

A LITURGY SUITABLE FOR ECUMENICAL OCCASIONS WHEN A EUCHARIST CANNOT BE CELEBRATED

(This liturgy was first used as the final act of worship at the 2011 National Conference of the Australian Academy of Liturgy. It was prepared and led by the Rev Nathan Nettleton, minister at the South Yarra Community Baptist Church)

The Gathering of the People of God

Blessed is our God, Trinity of Love,
and blessed is the dominion of our God,
now and ever and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

We gather today in a place sacred to many.

For thousands of years
the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation
have been faithful custodians
of this land on which we gather.
We honour them and pay respect to their Elders,
both past and present.

Amen.

Since 1917,
Christian people of the Anglican tradition
have been conducting public worship
in this chapel in which we gather.
We honour them and thank them for their hospitality.

Amen.

+ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:13

And also with you.

We stand to sing the following hymn.
Feel free to remain seated if you need to.

♪ Immortal, Invisible ...

[Together in Song 143 (HarperCollins Religious)]

We remain standing after the hymn.
Feel free to sit down if you need to.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
a light no darkness can extinguish.

The Candle is lit.

Since we live as people of the light;
in faith, hope and love
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

Joining our voices with the deep groans of creation
yearning for redemption;
let us pray to the Lord:

Romans 8:22-23

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

With all who suffer with Christ
under the weight of the sin of the world:
— those subjected to injustice and deprivation,
those seeking refuge, freedom and peace;
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

With the world's children,
with the aged and infirm,
with all who know their need of others;
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

With all who serve the earth and its inhabitants:
with leaders, policy-makers, activists,
with workers, students, artists and story-tellers:
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

With each one gathered here in prayer,
with the congregations from which we have come,
with our absent colleagues
from the AAL and Societas Liturgica,
and with the whole of Christ's church,
from the Yarra banks to the ends of the earth;
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

With God's faithful servants of every time and place
— all our mothers and fathers among the saints

who inspire us, guide us and encourage us —
and especially this day with Fabian of Rome;
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

And with the faithful ones
whose names we call on now . . .

*An opportunity to name out loud someone
whose life and faith have inspired your own*

With these and the whole cloud of witnesses — Hebrews 12:1
all who have died in the hope of resurrection,
let us pray to the Lord:

♪ **Into your communion. . .**

Blessed are you, God of all creation,
and blessed is the communion
into which you gather us.

You promised through your beloved Son
that when two or three gather together in his name,
you will be there in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

♪ **Send your Holy Spirit
to call us by name and lead us home.**

We come defeated, we come dancing,
We come traumatised, we come trusting,
We come aggrieved, we come adoring;

♪ **Send your Holy Spirit
to call us by name and lead us home.**

We come because our hearts are made restless
by echoes of a song we have never heard
and memories of a place we have never seen.

♪ **Send your Holy Spirit
to call us by name and lead us home.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Sisters and brothers,
the Word of God became flesh,
fruit of a woman's womb,
that we might see him with our own eyes
and touch him with our own hands.
Therefore, let us have wisdom, let us take heed,
let us not flee the Word that comes to save us.

O Lord,
Your mysteries, discerned in wisdom
by men and women through the centuries,
have been etched in sacred places
and recorded in holy books.

**Send your Holy Spirit upon us,
that your Word may take root
in the secret places of our hearts
and bear much fruit to your glory.**

We sit down as a sign of our willingness to receive God's Word.

The First Scripture Reading

1 Chronicles 16: 14-25 is read

Hear the word of God:
We have heard and are silent.

We reflect in silence for a minute

For the word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 149 is sung as follows:

RESPONSE: 1. Cantor 2. ALL

♪ **It is good to give you thanks, O Lord, it is good to give you thanks.**

Sing a new song, you faithful,
praise God in the assembly.
Israel, rejoice in your maker,
Zion, in your king.
Dance in the Lord's name,

sounding harp and tambourine.
The Lord delights in saving a helpless people.
Revel in God's glory, join in clan by clan.
Shout praise from your throat,
sword flashing in hand
to discipline nations
and punish the wicked,
to shackle their kings and chain their leaders,
and execute God's sentence.
You faithful, this is your glory!
Hallelujah!
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

♪ **It is good to give you thanks . . .**

The Second Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 is read

Hear the word of God:
We have heard and are silent.

We reflect in silence for a minute

For the word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading

Let us arise. Let us stand and rejoice.
In you, O virgin Mary,
the seed of the gospel has flowered.
Mary, full of grace – the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women Luke 1: 28, 31
and blessed is the fruit of your womb – Jesus.
You have borne the Word made flesh
The saviour of our souls.

♪ **Gloria, Gloria . . .**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Saint
Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 13: 31-35 is read

This is the Gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

♪ Gloria, Gloria . . .

The Sermon of Silence

When the world tells us that we are
what we do with our spending power,
let us learn

We are who we are in our silence.

When the world tells us that we are
how we're seen in the eyes of others,
let us learn

We are who we are in our silence.

When the world tells us
to rush in where angels fear to tread,
let us learn what the angels already know:

**Our truth is conceived
in the silence of God.**

*We observe five minutes of silence
for contemplation and reflection.*

The Creed

As we recite the Apostles' Creed, water will be sprinkled over us as a reminder of our baptism.

Let us stand and affirm the faith of the church,
the faith passed down to us from the apostles
through faithful disciples of every time and place:

**We believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived
by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day
he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge**

the living and the dead.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Prayers of the Faithful

Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess,
for we have a great High Priest
who has gone into the very presence of God —
Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Hebrews 4:14

**By God's grace
we share in Christ's priesthood,
praying for the world day and night
until earth and heaven are reconciled
and all things are made one in Christ.**

You may be seated during the following prayers

Let us pray for the care of the earth
and the web of life on which we all depend:

Free prayers may be offered out loud or silently.

. . . God of compassion, we put our trust in you:

♪ **Your will be done, Lord, your love be shown.
Your will be done, Lord, your love be shown.**

Let us pray for reconciliation and justice
wherever there is conflict, abuse or oppression:

Free prayers may be offered out loud or silently.

. . . God of compassion, we put our trust in you:

♪ **Your will be done, Lord . . .**

Let us pray for those who are sick, hurting,
fearful, despairing or beset by disaster:

Free prayers may be offered out loud or silently.

. . . God of compassion, we put our trust in you:

♪ **Your will be done, Lord . . .**

Let us pray for those who work for good
with integrity and faithfulness.

Free prayers may be offered out loud or silently.

. . . God of compassion, we put our trust in you:

♪ **Your will be done, Lord . . .**

Let us pray for the whole of Christ's Church,
with all its life, prayer and ministry.

Free prayers may be offered out loud or silently.

. . . God of compassion, we put our trust in you:

♪ **Your will be done, Lord . . .**

Let us lift up to God the names of all those
we carry in our hearts
for whom we would especially seek God's care:

An opportunity to name out loud, in a spirit of prayer, those for whom we especially seek God's presence and blessing. Your prayers may be offered in any language and all at once. Hear our prayers, tender God, and accept them in the spirit of the prayer your Son taught us: We stand and sing

♪ **Our Father in Heaven . . .**

Lament Around the Lord's Table

The Invitation

We stand at the threshold of the ultimate feast
when all who hunger will be fed
and the new wine of justice will be poured.
Even now, Christ invites us to his table,
to taste the first fruits
and be nourished for the journey.

And yet, in approaching this table
we will find ourselves painfully divided.
Our various communions have failed to maintain
the unity for which Christ prayed.
For some of us, if we broke the bread,
others would not be permitted to come.
For others, there are some
who we would not be permitted to invite.
And if I broke the bread,
we'd be in no end of trouble!

But let us approach the Table, nevertheless,
and stand there hungry
and feel the pain
and confess our complicity.
For in Christ we know
that suffering can be redemptive
and that healing will rise from the grave
and reach out to us with wounded hands.

As we sing the following hymn,
we process down the chapel and gather around the Lord's Table.

♪ **Let all mortal flesh keep silence . . .**
[*Together in Song* 497 (HarperCollins Religious)]

We remain standing after the hymns.
Feel free to sit down if you need to. We are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

Let us lift up our 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.

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise,
O God,
for you set the table of creation
and invite us to feast with you
in a cosmic celebration
of love and desire.

We thank you for Jesus,
whose life, prayer and ministry
opened our eyes
to the glory of life
and fuelled our hunger
for your long anticipated reign
of justice, mercy and peace.

We thank you for Christ's passionate solidarity
with the suffering of all the earth;
for as he bore in his own body
the wounds of creation,
he embraced us in our brokenness
and gathered us into his wholeness
so that we might know ourselves beloved

and serve with him as priests forever
in an all-embracing eucharist.

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh;
who, on the night when he was betrayed,
took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said:
“This is my body, which is for you.
Do this to remember me.”

And we long to do so,
here in this company,
for in these days we have prayed together
and learned together
and even eaten together
and we know ourselves to be
one body and blood in Christ.

But yet we stand here hungry,
divided by our allegiances
to powers who will not recognise one another.

**How long, O Lord? How long?
Deliver us from the snares of sin,
and give us peace in our day.**

Forgive us our sins, merciful Lord,
for we have extolled your prayer for unity,
but tolerated hostility and division;
we have praised your call for humility,
but fought for the seats of honour
at your right and left hand.

♪ **Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh;
who, on the day when he was crucified,
even as we took his body and broke it, said:
“Father, forgive them,
for they don’t know what they are doing.”

Come now, Holy Spirit of our God,
and brood over us, your broken people

whom you have so graciously forgiven.
Come, even now, and make of your gathered people
the real presence of Christ for the world,
standing strong before the fury of hell,
and pressing on through suffering and beyond,
all the way to the banqueting room of heaven,
where all the hungry will be fed
and sorrow and mourning and pain will be no more.

**Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour are yours, eternal God,
now and forever. Amen.**

The Peace

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness
we have communion with one another,
and with all who hope in Christ.

**Gathered at this Table
and hungering for the day
when our communion will be fulfilled,
we bind ourselves to one another
to live in love and peace from this day forth.**

Have peace with one another.
The peace of the Lord.

Let us share signs of peace with one another.

The Sending Forth of the People of God

Mysterious God,
you have gathered us in unity
around your fountain of living water,
and you have set your face against
the forces of division that deny us permission
to feast together at your banqueting table.

It is with grief that we depart this place
still hungry for the bread
of your broken but undivided body,

but with joy that we offer ourselves
as servants of your reconciling love.

A brief silence is observed

With trembling hearts
Let us renew that sacred pledge together:

**I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
Put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you
or laid aside for you;
exalted for you
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty;**

**let me have all things,
let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly
yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, glorious and blessed God,
+ Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever,
to the glory and praise of your name.
Amen.**

The Lord says:

“Walk in my sight and be whole.

[Genesis 17:1](#)

Make it your first work to love.

My presence shall go with you
and I will give you rest.

[Exodus 33:14](#)

Behold, I am with you every moment,
even to the end of the world.”

[Matthew 28:20](#)

So now go, with your eyes open
for signs of God’s kingdom emerging
in those things that are too small and powerless
for the world to take seriously.

And may God gather you under her wings
and protect you from all oppression;
May Christ Jesus ignite in you his passion for unity;
And may the Holy Spirit keep you always
in God's steadfast love.

♪ **For you, deep stillness . . .**

[All Together Whatever 494 (OpenBook Publishers)]

The worship is over;
the service begins.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.