



ST. STEPHENS UNITING CHURCH
WILLIAMSTOWN
WORSHIP RESOURCE FOR SUNDAY 30th MAY 2021

FOCUSING ON REONCILIATION WEEK



WORSHIP LITURGY RESOURCED FROM UNITING CHURCH SYNOD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
WORSHIP RESOURCE FOR RECONCILIATION WEEK 2020

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

The Uniting Church South Australia acknowledges that this resource was prepared on the traditional lands of the Kaurna People.

The Kaurna People are the Traditional Custodians of the Adelaide Plains. Their strong connection to the land has survived many thousands of years and continues today. We pay our respect to Kaurna elders past, present and emerging.

As we worship at home this week we pay our respects to the traditional custodians of this land. We acknowledge the Sovereign First Peoples, of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways where we gather on this day. Let us pay respect to their Elders: past, present and emerging. They have cared for this ancient land since creation as the Creator ordained it.

Let us walk gently upon this land, listening to her stories told through creation and her First Nations Peoples. *Dadirri*, listen deeply, to the Spirit and let us commit ourselves to walking together for justice for First Nations Peoples.

(NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The dates for NRW remain the same each year; 27 May to 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey— the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Call to Worship

Let us worship God.

The world belongs to God,
the earth and all its people.

Love and peace come together,
justice and peace join hands.

How good and how lovely it is to live together in unity.

If the Lord's disciples keep silent these stones would shout aloud.

Lord, open our lips and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Uniting in Worship 2

Prayer of Lament and Confession

Gracious God of All,
we with hearts of thanksgiving.

We acknowledge that we receive so many gifts at Your hands and we thank you for the all.
However we also gather in the knowledge that there have been times when we,
in part or in whole, have caused loss, hurt and pain.

At this time we humbly acknowledge the actions that have been taken by us which caused
pain or loss to the First Peoples of our land,

or in the years it took for the First Peoples to be embraced by the Church,

for the mistreatment, abuse and neglect of those vulnerable people who placed their faith in
the church and its care,

for the lack of welcome and cold hearts, for harsh words, lack of care, ignorance, insensitivity
and pride that have damaged relationships and the people so dear to You.

We are sorry for these sins against you and First Peoples, our brothers and sisters.

We pray for forgiveness and reconciliation.

As you brought reconciliation through Your Son, Jesus Christ,

we pray that you will also enable all of us to become reconciled to one another through the
power of your Spirit. Amen

Rev. Mark Schultz

Scripture readings: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 Psalm 8 Romans 5:1-5 John 16:12-15

Notes for Trinity Sunday from Rev Ken Sumner

David Unaiapon said, "We, as Aboriginal people, need you and you, as non-Aboriginal people, need us."

You, as non-Aboriginal people who have come to Australia, have played a large part in making this society what it is, so you can't just leave us Aboriginal people and expect us to fend for ourselves. You can't leave us now because its like us taking you out in the bush and leaving you there. Most of you wouldn't survive in the wilderness on your own. For many Aboriginal people, white society is like a wilderness. We need to be shown the way through what is, for many of us, very much uncharted waters; an unknown territory. However, it is inappropriate for you to insist that we become like you in order to succeed in society. This is what has happened so often in the past and Aboriginal people have been disempowered by this approach. Our society can encompass people who are quite different, and so can the

Church. We can work together to fulfil God's purpose for us all if we think of the Church in terms of what I call Stir fry Theology".

Stir-fry Theology A stir-fry consists of a variety of different but unique ingredients that are cooked together. However, each ingredient needs to be cooked so that it retains its own unique texture and flavour. This means it may need to be treated differently from other ingredients. Together, all the ingredients make up the stir-fry. A stir-fry is not a melting pot or soup when everything ends up tasting the same.

People are like the ingredients in a stir-fry. We need to be who we are in this great big wok, retaining our own identity. We are all different, and it is OK to be different. The sauce binds the stir-fry into a dish with unique textures and flavours. The secret is to know the kind of sauce to use with the types of ingredients chosen and how much sauce to add. When you add the sauce, the different ingredients take up the flavour of the sauce in different ways. All are flavoured by the sauce but they still retain their own unique flavours.

For Christians, the love of God, expressed through the Trinity, is the sauce that binds us together. Despite our differences we are each an important ingredient in the stir-fry of the Church community, bound together by love. It is the love of God that brings out the best in each of us and enhances our unique flavours.

What this means in terms of Covenanting (Reconciliation) As a Church we have agreed on an official covenant between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This is our legal position but what does it mean in practice for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the Church at the grass-roots? I am trying to develop a relationship type of covenant. I am trying to challenge people to be friends with Aboriginal people. This is a lot more challenging than just talking about the Covenant. So what does friendship mean? When we are friends with someone we love and respect each other even if we are quite different and we don't understand each other. We are still friends even though we don't agree with what each other says or believes. We need to journey into friendship – accepting people for who they are. Jesus commanded us to be friends, to love one another as God loves us. We need to imitate Christ in this respect. However, this is something we often struggle with. We find it difficult to step out of our comfort zone to become friends with people who are different.

So where do we start? We need to get inside ourselves and change our attitudes to people who are different, whether they are Aboriginal or refugees even if there are no such people in your local area. Your relationship with God as expressed through the Trinity is the key to building loving relationships with those who are different. The love we are able to share comes from God's love for us and we have Christ's example to follow, but we need the Spirit to guide us on our way. Loving one another means forgiving..., trusting..., sacrificing...; it means opening our hearts to others; it means transforming your attitudes toward others. This can happen even if you never have the privilege of meeting an Aboriginal person. Not having Aboriginal people living near you is no excuse for not building loving relationships with Aboriginal people. You can inform yourself of the truth rather than media spin, and what you read in the papers is mostly that, spin. It's what inside your heart that counts. Often, as Christians, we choose who we want to love and be part of our lives. The challenge is to love everybody unconditionally. On this Reconciliation Sunday we think of how we might express our love for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in Christ, especially members of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Rev Ken Sumner is the National Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, State Resource Minister for the Congress in South Australia and Covenanting Coordinator for the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia. He is a Ngarrindjeri man from the lower Murray and Coorong in SA.

Intercessory Prayers: Eternal and ever loving God

we believe that our worship draws us near to you, and towards our neighbours on earth.

We pray for the whole creation:

May we all learn before it is too late to respect the uniqueness, fragility, and beauty of our earth and all its creatures.

We pray for every nation and race, especially for the Aboriginal/first peoples of this land: May our actions and our lifestyle bear out our belief that all people everywhere are our sisters and brothers, whatever their country, their city, or their tribe, whatever their education or their culture, whatever their circumstances, religion, or colour.

We pray for peace in our torn and troubled world and for a country that discriminates and marginalises Aboriginal people: We pray that weapons and prejudice may be discarded instead of people, guns silenced instead of the voices of the poor, and that in a world half expecting terrorist attack, we might learn that love is not a luxury.

We pray for the church of Jesus Christ: May it be true and joyful, wholesome and active, always rediscovering that you called it into being for the service and salvation of others.

We pray for the witness of our church community:

As we grow in faith, love and hope, help us to understand that no planning for the future, however necessary, no program, no matter how carefully conceived, can relieve us of the necessity of going forward into a future that cannot be planned -- of risk, of danger, of hope in your incalculable grace.

We pray for ourselves: Not one of us has ever found or given enough tenderness or love in his or her life, enough truth, freedom, beauty, goodness, and joy. We are always travelling to a new tomorrow.

Lord we pray for our world, we pray for others, we pray for ourselves. We pray because you have put within us an unquenchable hope.

We pray because we live for the ultimate. We pray because Jesus is our Lord and your kingdom is in our midst. **Amen**

adapted with minor changes from Terry C Falla (ed) Be Our freedom Lord: Responsive prayers for contemporary worship (2nd edition) Open Book 1994, page 187

Benediction

May our footsteps, on these ancient lands,
remind us of creation and connectedness, in our search for truth.

May the Gum Tree from its roots to its branches,
remind us to dig deep and reach high, in our action for justice.

May the Eagle, who soars in the sky,
remind us of the power, in our call for love.

May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars,
remind us of God's timing in our faith in hope.

May the Holy three, Creator, Spirit, Lord God, Papa Jesus,
remind us of community.

So with grace, mercy and peace, go in truth, justice, love and hope.

Brooke Prentis