



All of this is us



#40PRAYERS

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

WEEK FOUR

Day 23 – Monday 5 June 2017 – Prayer for the Environment

On World Environment Day, we pray for the earth and all of God's creation. This prayer was written by Bethany Broadstock, member of the Assembly Standing Committee.

Creator and creative God,
alongside creation, revealed by creation,
who is in and with all things, and beyond them.

We confess again with the church of the ages that by your word and imagination, all that is seen and unseen was made. All that lives, and has lived and died, find their source and beginning in the loving Spirit which encircles them forever. All life held within Your own, its tendrils reaching back into time before time.

In the beginning, You.

In the beginning, darkness.

And then light, and then life.

Something from nothing brought into being and set into motion, called forth by creativity and the love that holds all things together. It was good.

It was this earth, where in the ground beneath our feet the roots of life and creation go deep. Where they are nourished by the water which has shaped the world across centuries, and life is sustained by what has grown. Where the promise of all-things-healed was born, and hands broke bread with thanks and a blessing. It is good.

We hold before you:

our despair that the goodness of creation is under threat,
and our despair at our own part.

The crisis of our environment, and of our climate.

The crisis of belligerence and apathy and industry.

Disappearing nations and disappearing species,
and our fear that we may be too late.

De-centre us in creation, God who sets all things in relation to each other. Draw us back into the pattern of life, everything entwined, and everything shed that we do not need.

For the making of all things new and a time when creation must groan no more, we pray and march and wait and hope. Amen.

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Day 24 – Tuesday 6 June 2017 – Prayer for Just Peace in Israel and Palestine

We continue to join with Christians world-wide in prayer for just peace in Israel and Palestine. [The WCC has called upon member churches to join in prayer](#) as the world marks 50 years since the war that led to the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

This prayer was written by Palestinian writer and educator, Najwa Farah. It has been adapted by Rev Gregor Henderson, former Uniting Church President (2006-2009) and Co-Convenor of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network.

God of hope, God of justice, God of peace: we appeal to your mercy for the people of Israel and Palestine; for Christian, Muslim, and Jew; and especially for all victims of violence, torture, oppression, and injustice. As we pray, conform our hearts to yours, and plant in us the seeds of hope for a future of lasting peace between Arab and Jew.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those in positions of power, authority, and influence among the Palestinian and Israeli people, that you would burden them with a divine conviction to stand for truth, and to act with justice and mercy. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may a dream for a shared future be planted in the hearts of our leaders and so captivate their imagination, that all the people of the Holy Land may be liberated into life.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that the eyes of the nations of the world may be opened, that all may see the truth and act for justice. May your spirit of reconciliation inspire us to be advocates for all human dignity, and defend us from the temptations of bias or indifference.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are most deeply affected by the structures of oppression, and for all who are devastated by profound loss of loved ones, homes, or hope for the future. We especially pray for those who undergo continual dehumanization through violence, torture, and unjust imprisonment.

Lord, hear our prayer.

And we hold our selves before you that we may answer your call to pray, not only with our hearts, but with our hands and feet. Use us as instruments of your peace and agents for the good news of your victory over evil, and give us perseverance and courage to work tirelessly for the future we know is possible.

Lord, hear our prayer.

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God of grace and reconciliation,
pour your peace and your power upon all your people in the Holy Land:
Jews, Muslims and Christians, Palestinians and Israelis.
Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope,
oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation,
that conflict, violence and suffering may be replaced by peace and justice for all.
Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Day 25 – Wednesday 7 June 2017 – Prayer for our Church Partners

Today we pray for our Church Partners stretched across the world.

Prayer for Church Partners in the Pacific

This prayer is written by Rev. Dr. Seforosa Carroll, UnitingWorld Manager, Church Partnerships, Pacific

Triune God of our past, present and future,
We thank you for the gift and witness of our global church partners,
For the vision of a redeemed world that we share together
And for the mission of reconciliation and renewal that we are together engaged through
the Spirit.

We pray for our church partners in the Pacific as they continue to navigate their way
through the challenges of climate change, the issues of domestic violence and the ugly
side of globalisation that continues to threaten the well-being of the cultures and
identity of people and communities.

We thank you for the witness of wise and discerning leaders and church communities
who faithfully and respectfully proclaim God's reign in a time of great uncertainty and
change.

May your Spirit continue to be the discerning and guiding wind of the Pacific Church
vakas and may our voices join with their songs and prayers for justice through
compassionate action. Amen.

Prayer for Church Partners in Africa

*This pray was written by Rev. Amel Manyon, Minister at the Northern Suburbs Dinka
Speaking Faith Community and the first South Sudanese person to be trained and
ordained as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia*

God of love and mercy,

We give you thanks and praise for your faithfulness to the Church of Africa,
And for her commitment to share God's vision of salvation to the world.

Open our hearts to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Africa.

We pray for the new Africa where war, fear, violent, famine and illness shall no longer
exist.

Touch the hearts of her political leaders and all those in power to exercise power
gently,

That they will lead people into unity.

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We pray for the church leaders that they may have courage to accept the challenge to bring change to people's behaviours.

We pray that where this is bitterness, there will be forgiveness and reconciliation

May your love cover all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Church Partners in Asia

This prayer is written by Rev Dr Ji Zhang, UnitingWorld Manager Church Partnerships – Asia, with a reflection at the end of the prayer.

Let mutual love continue (Hebrew 13)

Let mutual love continue.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
but entertain angels without knowing.

We pray for those who are in suffering and hope,
as though we were in suffering and hope.

We pray for the minority faith in Indonesia,
Remembering those who are being marginalised
As though we ourselves were being marginalised.
May the Lord give us the unity of the Spirit in the bound of peace.

We pray for the poor and outcast in India
Remembering those who are being made poor
As though we ourselves were being made poor as refugees to this land.
May the Lord bring justice to the voiceless through the voice of the church.

We prayer for the elderly in China
Remembering those who are without family care
As though we ourselves were being neglected in the ageing society.
May the Lord give love to the powerless through the service of the church.

Let mutual love continue in the Uniting Church in Australia.

We pray for the God of peace,
Who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
Continue to be our shepherd in the journey of reconciliation.
We praise God's love, by the blood of Christ's covenant,
Continue to make our diverse people more complete in doing everything good.

Let mutual love transform the Uniting Church with the world.

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We pray God's will is done on earth as well as in heaven,
Where there is struggle for power, show the powerlessness of the Cross,
Where there is exclusion for minority, desire honourable in all things,
Where there is division of ethnicities, celebrate cultures as a means towards unity.
Where there is hatred towards the Other, teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Come, the Spirit of life, transform your love into our action.

We are your pilgrim people on the journey,
So we praise you for having made unity as both Christ's gift and calling
We offer our prayers through Jesus Christ,
to whom be the glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Reflection

The 40-year history of the UCA is marked by two journeys. The first is our inward journey of reconciliation among past denominations, and with First Peoples. The second is our outward connections with 36 international partners. As God's love unfolds in 40 years, we begin to see ourselves, the Body of Christ in the world, differently.

In 1910, 80% of the Christian population were in the Global North, whereas in 2010, 64% of Christian population were in the Global South. Today in Asia this growth is not externally influenced, but rather internally generated. As the Spirit breathes over the region, it calls the poor, the meek and the marginalised into faith. Like the Pentecost, the Church is called into being, and people's lives are changed. God is using humble people to shift the centre of Christianity from the North Atlantic to Asia, Africa, the Pacific and South America.

Here in Australia, we are in the Global South, and we are surrounded by the fastest growing churches. Indonesia Communion of Churches assembles 89 member churches and represents over 10% population – 20 million Christians. Our partners in India are experiencing the wild fire of the Spirit – effecting 2% of 1.3 billion people. By the love of God, each year half a million newly baptised are added to the 40 million membership of the Chinese Church.

International relations are becoming two-directional. It is because we share similar challenges: a minority faith and the unity of the Church. Our partners are looking for a theology of unity to sustain the growth among diverse peoples. The UCA is also willing to learn from their witness how to be faithful when the Church is not in the centre, but in social margins.

What holds the Body of Christ together is God's love for the world. As we wait for the Pentecost, let also us pray, let mutual love continue.

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Day 26 – Thursday 8 June 2017 – Prayer for Adult Fellowship

The current UCAF National Committee has a theme 'Living Water – Come Drink'. Today we pray for those who have been and are involved in Adult Fellowship in the Uniting Church who come to the well to drink and share in fellowship.

Thanks to Pam Grant, Secretary UCAF National Committee, for this prayer.

Loving God, we give thanks for those members who came into the Uniting Church at the time of Union with the foresight and wisdom to seek to establish groups whereby adult members of the Uniting Church were able to gather to share their faith through fellowship and service, wherever they were across this vast land.

We also give thanks for those members currently involved in UCAF affiliated groups, and other adult fellowship groups, for the comfort, compassion, concern and goodwill they offer in their faith communities and the wider communities where they are located.

We remember the deep commitment many of the groups have to mission activities both in Australia and internationally that offer hope to those who are not as fortunate as many of us in Australia are.

We recognise that with the aging membership of the UCA, which is reflected in many adult fellowship groups, these groups find it harder to do what they did in the past. We give thanks for these people, offering encouragement to them as they continue to gather together, share their faith and provide opportunities for fellowship and mission in whatever way they can.

We pray with hope for the future of adult fellowship groups in the Uniting Church that they will continue to offer hope and service to the Uniting Church, its members and the wider communities where they are located.

Amen.

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Day 27 – Friday 9 June – Prayer for the work of our historians and archivists

Today we pray for those who keep our history and archive our stories. We pray also for the launch of the national UCA Historical Society taking place at the Uniting Church National History Conference in Adelaide from today.

Thank you to National Assembly Archivist Christine Gordon for this prayer.

Living God,

who throughout the ages has given people experiences of your love that issue forth in stories that must be told, thank you for those who have told the story of your work in their life and in the world and inspired us in our faith and service.

Send your blessing upon the work of all archives, libraries, museums and other institutions that are repositories of knowledge, history and culture.

May they be places that honour integrity, truth and community life with compassion and faith.

May we, as archivists and historians, work together to share our knowledge with joy, while handling records with professionalism, care and respect.

Following is an adaption of Psalm 23 published by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education in 1968.

Psalm 23 For the Islands

The Lord is my Great Chief,
I shall follow Him.
He makes me feel safe when I lie down to sleep
In my bamboo house at night.
He leads me by day
When I cross the water in my canoe.
He is beside me all the time and
I feel happy and strong.
He leads me in the roads of goodness
Because He is good.
Even though I walk in the places of fear of evil spirits
I will not be afraid
Because He is with me.
I will call His Name, and I will feel safe.
He makes ready a feast for me
Even when the hurricane is close by.
He puts His hands on my head to make me calm,
When trouble is all around.

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I am full of joy because He is near.
Truly the Lord's goodness and mercy
Shall be always with me.
And I shall stay with Him in His Nakamal (Meeting House) forever.

Teachers' Missionary Record No. 4 New Hebrides
Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1968

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Day 28 – Saturday 10 June 2017 – Prayer for Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry

Today we pray for our commitment to be a multicultural Church and live out our faith cross culturally.

We pray also for members of the Tongan National Conference who are gathered in Kurrajong, NSW, this weekend.

Thank you to National Director for Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry Rev. Dr Apwee Ting who has written this prayer for us in Indonesian (with an English translation).

Tuhan Sang Pencipta,
yang menciptakan kita dengan cara yang sangat unik
dan memberkati kita masing-masing dengan bentuk dan warna yang indah
Kami bersyukur atas dunia yang indah ini,
penuh dengan keberagaman budaya, tradisi, kebiasaan dan cara hidup

Namun kita tetap satu dengan Putra-Mu, Yesus Kristus.

*Creator God,
who created us in a very unique way
and blessed each of us with beautiful shape and colour
We give thank for this wonderful world,
filled with diversity of cultures, tradition, custom and ways of life*

yet we are one with your Son, Jesus the Christ.

Tuhan yang adalah Roh,
yang memberi kita hikmat, wawasan, mimpi dan nubuatan
dan terus membawa kita ke cara berpikir baru, bermimpi dan berharap
Kami bersyukur kepada nenek moyang, tua-tua, orang suci dan orang tua
penuh dengan sukacita, kasih sayang, pengampunan dan keadilan

Namun kita tetap satu dengan Putra-Mu, Yesus sang Nabi

*God of Spirit,
who gave us wisdom, insight, dream and prophesy
and continue to lead us into a new way of thinking, dreaming and hoping
We give thank for our ancestors, elders, saints and parents
filled with joyfulness, compassion, forgiveness and justice*

yet we are one with your Son, Jesus the Prophet

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Tuhan yang penuh Kasih,
yang telah melakukan perjalanan dengan Uniting Church selama empat puluh tahun
dan sepanjang perjalanan telah mengejutkan kami dengan begitu banyak teman yang
berbeda

Kami bersyukur untuk sebuah gereja multi budaya
penuh dengan banyak karunia, talenta, cerita, pengalaman dan sejarah

Namun kita tetap satu dengan Putra-Mu, Yesus teman kita

*Loving God,
who have journeyed with the Uniting Church in the past 40 years
and surprised us with so many different friends along the way
We give thank for a multicultural Church
filled with many gifts, talents, stories, experiences and histories*

yet we are one with your Son, Jesus our Friend

Tuhan Empunya Gereja
yang telah memaafkan, menebus, memperbaharui dan memimpin gereja di masa lalu
dan terus mempertahankan, memelihara dan mengarahkan kita ke kemungkinan yang
baru

Kami bersyukur untuk 193 komunitas gerejawi
Penuh dengan lebih dari 26 bahasa setiap hari Minggu

Namun kita tetap satu dengan Putra-Mu, Yesus Kepala Gereja

*God of the Church
who forgave, redeemed, renewed and led the church in the past
and continues to sustain, nurture and direct us into new possibilities
We give thanks for 193 worshipping communities
filled with more than 26 languages every Sunday*

yet we are one with your Son, Jesus the Head of the Church

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A second prayer for today is written by Rev. Swee Ann Koh, Director of the Intercultural Unit for the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

A Prayer on Diversity

God of many faces and names,
You created all people in your image.

We thank you for the amazing diversity of races, languages, accents and cultures in this world you created.

We thank you for the wonderful diversity reflected within the First Peoples and Second Peoples of this land and in our church.

We thank you for the blessings and enrichment we have received from the rich diversity in the Body of Christ.

Forgive us for the sins of racism that's part of our history and the pains and sufferings we cause by our biases and prejudices.

Forgive us for demonising those who are different from us and causing them anguish, distress and misery.

Forgive us for remaining in our ethnic silos and failing to reach out to other members of the Body of Christ.

We pray that in our diversity we will find the unity that's given to us in Christ and appreciate the gifts that others bring to us.

We pray that we will reach out to those who are different from us and see you in the faces of the poor, strangers and persecuted.

We pray that we may be transformed, and drawn into intentional, intercultural relationships and community.

Help us to take the steps you call us to take, to build a more just, inclusive community, where diversity is truly embraced, where difference is respected.

In the Name of the triune God, amen, amen, and again we say: **Amen!**

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Day 29 – Sunday 11 June 2017 – Prayer for National Conferences

Today we pray for the life and mission of the 12 National Conferences in the Uniting Church; Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Indonesian, Korean, Tamil, Chinese, South Sudanese, Filipino, Niuean, Vietnamese and Middle East.

More than 1000 members of the Tongan National Conference, the UCA's first National Conference, are gathered in worship today as they continue their annual three-day conference in Kurrajong NSW.

Thank you to Convenor of the National Conferences Working Group Rev. Eseta Waqabaca-Meneilly for this prayer.

God of races, cultures and traditions,
creator of languages, diversity and unity.
Thank you for the Uniting Church in Australia,
a multicultural Church
that expresses its life rhythms
in gatherings of National Conferences,
its diversity in vibrant, colourful worships and liturgies
and its unity in God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.
We remember the Tongan National Conference
as it holds its annual gathering
during this unique space and time
of church fasting and praying.
"Malo e lelei" to you, our God
from the Tongan National Conference.
Bless all National Conferences
as they showcase diversity
through your gift of languages and cultures,
and unity through your community
of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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