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. **This was so that all may see a destiny together, praying and working together for a fuller expression of our reconciliation in Jesus Christ.**

**AND THUS** the Church celebrates this Covenantal relationship as a foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation.

## Uniting Church in Australia

### Revised Preamble to the Constitution

As the Church believes God guided it into union so it believes that God is calling it to continually seek a renewal of its life as a community of First Peoples and of Second Peoples from many land, and as part of that to

#### RECOGNISE THAT

1. When the churches that formed the Uniting Church arrived in Australia as part of the process of colonisation they entered a land that had been created and sustained by the Triune God they knew in Jesus Christ.
2. Through this land God had nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, who continue to understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians (meaning 'sovereign' in the languages of the First Peoples) of these lands and waters since time immemorial.
3. The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.
4. Some members of the uniting churches approached the First Peoples with good intentions, standing with them in the name of justice; considering their well being, culture and language as the churches proclaimed the reconciling purpose of the Triune God found in the good news about Jesus Christ.
5. Many in the uniting churches, however, shared the values and relationships of the emerging colonial society including paternalism and racism towards the First Peoples. They were complicit in the injustice that resulted in many of the First Peoples being dispossessed from their land, their language, their culture and spirituality, becoming strangers in their own land.
6. The uniting churches were largely silent as the dominant culture of Australia constructed and propagated a distorted version of history that denied this land was occupied, utilised, cultivated and harvested by these First Peoples who also had complex systems of trade and inter-relationships. As a result of this denial, relationships were broken and the very integrity of the Gospel proclaimed by the churches was diminished.

## Marking with Ash

People mark one another with ashes on their foreheads or back of hands.

**Music is played: Christ's is the world in which we move (TiS 677)**

**When the marking with ash is complete, the First Peoples are invited to gather in the centre of the community and the everyone else gathers around them for the prayer of confession.**

## Prayer of Confession

**Rev. Terence Corkin**

Merciful God,  
we, the Second Peoples of this land,  
acknowledge with sorrow  
the injustice and abuse that has so often marked  
the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.  
We acknowledge with sorrow  
the way in which their land was taken from them  
and their language, culture and spirituality despised and suppressed.  
We acknowledge with sorrow  
the way in which the Christian church  
was both complicit in this process and actively involved in it.

We acknowledge with sorrow

**that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued:**

**we have failed to care when we should have been outraged,  
we have been apathetic when we should have been active,  
we have been silent when we should have spoken out.**

**Gracious God, forgive us for our failures, past and present.**

**By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts  
so that we may boldly speak your truth  
and courageously do your will.**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Response

**Rev. Rronang Garrawurra**

(with simultaneous translation)

## Declaration of Forgiveness

**Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney**

This is the best of all:  
when we are empty,  
God fills us;  
when we are disheartened,  
God is compassionate;  
when we are wounded,

God brings healing;  
when we confess our sins,  
God forgives.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:  
'Your sins are forgiven'.

**Thanks be to God.**

## A Prayer for Reconciliation Ms Denise Champion

Holy God of love,  
you are the creator of this land and all good things.

We thank you for the survival of indigenous cultures across this land  
and for the courage and resilience  
of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our hope is in you:  
you sent your son Jesus  
to reconcile the world to you  
and reconcile us with each other.

## Presiders

**Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney**, President, Uniting Church in Australia

**Rev. Rronang Garrawurra**, Chairperson, Uniting  
Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

## Participants

**Rev. Terence Corkin**, General Secretary,  
Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

**Ms Denise Champion**, UAICC SA Region Chairperson

**Ms Cheryl Lawson**, UAICC WA Region Resource Officer

**Rev. Myung Hwa Park**, Moderator-elect, Synod of NSW and ACT

**Rev. Dorothy Harris**, UAICC National Elders

**Pastor Sam Dinah**, UAICC National Elders

**Ms Julia Lennon**, UAICC SA Region

**Ms Candice Champion**, UAICC SA Region

**Translator:** Mr Mark Guyula

**Musicians:** Mr James Aaron, Ms Hildegard Palafox

**Liturgy prepared by** Rev. Dr David Pitman, Rev. Dr Chris Budden  
and Rev. Elenie Poulos

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A Prayer for Reconciliation prepared by the Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous  
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## Word of Mission

**Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney**

People of God,  
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,  
the First and Second Peoples of this land,  
have entered with one another.  
Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.  
Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.  
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.  
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord.  
Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God.

## Blessing

**Rev. Ronang Garrawurra**

The love of God enfold you,  
the wisdom of Christ enlighten you,  
and the fire of the Spirit inflame you;  
and may the blessing of the holy triune God  
rest upon you and abide with,  
now and evermore. Amen.

Give us the courage to  
accept the realities of our history  
that we may build a better future for our nation.

Teach us to respect all cultures.  
Teach us to care for our land and waters.  
Help us to justly share  
the gifts of this land.  
Help us to bring about spiritual and social change  
to improve the quality of life  
for all groups in our communities,  
especially those who are disadvantaged.  
Help our young people find true dignity  
and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love be the foundations  
on which we build our families,  
our communities and our nation.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## The Peace

**Rev. Ronang Garrawurra**

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

**A sign of peace is exchanged amongst those present.**

## Scripture Readings

### Luke 24:28-32

Ms Cheryl Lawson

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us[a] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

(NRSV)

### 1 Corinthians 13

Rev. Myung Hwa Park

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. <sup>9</sup> For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup> but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became

peace to the killing-fields,  
scorched earth to green;  
Christ for the bitterness,  
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,  
oceans and streams,  
plundered and poisoned,  
our future, our dreams.  
Lord, end our madness,  
carelessness, greed;  
make us content with  
the things that we need.

#### Chorus

Lighten our darkness,  
breathe on this flame  
until your justice burns  
brightly again;  
until the nations  
learn of your ways,  
seek your salvation  
and bring you their praise.

#### Chorus

Words and Music by Graham Kendrick

## Song

### Beauty for brokenness

Beauty for brokenness,  
hope for despair,  
Lord, in the suffering,  
this is our prayer.  
Bread for the children,  
justice, joy, peace,  
sunrise to sunset  
your kingdom increase.

Shelter for fragile lives,  
cures for their ills,  
work for the craftsmen,  
trade for their skills;  
land for the dispossessed,  
rights for the weak;  
voices to plead the cause  
of those who can't speak.

#### Chorus

**God of the poor,  
friend of the weak,  
give us compassion we pray;  
melt our cold hearts,  
let tears fall like rain.  
Come change our love  
from a spark to a flame.**

Refuge from cruel wars,  
havens from fear,  
cities for sanctuary,  
freedoms to share,

an adult, I put an end to childish ways.<sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror,  
dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then  
I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.<sup>13</sup> And now faith,  
hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

(NRSV)

## Reflection

**Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney**

**A time for silent reflection and prayer.**

## Affirmation of Faith Said together

**We say** God created the universe,  
and the world we live in,  
and every living thing on this earth.

**We believe** the Creation shows us the power and presence of God,  
and makes us want to praise and give thanks to God,  
and take good care of the earth God has made.

**We are full of joy** that across the world  
different peoples have their own culture and language,  
and that in God we are all united together as one.

**We say** God is Spirit,  
breath of life,  
who is always working to bring people to life in God.

**We believe** the Spirit has been alive and active in every race and culture,  
getting hearts and minds ready for the good news:  
the good news of God's love and grace that Jesus Christ revealed.

**We are full of joy** that from the beginning the Spirit was alive and active,  
revealing God through the law, custom and ceremony  
of the First Peoples of this ancient land.

**We say** Jesus is Saviour and Lord,  
and that he began the church  
and prayed that the church might be together as one.

**We believe** that in the risen Jesus we are all brothers  
and sisters in the one great family of God,  
and that God calls us to live in faith, hope and love  
for the sake of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

**We are full of joy** that we can learn, grow and serve together  
as a pilgrim people  
in the name of Christ.

## Song

### How Long

How long must we cry out  
'til justice rolls down like a river?  
How long will this night last,  
and when will we all be together?

#### Chorus

**Teach me to do what is right,  
work in the darkness, trust in the light.  
And may love be the path I walk upon.**

How long will these bombs fall,  
and bodies get twisted and broken?  
How long will these voices keep shouting  
loud insult and slogan?

#### Chorus

How long will your creatures  
be trampled, degraded for ever?  
How long must we cry out  
'til justice rolls down like a river?

Christ is the bread of life,  
food for healing and wholeness.

### The minister lifts the cup in full view of the people and says

Christ is the cup of hope,  
wellspring of resurrection life.

### The minister holds out the bread and the cup to the people and says

The gifts of God for the people of God.

### The Distribution

**Distribution will be via intincture with grape  
juice only at four distribution points.**

## Prayer after Communion

### Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

#### Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ  
You have put your life in our hands,  
Now we put our lives in yours.

Take us,  
Shake us,  
Remake us in the image of Christ.

Enable us to live as a reconciling community,  
a people who love and follow Jesus.

**Amen.**

We rejoice with all that you have made,  
as we join the company of heaven in their song.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

And so, in remembrance of all you have done for us,  
we take this bread and this cup,  
and proclaim Christ's death and resurrection.

**Send to us the Holy Spirit  
that this meal may be holy  
and your people may become one.  
Unite us in faith, inspire us to love,  
encourage us with hope,  
that we may receive Christ  
as he comes to us in this holy banquet.**

We praise you, Almighty Father,  
Through Christ your Son,  
In the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**  
**Rev. Ronang Garrawurra**

**People are invited to pray in their language of choice.**

**The Breaking of Bread**

**The minister takes the bread and breaks it  
in full view of the people and says**

**Chorus**

Teach me to do what is right,  
work in the darkness, trust in the light,  
And may love be the path  
And may love be the path  
I walk upon.

Words & Music by Robin Mann

**Holy Communion**  
**Invitation**

Friends, this is the table of the crucified One,  
the one who fed the hungry from the abundance of God,  
who welcomed the outcast, the stranger, the morally dubious,  
who died as a common criminal outside the city.

This table is an act of courage.  
In the face of those who would deny God and God's reign  
it affirms the reality of the kingdom, the heavenly feast of God's people,  
and the promise of God's future and God's life.

Come and receive the gift of life.  
Come because you love the Lord a little  
and would like to love him more;  
come, because he loves you  
and gave himself for you.

**Prayer of Approach**

Merciful God,  
we are unworthy to celebrate this sacrament,  
but in your Son Jesus Christ  
you have drawn near to us;  
it is in his name that we draw near to you.

In obedience to Christ's command  
we present this bread and this cup.  
All that we have comes from you,  
and what we give you is your own.

**Amen.**

## **Words of Institution**

Luke makes it clear that Jesus gathered his disciples in secret.  
He was a hunted man,  
yet gathered to break bread and share wine with friends.  
And not just any meal of bread and wine.

Jesus said to them,  
"This broken bread is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in memory of me."  
And as he passed them a cup he said,  
"This cup is the new covenant sealed with my life and blood.  
Whenever you share this, do it remembering me".

Life has a new centre and a new beginning.

We come in the shadow of Parliament to remember,  
to tell the story of the crucified One,  
to ask what this death we celebrate  
means for us who are his followers,

and how we will live  
in the light of crucifixion  
and the declaration that 'Jesus is Lord'.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We bless you for this wide, red land,  
and for its life-giving waters,  
acknowledging that you have been present in this place  
from the very beginning of creation,  
sustaining the people, the land and all living creatures.

In another place you called Abraham to be the father of a people  
who would be a light to others,  
and you called the women with the courage to care for your nation.  
You called prophets to remind the people of your story:  
of creation, of covenant, of liberation, of new community and law,  
of other nations who served you, and of stories  
gathered to be sacred scripture.

In the mystery of your time you entered into the life of the world in Jesus,  
who healed, ate with sinners, welcomed outcasts, taught women,  
shared water with foreigners, criticised politicians and church leaders,  
fed the hungry,  
and was obedient to death  
so that we might see your reign.

You have called us to be the Church in this place,  
to be a small glimpse of the life you intend for all.  
We follow Jesus who stood for the poor, who created havoc in the  
temple,  
who declared a jubilee time of equality and sharing of wealth.  
We seek to be a just, inclusive community of  
the sisters and brothers of Christ.