



All of this is us



# #40PRAYERS

## 40 days of prayer from the Assembly to mark our 40th Anniversary

### WEEK ONE

#### Day 1 – Sunday 14 May 2017 – Inaugural prayers for the Uniting Church revisited

*We begin our 40 days of prayer with the first prayer from our first President Rev. Dr Davis McCaughey at the Service of Inauguration on 22 June 1977.*

In peace let us pray to the Lord,

For the peace which is from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God's holy churches, and for the unity of them all, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For Ministers of Word and Sacrament and all others called to minister in the Church of God, that with pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith they may accomplish their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For our homes that they may be holy, for parents and children, brothers and sisters, and all our families let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For the rulers of our country and all in authority among the nations, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For the sick and the suffering, the sorrowful and the dying - for the homeless and starving, for the prisoners and captives; and for those who suffer persecution, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord have mercy.*

For ourselves and all who confess the name of Christ, that we may faithfully serve and obey Him in this life and at the last join those now at rest in unending joy, let us pray to the Lord.

*Response: Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.*

*For this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the 6<sup>th</sup> President Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood has updated a prayer of thanksgiving given by his father, Rev Dr A. Harold Wood at the time of the Inauguration.*

Mighty and merciful God,  
you have led your pilgrim people through centuries past  
and are calling us to serve you today.  
You have blessed us with gifts of the Holy Spirit.  
You have given leaders to your Church  
who have guided us with courage and insight.  
Despite the failings of your Church, you continue to claim us for yourself,  
to renew our faith  
and to send us out to a world in need.  
We thank you for the inheritance into which we have entered:  
for the Reformers of the 16th century who preached the centrality of Jesus Christ;  
for the Evangelical Revival of the 18th century which reached out  
in fresh ways with the Good News;  
for the Ecumenical Movement of the 20th century which has brought Christians  
together across barriers of race, language, culture and tradition.  
We give you thanks for all who prayed and worked to bring the Uniting Church  
into being:  
for those who wrote the Basis of Union;  
for those in every locality who worked patiently to bring people together;  
for those who for 40 years have proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ,  
ministered to the sick and suffering,  
and developed new initiatives in mission.  
We ask your blessing on your Church in the coming years:  
that you will draw us closer to other Churches;  
that you will strengthen our work for justice and peace;  
that you will help us minister to the poor and distressed,  
the lonely and alienated, the confused and despairing.  
May your Spirit of truth and love be our guide both now and in the future,  
that we may be a faithful servant Church,  
giving of ourselves and all we have  
as Jesus gave himself for us. Amen.

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## **Day 2 – Monday 15 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of Rural and Remote Ministry**

*Today we pray for all those working in rural and remote ministry.*

*On anniversary of the first flight of the Australian Inland Mission Aerial Medical Service later known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, we remember the pioneers of ministry in the outback and all those who have followed in their footsteps to support and advocate for the people of remote Australia.*

Loving God  
undiminished by distance  
unconstrained by place or time, forever seeking, forever calling,  
forever drawing humanity  
to yourself and to each other,  
We glimpse your Spirit  
in the brooding silence of awesome landscape, the ancient law of Aboriginal nations,  
the unspoken trust of honest mateship.  
Yet in the vastness of this place, Australia,  
we often feel alone, alienated, unworthy  
of more than a passing acquaintance with your love.  
Help us understand  
You ever yearn to make us whole,  
drawing near in Christ  
to show us the way.

We pray for all who live beyond our cities,  
especially for people and communities in the grip of drought  
or economic hardship or despairing for their future.  
Come with your spirit of hope.

We pray for those who are feeling disconnected  
from their families, their communities, their God.  
May their loneliness be replaced with a sense of belonging and relationship.

We pray for those suffering the impact of our unpredictable climate,  
those who are burdened with the darkness of depression,  
and for families and communities devastated by the scourge of suicide.  
May your peace encircle and strengthen them and bring them consolation.

We pray for all who serve in remote communities,  
especially through the work of Frontier Services, for the Patrol Ministers  
and the volunteers of Outback Links,  
who by their presence reflect  
your compassion and love to all they encounter. Amen.

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### **Day 3 – Tuesday 16 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of our community services**

*This prayer was written for the launch of UnitingCare by the members of the UnitingCare Secretariat.*

#### Your Hands

God of Hope and Joy,  
In your greatness you call us  
To seek those who are lost,  
forgotten and isolated.

God of light and strength,  
by your Grace  
you call us to be together  
to journey our understanding of the Way.

Show us the way forward  
into this world you love,  
to be your hands and heart,  
to respond with willingness and humility,  
to love and share  
as you have loved and shared.

Send us to the edges,  
give us the grace to stand beside  
those who are voiceless,  
marginalised and rejected,  
those who experience pain and hardship,  
loneliness and grief, coldness and hunger.

Show us how to care, how to listen,  
how to respond, how to love,  
how to proclaim and liberate.

Lead us so that in being  
your hands and heart  
we may ever faithfully  
walk in your Spirit.

Amen.

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*Additionally you may like to offer this contemporary prayer for the poor and needy. Thanks to UnitingCare National Director Claerwen Little for sourcing this prayer.*

Lord God,

You came to give honour to the least, those forgotten, overlooked and misjudged.

You came to give first place to the last, those left behind, misunderstood and undervalued.

You came to give a warm welcome to the lost, those who are orphaned, abandoned and destitute.

Help us to be your ears to listen to their cries.

Help us to be your voice speaking out love and acceptance.

Help us to be your feet walking beside those in need.

Help us to be your hands to clothe, feed and shelter them.

You came for the least, the lost and last of this world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

*This prayer is from the website [lords-prayer-words.com](http://lords-prayer-words.com)*

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## **Day 4 – Wednesday 17 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of our schools**

*Today we pray for Uniting Church schools across the country.*

*This prayer was contributed by Elaine Rae, Assembly Standing Committee member and former Executive Officer of the Schools Commission, UCA Queensland Synod.*

Lord, we pray for those exercising ministry through working in Uniting Church schools throughout Australia  
as they seek to model servant leadership, share the Gospel and build Christian communities.

Lord, we pray for the work of our schools;

for Principals and Boards that they may reflect Christian values in all their deliberations and actions  
for Chaplains that they are provided with opportunities to share the Gospel  
for teachers and other staff that they may model Christ's love in their interactions with each other and students  
and for students that they be open to the leading of your Spirit.

Lord, we pray for all who work in and with our schools.  
Grant them wisdom, courage and compassion in all their deliberations and actions.  
We pray that their influence on the lives of young people is reflective of Christ's love and teachings.

Amen.

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**Day 5 – Thursday 18 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of our ministry lay and ordained**

*Today we pray for all those exercising ministry across our Church in whatever capacity. This prayer is contributed by the General Secretary of the Uniting Church in Western Australia Rev. David de Kock.*

Holy God, revealed in Christ Jesus, as Lord of the church, we come with thankful and joyful hearts to celebrate the ministry of all leaders in the Uniting Church in Australia.

For those who have served gladly over the past 40 years – whether ordained or lay, for those who serve Your people at this time, and for those whom You are calling to serve in the days ahead,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For those who have provided for our needs and comforted us in our despair, for those who lifted us when we were down, who accepted us as we are, and who spoke Your words of forgiveness over us,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For those whose words and deeds have made the love of God real for us, for those whose lifestyle is so shaped by the presence of the Father that they became beacons of hope in a dark world,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For those who have borne witness to the One who lived, died, and was raised to make us whole, for those who told us the stories of Jesus, for those who brought us to Christ,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For those whose warmed hearts have revealed the renewing and enabling power of the Holy Spirit, for those lives that demonstrate the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit's presence,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For those servants of God whose vision has brought us to this time and place, for those who through the years have stood firm for Christ, for those who have finished the race and won the prize,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For our life in Christ and the fellowship of His people, for freedom to worship and good news to share, for opportunities for evangelism and the mission of caring,

**We thank You Lord. And we celebrate with joy!**

For our gathering together in the name of Christ across this land, for our oneness in Him and the promise of wholeness both now and to come, for the God who had the first word and who assures us that He will have the last, for the One who is worthy,

**We thank the Lord. And we celebrate with joy! Amen.**

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## **Day 6 – Friday 19 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of our theological colleges and educators**

*Today we pray for all those working in Christian education in the Uniting Church.*

*This prayer is contributed by Rev. Dr Chris Walker, the Assembly's National Consultant for Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship. Chris has worked in educational roles in the Uniting Church for more than 30 years.*

Gracious God, you are the source of all life and truth.  
Your son Jesus was known as a teacher and master.  
Your Spirit enlightens people with your wisdom.

Bless the work of teaching in the church  
that it may bear much fruit in the lives of people,  
in the church and in the community.

We pray for our Uniting Church theological colleges and educators in their work of enabling people  
to deepen their knowledge of you and your purposes.  
Assist them to be effective in equipping people to serve you in their lives.

Bless the teachers and learners.  
Be with those who teach as they prepare and guide.  
Make them strong in their believing,  
insightful in their understanding  
and humble in their presentation.

Be with the learners as they study and consider.  
Make them eager in their tasks,  
proficient in their study  
and perceptive in their discernment.

Bless those with responsibility for the oversight of the educational ministry of the Uniting Church.

Be with them as they encourage and inspire the teaching ministry across the Church  
so that people are given opportunities to grow as disciples  
in their understanding and commitment to Jesus Christ.  
In his name we pray. Amen.

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*We pray also for those who form and nurture us in faith. This prayer is written by Craig Mitchell, National Director of Formation, Education and Discipleship.*

Today, let us give thanks for those who formed and nurtured us in faith.

Spend some time in silence, remembering and being thankful for the people who introduced you to faith

Those who told you the Gospel stories and opened up the Scriptures,

Those who were living examples of what it means to follow Christ,

Those who heard your doubts and withheld easy answers

Those who led you into experiences of discovering your gifts and serving God

Those who walked alongside you as fellow pilgrims

Grandparents and parents, ministers, Sunday School teachers and youth leaders,

Bible study leaders, school chaplains, friends and mentors

You may wish to write down some of their names as you give thanks.

Spend some time in silent confession

For when we have failed to pass on the faith to younger generations

For when we have neglected to raise up and resource teachers and leaders

For when we have learned not to struggle with the hard questions of faith

but are instead satisfied with easy answers and shallow discipleship

### **Lord, have mercy**

Spend some time praying for people

For those who are the teachers of the faith in your congregation

For church councils as they resource the ministry of teaching and learning

For those who provide leadership in faith formation and education in presbyteries, synods and assembly

Reflect on how you pass on the faith in word and deed

with those in your spheres of influence

Ask God to help you be a person who with humility is a companion to others

on the way together as disciples of Jesus Christ

Close with this ancient prayer by Thomas Aquinas

**Give to us, Lord**

**understanding to know you,**

**diligence to seek you,**

**wisdom to find you,**

**and a faithfulness that may finally embrace you,**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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## **Day 7 – Saturday 20 May 2017 - Prayer for the work of our congregations**

*This prayer is contributed by Rev. Dr Chris Budden, the interim National Coordinator of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Chris is a former General Secretary of the Synod of NSW and the ACT. He prefaces his prayer with two paragraphs from the Basis of Union.*

The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world. (Basis of Union, paragraph 15)

God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end... (Basis of Union, paragraph 3)

Holy God, dancing community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
You call people into that community which is the Body of Christ,  
a community of reconciliation and renewal,  
of diversity, welcome, justice and breaking of bread.

We thank you for the diversity of congregations in our church  
large and small, rural and city, stretched across the theological landscape.  
We thank you for the languages and cultures, the worship styles and traditions,  
held together in common commitment to Christ.

Sustain and encourage your people in worship  
encourage them as they do their best to tell the story of Jesus,  
enable them to be beacons of compassion in what is not always an easy world.

We ask that your Spirit will help us celebrate, find joy, and be fed by the living Word;  
encourage us to take steps – however tentative – into your world;  
and offer hope to the broken-hearted, the lost, the lonely, and the ignored.

May the life of Jesus so inspire us that we may bear your image in the world,  
opposing racism and sexism, standing with those who are different,  
seeking peace, welcoming strangers, building families of all kinds,  
enabling people to celebrate the gift of life.

Enable us, we pray, to be your people,  
a community shaped by the life and presence of Jesus,  
committed to the life of our community.

In his name we pray.  
Amen.

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**Day 8 – Sunday 21 May 2017** - WCC Global Day of Prayer to End Famine / Prayer for the work of Uniting World, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, and UCA South Sudanese faith communities.

*The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches have asked member churches to observe a Global Day of Prayer to End Famine.*

*This prayer is offered by Rob Floyd, National Director of UnitingWorld.*

Loving God,  
Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us today our daily bread"  
we acknowledge that all good gifts come from your generous hands.

We thank you for the blessings of food, water, shelter, family and well-being.  
As we enjoy healthy food, we know that this abundance is not shared equally among us.  
While some are satisfied, others are starving.  
We think of people who struggle to feed their families every day.  
As we say "Give us today our daily bread" we pray also for the millions who go hungry every day.

Lord Jesus,  
On this day that our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world are joined in prayer to end famine, we remember how you fed the hungry.  
Inspire us to follow your example, showing compassion in action and sharing what we have with people who have less.  
Give us the courage and determination to speak out about the systems in our world that perpetuate injustice and inequality, poverty and hunger.

We pray for the work of UnitingWorld and the overseas church partners of the Uniting Church in Australia.  
Many of our partner churches are located in places where their communities are subject to great hardship and shortages of the basics of life.  
Particularly today we join with our African brothers and sisters, once more facing famine on their continent.

We pray for the people of South Sudan and our partner the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.  
Bless them as they care for their people and as they work to feed the growing number in their communities facing starvation.

We pray too for the South Sudanese communities in Australia, whose hearts ache for their relatives and friends in their homeland as they endure the miseries of famine and conflict.

Loving God,  
You care for all people. Help us to remember your command to love one another.  
Help us to see you in each of our brothers and sisters— especially those who are in need.  
You are the Bread of Life. Strengthen us as we work for justice in the world.  
Amen.

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