



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

Leigh Memorial
Westmead
Uniting Churches



National
Reconciliation
Week



Pentecost

JUNE 5, 2022

Leigh Memorial

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

Meeting ID: 519 908 9657

Westmead Uniting

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/93615534553>

WELCOME

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

THE PENTECOST SPIRIT SEEKS RECONCILIATION

Pentecost reminds us that Christ's Spirit is not mild or temperate but a disrupting force, a caring love that disconcerts and unsettles the systems of this world, redefining power from the inside out and from the bottom up.

We usually think and act in terms of continuities, predictability, repetition of schemes and plans, and the Pentecostal event show us God's capacity to interrupt, to break those schemes open, and to violate those formulae:

it is a bold and risky spirit, even disobedient, when it is a matter of uncovering new paths of life.

Ivan Nicoletto OSB Cam. unpublished sermon Pentecost, 2019

LIGHTING OF PENTECOST AND RECONCILIATION SUNDAY CANDLE

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

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In this National Reconciliation Week we acknowledge the Burramattagal 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=N4LjjiSlf8>

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.

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, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress)

INDIGENOUS READING *Thomas Mayor Recites the "Statement from the Heart," Berry Uniting Church, 7th December 2019*

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

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.

RECONCILIATION HYMN

(Tune: Slane)

- 1 When will it be that the sorrow will end? When will the stranger be found as a friend? When will the stories of grief be embraced, told by the stolen, the lost, the displaced?
- 2 When will the languages flourish again, cultures be treasured and pride shine through pain? When will new hearts know that love has drawn near, banishing deafness and blindness and fear?
- 3 When will it be that the wounds will be healed, new ways of walking together revealed?
When will the land and its peoples be one, truth fully told and deep justice be done?
- 4 Now, as the First Peoples' voices are heard, now, as each listener's conscience is stirred, Christ in our midst, keep us turning to you and to each other, this long journey through.

(Source: words © Elizabeth J Smith 2019; tune: Slane)

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SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 14:8-17, 25-27

(NIV, inclusive language)

- 8 Philip said to him, "Jesus, show us God the Parent, and we will be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen God. How can you say, 'Show us God the Parent? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the God and God is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but God the Parent who dwells in me does God's works. 11 Believe me that I am in God and God is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Parent God. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.
- 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask my Parent God, who will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees nor knows the Spirit. You know the Spirit, who abides with you, and will be in you. ...
- 25 "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom God the loving Parent will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

REFLECTION

RESPONSE

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

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

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

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OFFERING O God, our prayer is that, as we share these gifts, you will widen the landscape of our seeing, feeling, and ethical living, so that we enhance the lives of all peoples particularly our First Nations Peoples!

Guide us in our generosity!

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Grounded in Truth, Walking Together in Courage God of all,
Watcher and dreamer of all people, Source of care, compassion and justice, Keeper
The story of the First Peoples shines bright in this land, For tens of thousands of years it the light
burnt strong, Deep culture,
Deep language, Deep spirituality Efficient technology Sustainable living
Like an extension of the Garden of Eden Then things changed,
Whether well-meaning or ill-meaning, Whether selfish or ignorant
The coming of subsequent peoples to this land Has wrought wrong
Harm has been done Right left undone
And the First Peoples have suffered and continue to suffer. Though the story is not all bad and there
is good within it, With courage we face the truths that are saddening and upsetting.
We give thanks for the First Peoples of this land. We recognise now their ancient sovereignty
We celebrate their wisdom.
We seek to learn from their custodianship.
We are sorry for the loss of land, language, culture and story. We are sorry for the suffering
But we are thankful for those who work together
Who listen to each other with courage and respect, And seek to work together in reconciliation.
Help us to be such people, May we open ourselves to the truth both good and ill
And commit to working and walking together with courage That we might walk together,
Reconciled to a better future for all people. This we pray.

Amen

(Source: Jon Humphries, Facebook post, *Walking Together as First and Second Peoples, Uniting Church in Australia*)

COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Holy Table of Jesus Christ waits for its honoured guests: all of us who come in humble faith. Here lies the hospitality of God, the open heart of Christ and the dancing life of the Holy Spirit.

In eating and drinking this life-giving sacrament we are fed by God's love.

THE PEACE

As Jesus departed, he promised that God would gift us with the Spirit of Truth, and Jesus gifted us with his Peace!

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

I invite you to share the peace of Christ.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Christ be with you

And also with you.

We thank you, O God,

for the wonder of the threads of hope which you weave through all creation; for small signs which you give to us each day, if only we will look: for fragile flowers in forest and bushland, for colour in a rock and a smile on the face of a child.

We thank you, O God.

We thank you for gifts which wait for us if we will see them: in a small kindness from one to another, in a word of insight from an unexpected place. Thank you for a brave laugh surviving in sadness and for faithful love which stand the test of every day.

We thank you for your gifts to us, O God.

We give you thanks that as we stay and go down deep into the heart of Christ we may go past our own shadow places and gently stand on the ground of truth.

We thank you that there, in surprising grace, lies peace and new things waiting to be born in us, held within our own longings.

And so we praise you with the faithful

of every time and place, joining with the whole creation in the eternal hymn :

Holy, holy, holy,

God of power and vulnerability, heaven and earth

are full of your glory. Come and deliver us, God the giver of life.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God.

Come and deliver us, God the giver of life.

THE INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said: "This is my body, which is for you. Do this to remember me"

In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and again giving thanks, said:

"This cup is the sign of my new covenant with you.

Do this as often as you drink it to remember me."

THE INVOCATION

Be present risen Lord Jesus, by your Holy Spirit, as you were with your disciples and make yourself known to us in the breaking of the bread, for you live and reign with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. *Amen.*

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

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

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

The gifts of God for the people of God.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ given for us. The life of Christ poured out for us.

FINAL PRAYER

O God we give you grateful thanks for all that lies within this sacred feast. May we carry into the world the bread which brings life and the wine of compassion for all who wait in longing.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, *Amen*

HYMN *Shalom* (TiS 778) Shalom to you now Shalom my friends May God's full mercies Bless you my friends In all your living And through your loving Christ be your Shalom, Christ be your Shalom.

Elise S Eslinger

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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