

DAY OF MOURNING 2025

A worship service for faith communities to stand in solidarity with Australia's First Peoples as we remember, reflect and on the effects of invasion, forced dispossession, oppression and suffering.



We acknowledge that God has been present in these lands for thousands of generations, and we can claim the promises of Jesus to write a new story of a walking together in faith, hope, justice and love.

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

PRAYERFUL ACTION:

(Moderator Rev Bruce Moore)

(As people gather, invite them to take a stone, representing the heaviness of lament, and hold in their hands for the first part of the service.)

Choir leads the body actions with the call to worship.)

Our Lord is alive amongst all things of creation.

(Lift your hand to your ears)

The sounds of the rivers in motion,
the waves of the seas.

(Make a motion of the waves with your hands)

The scents of the gum trees and
native flowers on the winds.

(Stand still with your legs firmly planted, take some deep breathes, stretch up both arms and sway like a tree in the breezes.)

You made the earth to give us life and daily sustenance and it is on Country that we find a
place to retreat and walk alongside you in whispering conversation.

(Rub hands together to make the sound of a whispering conversation)

Today we come together, and we bring
our full voices, to lift them in praise of our triune God.

(Lift arms wide to praise God together)

We ask for forgiveness for not always being the givers of love and hospitality.

(Bring hands together in prayerful pose)

And, we look to have our hearts made clean.

(Use your right hand to catch the love of Christ and rub it onto your chest over your heart)

(Together)

***Lord our father of unconditional love,
we come in repentance and hope***

***Jesus, son of guiding and teaching love,
we come to listen, learn and act with courage.***

***Holy Spirit of multiplying love,
we come with humble awe and wonder of what you might move within our hearts and
the hearts of those with whom we share life.***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND FIRST PEOPLES

Today, as we gather to worship, we acknowledge the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples, as the first-born peoples of these lands, and we acknowledge that through their continuing care of God's creation, God and God's Holy Spirit has been a source of spiritual sustenance and strength for First Peoples of this Country.

¹ Written by Kym Korbe, Executive Officer Covenanting, UCAQLD

HYMN / SONG **“We are standing on holy ground”**
(Choir + guitar/s)

(Moderator, Rev Bruce Moore)

We come together today under God, to mourn and lament the darkness and suffering of our history, and to prayerfully welcome into our lives, the healing light of the hope we have in Jesus.

A BLESSING FOR ALL WE HAVE RECEIVED

(Kym Korbe)

Responder: Our Creator God, our guide, our protector and giver of wisdom

All: *You have come before us, and made it possible for us to be together in this special place at this time.*

You created us in your image to be in a reconciling relationship with each other through you.

Our pain is known to you and you have shared with us the way through darkness and into light.

Help us not to stumble like children, but to stand proudly as followers of your teachings and lessons of healing.

Caller: Jesus, the name of salvation

All: And our home of assurance

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (SPOKEN IN UNISON):²

(Rev Brian Hoole)

Merciful God, we, the Second Peoples of this land, acknowledge with sorrow the injustice and abuse that has so often marked the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

We acknowledge with sorrow the way in which their land was taken from them and their language, culture and spirituality despised and suppressed.

3

We acknowledge with sorrow the way in which the Christian church was so often not only complicit in this process but actively involved in it.

We acknowledge with sorrow that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued.

**we have been indifferent when we should have been outraged,
we have been apathetic when we should have been active,
we have been silent when we should have spoken out.**

Gracious God, forgive us for our failures, past and present.

By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts so that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS:

(President Rev Charissa Suli)

Water for First Peoples is always a sign of God's peace and fulfillment in everything that is good. The promise of food, of harmony with ourselves, and the creation around us.

At the very beginning Creator God blessed the waters, God's great gift to us and renewed in this water here today.

God who hovered over the waters, invites us to 'come to the water' to drop our heavy burdens of lament and confession.

Hear then the words of Christ's forgiveness to us all:

Your sins are forgiven, and you are cleansed and made new again.

Go now and live as my reconciled people.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

So then, let us bring the heavy stones that we are carrying and drop them into the water of healing and life.

SONG and PRAYERFUL ACTION: "Amazing Grace"

(While music is playing, invite people to bring their stones forward to place in a bowl of water, symbolising the waters of baptism and cleansing of forgiveness and life.)

RESPONSE FROM FIRST PEOPLES *(Uncle Roy Chevethen, Aunty Roberta Stanley, Rev Mark Kickett's video)*

PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY OF HEALING³ *(Sono Weatherall / Amanda Hegarty)*

Oh God, your love is wider than our differences,
larger than our loneliness,
and stronger than our sorrows.

³ Based on a reflection written by Rev Aunty Roberta Stanley, Chairperson of Muth Arrak, UAICC Regional Council Qld Synod.

At times we may doubt that we are able to overcome hostilities we feel towards others, or have felt towards us,

Yet you invite us to experience
that through surrender and obedience to your great and reconciling love,
we are able to see more clearly the beautiful picture
of your gift of a wondrous creation.

We are reminded of the words of Paul to the church in Rome calling us to peace and hope through faith, grace and perseverance:

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

Oh God, we know the work of reconciliation is not simple.

It requires peoples who may feel suffering through dispute,
to look at each other as we would look to reconciling with you God;
to see the joy in working to live amongst each other in peace,
in a creation made for us.

Peace given from you God, with you God, and in you God.

Help us to reckon with the challenge that reconciliation between First and Second Peoples must begin with reconciling ourselves in truth and humility with you, our God.

Then we can do the work of being peacemakers and justice seekers,
in understanding what we may need to know better,
to be able to act responsibly and respectfully.

Oh God our hope for the coming season of faith in our Uniting Church,
is that we look towards each other as peoples of God,
who wish to be supported to live freely,
in enjoying the giving of spiritual care for each other,
through wonder and worship.

We bring our truth-telling, our lament and our confessions to you God,
In the name of Jesus Christ,
Who bore our sins,
And is the great reconciler.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

2 Chronicles 7 NIV

(Leong Hiew)

¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Isaiah 61:1-3 NIV

(James Allan)

The Year of the Lord's Favor

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a]

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendor.

SERMON

(Rev Charissa Suli)

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN/SONG

“O Come to the Altar”

COMMUNION (led by Rev Bruce Moore and Rev Aunty Roberta)

Gracious God, who calls us by name
We do not know fully the mystery of your boundless love
The salty tears of your son's weeping
Have become part of the story held within your creation

Our tears of lament at feeling forsaken by you
Or not feeling worthy have added to this story

The world we know now is broken, but it also contains much beauty and bounty

Help us to receive the miracle that is your continued grace and peace
So that we may receive your light and be that light for others

All who come to hear and know the Good News

The light of all life has come into the world
and the darkness cannot overcome it

Jesus Christ came into the world
Not to tell us that we are unworthy, but to tell us that we are loved
And to teach us to create a big and bountiful life for ourselves and others

He came so that we may have rich blessings in our lives

We are forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

The Minister invites the people to share a peaceful greeting with those around them.

Christ our Lord invites to his table
all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.

The people stand

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your 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.

Thanks and praise, glory and honour are rightly yours,
our Lord and God,
for you alone are worthy.
In time beyond our dreaming
you brought forth life out of darkness,
and in the love of Christ your Son
you set us a people at the heart of your creation.
And so we praise you
with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with choirs of angels
and the whole creation
in the eternal hymn.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The bread we break
Is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ,
And feed on him in your hearts by faith and thanksgiving.

The Minister invites people to share in the bread and cup of salvation given to them as they entered the church

HYMN/SONG **“King of Kings” (Hillsong version)**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:⁴

(Nancy Spencer)

Leader: Loving God, on this day of celebration we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia. We turn to you in prayer as we commit ourselves to journeying together in the spirit of Faith.
Father, you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: We pray for all Leaders in this Great Southern Land, that they may respect and accept the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provide truth, justice, peace, unity and equity for all.
Father you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: We ask for your guidance for the youth on their life's journey, that they come to seek and know you and trust in your love and compassion.
Father you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: We pray for all Elders, those who are sick, the dying, the imprisoned, those who are lost and suffering – we ask for your protection, healing and mercy for all.
Father you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: Lord thank you for your Mercy which covers all our Sins and for the love

⁴UCA National Assembly Working Group on Worship, [Resources suitable for worship and prayer with, or in support of, the First Peoples of this land](#)

which you wash over us. Please help us to be strong in Faith and to love everyone as you taught us.
Father you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: Let us all take a moment's silence as we pray for our personal intentions to our God.
Father you are good.

All: Lord fill our hearts with Love and Compassion

Leader: God, our loving Father, you reveal your care and compassion to us through the life, words and deeds of your son Jesus. Grant us the gift of your compassion so that all peoples may enjoy your promise of peace. With humble hearts we make our prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen

WORD OF SENDING FROM GOD:⁵

Rev Aunty Roberta Stanley

People of God,
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,
the First and Second Peoples of this land, have entered
with one another.

Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.
Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord.
Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God.

BLESSING⁶

Rev Charissa Suli

May our God of all creation
Bless us with a desire to seek to know better those who we are yet to call friend.

May the troubles we experience in our own lives, be lessened by the giving and receiving of hospitality and respect towards each other.

May our great Creator comfort the pain of those who experience ongoing suffering through the actions of those who are yet understand a better way.

May the songs of the birds amongst the trees and the bush scents carried on the breeze, be a comfort to those who mourn what has been lost.

May the rivers, streams and waterholes that have cut pathways across Country, be a creation signpost for knowing the healing waters from which to drink.

⁵ UCA National Assembly Working Group on Worship, [Resources suitable for worship and prayer with, or in support of, the First Peoples of this land](#)

⁶ Written by Kym Korbe

And, may the nourishing light of Christ's Holy and perfect love be a daily reminder of our responsibility to be the hands and feet of Jesus in speaking up for justice, and working to create an abundant life, for all of God's peoples across these lands.

HYMN/SONG: **"I the Lord of Sea and Sky/ Here I am Lord"**

