



DAY OF MOURNING

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A worship service that reflects on the effect of invasion and colonisation on Australia's First Peoples.



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY



UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER
CHRISTIAN CONGRESS

The observance of a Day of Mourning was endorsed by the Fifteenth Assembly at the request of our sisters and brothers in the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

In the spirit of our Covenant relationship with the UAICC, we have declared the Sunday before Australia Day as a Day of Mourning.

This Day of Mourning Worship Resource invites all Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) congregations to hold worship services that reflect on the effect of invasion and colonisation on Australia's First Peoples and our identity as a nation.

This worship service will be an annual fixture on our liturgical calendar.

Remembering our history is an important part of our journey toward reconciliation as First and Second Peoples. The service reminds us of the dispossession and violence against First Peoples, and laments that as a Church and as Second Peoples we were and remain complicit.

We acknowledged this in our Church when we apologised to the Stolen Generations in 1997.

We acknowledged this by revising the Preamble to our Constitution, which was approved by the Ninth Assembly in 2009.

We acknowledged this in affirming First Peoples as the sovereign peoples of this land.

Our declaration of a Day of Mourning allows us to stand together in remembering the truth of our history, and honouring the culture of Australia's First Peoples, their families and the next generations.

I will be joining Uniting Church members in lamenting, saying sorry and asking for forgiveness, for the past and current impacts of colonisation and dispossession of Australia's First Peoples.

I pray that our Church and our nation will continue on this journey of confession, forgiveness and working toward justice and healing.

Rev Denise Champion, a Deacon in the UCA and an Adnyamathanha woman speaks of the new community toward which we are called as the Uniting Church:

"I have been challenged, in my work in facilitating reconciliation between First and Second Peoples, to create a safe community. A community where people can come together, sit and talk, and experience healing and forgiveness for the past, finding a new destiny together."

As the Uniting Church we affirm that ours is "a destiny together" acknowledging the wrongs of the past and the present and committing ourselves to take action to bring about a more just Australia. As the Uniting Church we hear Jesus calling us into the light of reconciliation.

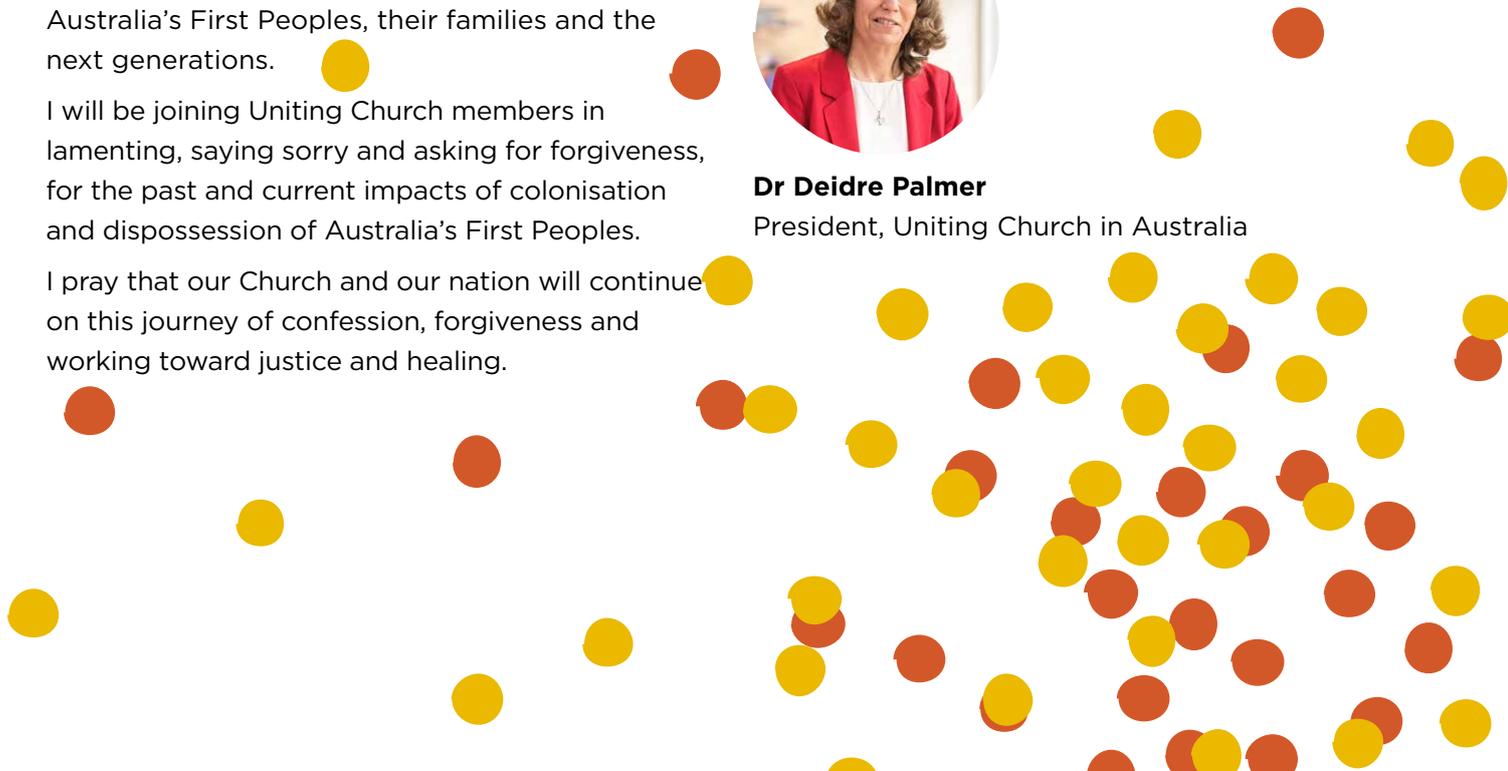
I pray that the whole nation may fully acknowledge our history and take a significant step towards healing for our nation.

I want to acknowledge our past President Mr Stuart McMillan for his work in developing this resource and his ongoing passionate commitment to walking together as First and Second Peoples.

I commend this resource to the Church.
Grace and peace to you.



Dr Deidre Palmer
President, Uniting Church in Australia



DAY OF MOURNING

For use on the Sunday before 26 January

Call to Worship

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.

Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.

All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.

Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.
Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the _____ peoples,
the first inhabitants of this place
from time beyond remembering.

We acknowledge that through this land,
God nurtured and sustained
the First Peoples of this country,
the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.
**We honour them for their custodianship
of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that 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.**

We acknowledge that 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;
and so we rejoice

*If there is a member of
the recognised traditional
owner Clan/Nation able to
be present, then a **Welcome
to Country** may be said
after the short form of the
Acknowledgement and the
speaker introduced.*

**in the reconciling purposes of God
found in the good news about Jesus Christ.**

OR

We acknowledge the _____ Clan/Nation
the sovereign First Peoples of this place.
We honour their elders past and present
together with all descendants of this Nation,
for their care for these lands and waters since creation.

Hymn/Song

Greeting

Today friends, we are remembering the tragic history of our nation and the violent dispossession of her First Peoples.

Today is a Day of Mourning. Today we mark in lament the truth of our shared history and we lift up to God our prayers for First Peoples and our nation.

We say sorry and we pray for forgiveness, healing and hope. But today is also a day of worship. So we come together and give thanks to God for the abundant grace and liberating hope which we know through Jesus Christ and which is for all people.

The God of all justice,
The God of all peace,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayers

Invocation

Abba, Father,
Bäpa God,
source of all life,
answer our call,
as a mother responds
to the cry of a child in the night.

Jesus Christ,
brother and friend,
Liberator,
stand beside us
as bearer of our humanity,
and sharer of God's grace.

Creator Spirit,
giver of new life,

*Bäpa means father in the
Yolŋu languages of NE
Arnhemland and in Bahasa
languages.*

purposeful guest,
prod us to praise,
calling us to be a people
of hope and faith in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Lament and Confession

**Merciful God,
we, the Second Peoples of this land,
acknowledge and lament
the injustice and abuse
that has so often marked
the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.**

**We acknowledge and lament
the way in which their land was taken from them
and their language, culture, law and spirituality
despised and suppressed.**

**We acknowledge and lament
the way in which the Christian church
was so often not only complicit in this process
but actively involved in it.**

**We acknowledge and lament
that in our own time
the injustice and abuse has continued.
We have been indifferent
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.**

**Liberating Jesus, hear our lament and
by your Spirit bring healing, hope and transformation
to the lives of our First Nations sisters and brothers
and their communities, we pray.**

**Gracious God, hear our acknowledgements —
We have not loved you
with our whole heart,
nor have we loved First Peoples
and other neighbours as ourselves.
God of mercy,
forgive us for our failures,
past and present and
give us the grace today to make a fresh start.**

*The gathered body shares this
lament, saying it together.*

**By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts
so that we may love as you have loved us,
that we may boldly speak your truth
and courageously do your will.**

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

Declaration of Forgiveness

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 sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,
our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You refill the cup of life, O God.

In Christ, we find refuge, strength and hope.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

The Service of the Word

Bible Readings

Passages which could be used include:

Psalms 85: 7 – 13; Micah 6: 6 – 8; John 14: 15 – 24; Acts 2: 1 – 21;
Romans 8: 19 – 27; James 2: 14 – 26; 1 John 4: 7 – 21

Concepts as follows:

Redistributive Justice – reparation, who is given the power, 2 Samuel 21

Nature of land, 1Kings 21

Reparation Luke 19:1-10

Jubilee, a prophetic declaration for First Peoples, Isaiah 61:7-9

Luke 4:16-21 – “the year of the Lord’s favour” i.e. Jubilee (Lev 25)

See also: Mark 10:17-31, Luke 1:46-55 Sovereign God, God creates, preserves and saves; John 1; Psalms 19:1,2; Isaiah 40:22-31; Romans 8:19-21, Acts 17:22-28.

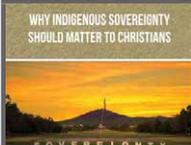
Self-emptying God (kenosis) – in the “other”, Christ is revealed, Matthew 25:31-46

A Destiny Together – Basis of Union “the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.”, Psalms 78:1-8, 2 Corinthians 5:16-19

The Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12

Preaching of the Word

Some resources for preaching could include:

 <p>WALKING TOGETHER Exploring the Covenant between First and Second Peoples Study Guide</p>	<p>Walking Together - Exploring the covenant between First and Second Peoples https://bit.ly/2QI3tpx</p>
 <p>Building Partnerships A guide to covenant renewal with Indigenous people throughout the United Church in Australia.</p>	<p>Building Partnerships - A guide to covenant renewal in the UCA https://bit.ly/2QwNUS</p>
 <p>WHY INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY SHOULD MATTER TO CHRISTIANS</p>	<p>Why Indigenous Sovereignty Should Matter to Christians - Rev Dr Chris Budden https://bit.ly/2SLJpQo</p>

Offering

Notices

Prayers of the People

Give us the courage to
accept the realities of our history
so 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 share justly
the resources of this land.

Help us to bring about spiritual and social change
to improve the quality of life
for all peoples in our communities,
especially the disadvantaged.
Help all young people to find true dignity
and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love
be the foundations on which we:
walk together as First and Second Peoples; and
build our families, our communities and our nation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

There could be a special offering for the work of the UAICC in your Synod.

Prepared by the Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group, Amended September 2018 Assembly Resourcing Unit

Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn/Song

Word of Mission

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,
Until God's promised reconciliation of all creation is complete.

Blessing

**Bless us therefore, as we depart this place:
give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk alongside our First Peoples,
as brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in the power of God's good Spirit:
with the gentle fire of God's zeal,
with the breath of life,
ready to work for justice and peace.
**We go in Christ's name.
Amen.**

Cover: Adnyamathahna woman Rev Denise Champion, Pitjantjatjara woman Auntie Mona Olsson, and Canadian First Nations elder Lorna Standingready mourning together at Colebrook Reconciliation Park in Adelaide, a former home for Aboriginal Stolen Generations children (March 2018).