



**uniting  
church**  
in Australia,  
Synod of NSW & ACT

Leigh  
Uniting Church



RECONCILIATION SUNDAY

**23 MAY 2021**

**Sunday 23 May, 9:30am**

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/5199089657>

Meeting ID: 519 908 9657

Or Dial by your location +61 2 8015 6011 Australia

## WELCOME

A warm welcome as we gather together on this Reconciliation Sunday.

## LIGHTING OF THE EASTER CANDLE

Today we light this candle of Reconciliation, which announces that the crucified risen Christ breathes love into reconciliation, inspiring transformed relationships, cultural respect and structural changes.

*The candle is lit*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**     *“JESU”* Gurrumul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4LijjSlf8>

Gurrumul (Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu), former member of Yothu Yindi - 'The Gospel Album'.

Gospel songs were the first western music Gurrumul heard as a very young child when his family took him to the local Methodist church on Elcho Island. Sung in Yolŋu Matha!

## GURRUMUL

Born blind, the Indigenous Australian singer/songwriter Gurrumul grew up as a member of the Gumatj clan on Elcho Island, off the coast of tropical North East Arnhem land in Australia's Northern Territory. Gurrumul's songs speak of identity, spirit, connection with the land, the elements and the ancestral beings to whom he is related. His fragile but uniquely emotive high tenor voice and aura-like persona elicit feelings of peace and longing in listeners.

Following a long battle with illness, Gurrumul passed away in 2017 at Royal Darwin Hospital at the age of 46.

**HYMN** *We are standing on holy ground* (Tune: 'Ellacombe(2) 453 TiS)

We're standing here on holy ground,  
on land your hand has made;  
Your art displayed in timeless rocks,  
in purple haze and space;  
Its mighty gums and feathery ferns  
your beauty magnify.  
Tread softly then, in awe reflect,  
and listen to the land.

We're standing here on holy ground,  
on land which ancients trod.  
They wrote your law in hills and streams  
in rocks and caves and trees;  
A law to tell us who we are,  
to guide and make us strong.  
Tread gently then, respect the earth,  
remember whence we've come.

We're standing here on holy ground,  
on land that toil has shaped.  
It's fertile plains will feed us all,  
when tilled with care and love.  
But mindless greed and drought and flood  
wreak havoc in the land.  
Then let us tread with love the earth,  
that's fed us faithfully.

We're standing here on holy ground,  
on land we long to share,

Where each has space and equity,  
and neither want nor fear  
But demons fierce are dancing here  
of race and greed and hate.  
Engrave upon our wills, we pray,  
your ancient covenant law.

We're standing here on holy ground,  
we seek your rule on earth;  
Your will be done in politics,  
in law court, market, church;  
Your gentleness among us reign,  
and each one dwell secure;  
May generations yet unborn,  
live here in harmony.

© JBrown. (*Adapted – Verses 1-2, 4-6*)

## PRAYERS OF WHO WE ARE

When we look at the stars,  
we are looking at light that has guided your Aboriginal people  
from time immemorial.

When we drive through Australia's plains, hills and valleys,  
we are often travelling on routes  
that have been known for longer than European history.

We give thanks for the richness of the environment in Australia, and  
acknowledge those who have cared for it throughout time.

We give thanks that often we receive the full benefits of Australian  
citizenship, without stopping to consider those who are on the margins  
of society, and not receiving all these benefits. And yet we know that  
this is not the full story of what has happened here.

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.

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 and structures  
so that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your  
will.  
Through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.***

**SONG OF GRACE & CHANGE**      *realisations*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkMSiES P g>

*Realisations was written by Geoff Boyce, and orchestrated, recorded and engineered by Rod Boucher at 'Do Your iDreams' studio, April 14, 2021 - for the launch of the book, 'Realisations and Reflections: Stories of Transformation while engaging with Australia's First Peoples among members of Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide, South Australia'.*

**WORDS OF GRACE & CHANGE**

Friends, hear once again the promise of the Christian faith:  
The gift of life is to be embraced and shared.  
In the love of Christ we have our peace  
and we have our healing.

***Thanks be to God. Amen***

*(This absolution is by Sean Gilbert, UAICC)*

**INDIGENOUS READING** *Thomas Mayor Recites the "Statement from the Heart," Berry Uniting Church, 7th December 2019  
(Found at the end of this order of service)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=365cbP0m0IY>

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** **John 17:1-11** (*Inclusive Text*)

17After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6 "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

**RESPONSE**

*O God our nurturer,  
may your word live in us.  
**And colour our living. Amen!***

**REFLECTION**

**SONG** Gurrumul, *Baywara (you my Mother, Creator, Ancestor)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMVJB1r3FY>

I heard my mother  
from the long distance  
making me cry

Mother dreaming  
The storm clouds building across the sky

The place was changing  
for the new season  
yambaṭṭhun dhawalyu wirrpaṅuya

Yä my mother, Baywara  
you are creator, yä ṅāṅḍi

Oh my mother, Ancestor Baywara  
You are creator, oh mother

I heard my Mother  
from the long distance  
making me cry oh Mother

My Mother dreaming  
the storm clouds building across the sky  
W..o thunder travelling across the country

The place was changing  
for the new season  
time for thunder and lightening,  
approaching wet-season

Yä my mother, Baywara  
You are the Creator, oh Mother

Mother Ancestor, Guṅḍjuḷpurr  
Buliyaṅu Dhawu-Minydjalpi

And Mother Ancestor, Guwarruku  
Baḷpaḷuna, Māmbila, m..m

**OFFERING** O God, our prayer is that, as we share these gifts,  
you will widen the landscape of our seeing,  
so that we enhance the lives of people  
who we may have failed to know before.  
Guide us in our generosity!

***Amen.***

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

God of love and justice,  
of wholeness and reconciliation,  
You call us to share in Christ's ministry –  
Praying and acting such  
That your reign may blossom.  
We pray for those in Parliament:  
That you may guide our elected representatives  
To act in the interests of all the people of this land,  
And work towards a reconciled Australia.

Christ, in your mercy:

***We pray for wholeness and reconciliation!***

We pray for our Church:  
That through the Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal  
and Islander Christian Congress  
We may continue what has begun  
and stand together to see it through.

Christ, in your mercy:

***We pray for wholeness and reconciliation!***

We pray for ourselves, all the people of Australia:  
You taught us to love our neighbour.  
Enable us to see in each other  
Your righteousness, your justice, your love,  
And humbly seek to reflect the same

Christ, in your mercy:

***We pray for wholeness and reconciliation!***

We pray for Reconciliation:  
That the wrongs of the past may be recognized,  
That our awareness of the journey so far be awakened,  
And that the Spirit move us  
To see through what has been started.

Christ, in your mercy:

***We pray for wholeness and reconciliation!***

***Amen.***

**SONG** *i am, you are, we are australian, the seekers*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjkriyitgea&list=rdxjyeskzwt6i&index=18>

**HYMN** *"The Great Southland" (version III) Geoff Bullock*

1. These are Your nations, these are Your lands,  
our common future, and our shared hope.  
These lands of reaping, these lands of harvest,  
these are Your lands, these lands our home.

*Chorus*

These are the Great South Lands of the Holy Spirit,  
from lands of red dust plains to island rains;  
and in these sun-drenched lands we have seen Your love,  
and to these Great South Lands Your Spirit's come.

2. These are Your nations, these are Your lands,  
These lands of plenty, these lands of hope.  
The richest harvests are in their peoples,  
from age to age, Your Spirit's come.

*Chorus*

3. These are Your nations, these are Your lands,  
these blessed countries of dreams revived.  
And to Your people, we see a harvest  
and to these lands, Your spirit's come.

*Chorus*

**BLESSING**

Let us go in peace to live and love,  
guided by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

May you always stand tall as a gum tree  
Be as strong as the rock Uluru  
As gentle and still as the morning mist  
Hold the warmth of the camp fire in your heart  
And may the Creator Spirit always walk with you.  
Amen.

***Auntie Betty Pike, Aboriginal Elder***

## ULURU STATEMENT

### FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart: Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years? With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.