



4 June 2024

Dear Uniting Church family,

It gives me great pleasure to write my first letter to you as Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress - Queensland Regional Council. The Council is known as Muth arrak (meaning fire stick in the Thaynakwith language). I am excited about the opportunities we can create under God, and in relationship as peoples who choose to walk together.

Exodus 34:10 speaks of a new relationship or renewed covenant that God is making with the people of Israel. It reads: "The LORD replied, 'Listen, I am making a covenant with you in the presence of all your people. I will perform miracles that have never been performed anywhere in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people around you anywhere in all the earth or in any nation. All the people around you will see the power of the LORD - the awesome power I will display for you.'" (NLT).

The covenantal relationship that God continues to bless his children with through baptism, is also represented in the spiritual covenant the Uniting Church in Australia has with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. In this covenant relationship "we walk together as all First and Second Peoples, seeking to build a church and nation of justice and reconciliation."

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the firstborn of this nation. Like first born children in many cultures and families, we are born with a responsibility to teach the stories and knowledge we are given by our Elders to those in our family who come after us.

Teaching and learning first begin with relationships of fellowship where trust and mutual respect can be created.

My hope, as a person who has been chosen to represent Aboriginal and Islander people of the Church, is that we can begin a walk of true fellowship across our churches, responding to the covenantal call to build a nation of justice and reconciliation.

If you identify as an Aboriginal or Islander member of the Uniting Church in Queensland, we would love to hear from you. We invite you to contact us at covenanting@ucaqlld.com.au so that we can come together across the Synod.

Equally important is identifying First and Second peoples within the life of the church who might wish to be a member of a covenanting and reconciliation working group. To find out more contact us at covenanting@ucaqlld.com.au with *Expression Of Interest* in the subject line.

Let me leave you with a reading from the bible that I was taught from by Spiritual Elder Pastor Bill Hollingsworth, co-author of the Uniting Church in Australia [Covenanting Statement](#):

"Seek the Kingdom of GOD above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." **Matthew 6:33** (NLT)

Blessings,

Rev. Aunty Roberta Stanley
Chair, UAICC Regional Council Queensland

