

Worship Resources for Reconciliation Sunday 31st May 2015

Cover Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Ministry,

As you may recall it was agreed that the SA Presbytery establish Reconciliation Sunday in reconciliation week (27 May – 3 June) annually, to be celebrated across the church, and request church councils to include third in their worship calendars.

This year Reconciliation Sunday also falls on Trinity Sunday being May 31st.

This is the ninth year that we have prepared worship resources for use on Reconciliation Sunday. You may like to use some of the resources produced in 2010 and 2013 when Reconciliation Sunday also fell on Trinity Sunday. Please refer to the full set of resources for this year and those for previous years which may be downloaded from the Mission Resourcing SA website at: <http://sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday>

We have also used some of the resources prepared for “A Destiny Together” held in March 2014, which are on the Assembly website along with other Assembly worship resources.

The sermon notes this year were prepared by Rev. Alison Whish of Newland UCA, and to quote Alison, “I did not take this to a particularly deep level. I wanted to keep it fairly accessible.....presuming that many services on the day will be led by lay leaders.” Hence Alison has raised questions in looking at the Scriptures and been practical in the points she has raised. Thanks for this work Alison.

As in other years the UAICC greatly appreciates the support offered to the Congress through the Pilgrimage of Healing appeal, which this year supports training young people to lead pilgrimages, which the Presbytery encouraged the Covenanting Committee to commence this year. (Already an Adnyamathanha pilgrimage has been held, while Kaurna pilgrimages will be held on May 23rd and September 12th).

The story this year (“The Three Spears”) is told by Nelson Varcoe, with artwork prepared by Aboriginal students from Woodville High School. Both the sound recording of the story and the power point may be downloaded separately.

At the end of the sermon notes we have some notes on “Stir Fry Theology” from Ken Sumner and provided extra material from Alison as well as suggestions for further reading.

Grace and Peace, The Covenanting Committee Organizing team

Antonella Cavello, Covenanting Committee chair

Denise Champion, SA Congress Chair and former Synod Covenanting Officer

Peter Russell, Secretary, Covenanting Committee

Di Russell, Covenantor

Ian Dempster, Congress Resource Officer

Nelson Varcoe, Congress leader and storyteller

Worship Resources

Hymns and Songs

(Please remember to observe any copyright acknowledgements that may be required)

Hymns and Songs suggested in “A Destiny Together” resources included:

For you, deep stillness (Julie Perrin – All Together Whatever 494)
How Long? (Robin Mann – All Together for Good 563)
Like a Candle (Craig Mitchell – All Together for Good 582)
Sorrowing Song (Robin Mann – All Together Everybody 286)
How long? (David MacGregor, Uniting in Worship 2, p.200 & CD Rom)
Prayer for peace (David Haas – As One Voice)
Christ be our Light (Bernadette Farrell _All Together OK313)
Do Justice (David Macgregor – All Together for Good 578)
Bambelela/Never give up (Trad. South African – Seasons of the Spirit Songbooks)
All are welcome (Marty Haugen – Church Hymnary 4)
Companions on the Journey (Carey Landry Seasons of the Spirit Songbooks)

Together in Song resources include:

179 Praise with Joy the world’s Creator
407 Breath on me, breath of God
409 Breath of Life, come sweeping through us
411 Filled with the Sprit’s power
412 God sends us his Spirit
416 Great God, your Spirit, like the Wind
421 Where the Spirit is, there’s freedom
473 Community of Christ
477 Jesus calls us to meet him
629 When I needed a neighbour were you there?
640 Kneels at the feet of his friends
657 God of Freedom, God of Justice
677 Christ’s is the world’s in which we move
688 Come to be our hope, Lord Jesus
690 Beauty for Brokenness, hope for despair

Other old favourites could include:

AHB 85 To God be the Glory
AHB 165 What a Friend we have in Jesus
Spirit Song (477 Praise & Worship)
Holy Holy (40 All Together Now)

Reconciliation Sunday resources for 2013 and 2014 have additional suggestions.

Introduction to Worship

Today is Reconciliation Sunday - as part of Reconciliation week (between May 27th – June 1st), - and also Trinity Sunday.

On Trinity Sunday we think about community and relationships, and that restoring human relationships is part of God's reconciling mission in the world. And so it is a good day to celebrate Reconciliation Sunday, when we also think about the relationships of the first peoples of this nation with the second peoples, and how God calls us all to live in harmony and as peacemakers and reconcilers.

Acknowledgement of Country / First Peoples

We acknowledge the people (or "the traditional owners"), whom God has placed as the original custodians of this place on which we meet. We acknowledge the wisdom of their Elders, both past and present and honour their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.

Call to Worship – Psalm 29 (or part thereof)

Gathering Prayer

God of love,
you are the creator of this land
and of all good things.
Our hope is in you
because you gave your son Jesus
to reconcile the world to you.
We pray for your strength and grace
to forgive, accept and love one another
as you love us
and forgive and accept us
in the sacrifice of your Son.

*(Prepared by Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology
Working Group) NATSIEC 2003, used with permission*

Hymn / songs

Prayers of Confession

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 so that we may

boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introduction to Story

Auntie Denise Champion's new book, ""Yarta Wandatha" is centred around stories. "Yarta Wandatha" means "the land is speaking, the people are speaking." Each story has a fixed geographical location. This year we will not hear one of Denise's Adnyamathanha stories, but one that Uncle Nelson Varcoe heard from his grandma while growing up at Point Pearce.

Note: The story may be downloaded from the Reconciliation Sunday resources on the Synod Covenanting website. It is a powerpoint file with illustrations from students of Woodville High School.

"The Three Spears" story told by Uncle Nelson Varcoe

Hymn / Song

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 29

Romans 8: 12-17

John 3: 1-17

Sermon / Reflection: See the section below under heading, "Preaching Resources" below.

Hymn / Song

Prayer:

Two alternatives for prayer are presented below.

Reconciliation Prayer

Holy Father, God of love,
you are the creator of this land and all good things.

We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history
and the suffering of our peoples
and we ask your forgiveness.
We thank you for the survival of indigenous cultures.

Our hope is in you because
you gave your son Jesus
to reconcile the world to you.
We pray for your strength and grace to forgive,
accept and love one another
as you love us and forgive and accept us
in the sacrifice of your Son.

Give us the courage to
accept the realities of our history
so that we may build a better future for our nation.
Teach us to respect all cultures.
Teach us to care for our land and waters.
Help us to share justly
the resources of this land.

Help us to bring about spiritual and social change
to improve the quality of life
for all groups in our communities,
especially the disadvantaged.
Help our young people to find true dignity
and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love be the foundations
on which we build our families,
our communities and our nation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Prepared by the Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology
Working Group, March 1997)*

or

Prayer for this land, Australia

Creator God,
we pray for this land, our culture, our customs.
our languages, our people and our nation.
Gather us together to look after this land

so that the beauty of our mother earth
may be preserved for all future generations.

Jesus, our brother, give us your grace,
to be united in one mind, in one heart and in one action
so that we can continue the journey of reconciliation,
and enable all Australians to work together
in love, peace and joy.

We ask you, God the Holy Spirit.
overshadow us with your presence.
We ask you to guide all people, whether black, white
or yellow, so that we can truly learn and have better
understanding in the knowledge of language and
culture in this land, Australia. Amen.

Bishop Saibo Mabo, Chairperson NATSIEC, 2012

Offering

Please consider using the offering or a special retiring offering today (or an appeal run over several weeks) to support the work of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in South Australia. This year the Pilgrimage of Healing (please see the poster which is available to be down loaded) focusses on training young people to lead pilgrimages on their country. Your support of this appeal is greatly appreciated by the Congress not only in 2015, but also in recent years.

Affirmation of Faith (to be said in unison)

We say God created the universe,
and the world we live in,
and every living thing on this earth.

We believe the Creation shows us the power and presence of God,
and makes us want to praise and give thanks to God,
and take good care of the earth God has made.

We are full of joy that across the world
different peoples have their own culture and language,
and that in God we are all united together as one.

We say God is Spirit,
breath of life,
who is always working to bring people to life in God.

We believe the Spirit has been alive and active in every race and culture,
getting hearts and minds ready for the good news:
the good news of God's love and grace that Jesus Christ revealed.

We are full of joy that from the beginning the Spirit was alive and active,
revealing God through the law, custom and ceremony
of the First Peoples of this ancient land.

We say Jesus is Saviour and Lord,
and that he began the church
and prayed that the church might be together as one.

We believe that in the risen Jesus we are all brothers and sisters in the one great family
of God,
and that God calls us to live in faith, hope and love
for the sake of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

We are full of joy that we can learn, grow and serve together
as a pilgrim people
in the name of Christ.

Prayers of Intercession

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 thankyou for your Mercy which covers all our Sins and for the love 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

Hymn / Song

Word of Mission

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,
Until God's promised reconciliation of all creation is complete.

**Bless us therefore, as we depart this place: give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk alongside our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Amen.**

The Peace of God be with you.

And also with you.

Preaching Resources

Isaiah 6:1-8

A call story, one of many in the bible. Potentially very helpful for Reconciliation Sunday as reconciliation will only happen when first and second peoples respond to a call to work at the many steps in the journey of reconciliation together.

- Who are we sending to engage in active practices of reconciliation?
- While we may not feel equipped for this task, remember that God equips as he calls. What equipping could you or your community be actively seeking to resource you?
- As people of faith we have a message for our wider community about reconciliation, the importance and centrality of it for Australia as a nation in the 21st century. Are there areas where we could be come active, eg as advocates for the Recognise campaign <http://www.recognise.org.au/about/what-is-recognise/>
- Also recall that the seraph touching the mouth with the live coal was a symbol of forgiveness, enabling guilt to depart. Are there actions against first people's that have happened in your area that need to be lamented and forgiveness sought? Is this a time to make contact and discover the local history between first and second peoples and honestly own that history, the good and the bad? Knowing the stories is a first step to naming injustices and understanding how that history has shaped people since those events.
- It might be worth asking 'whose stories do we still need to hear?' In many parts of Australia the non indigenous community knows very little of the indigenous history of the places they live. As a community you may want to make sure you hear some of the stories relevant to your district. It is often interesting to consider why there has been secrecy about such history. Who has things to hide, or of which they are ashamed?
- Are some of your people being called to participate in some of the programs the Uniting Church offers that enable exposure visits with Aboriginal communities, eg About Face, Pilgrimages, Period of Discernment, Ministers' Conferences. Find out about these possibilities if you don't already know of them.
- Does your community need to learn some more about the practical Christian practice of forgiveness? In which case Dennis Linn's book Don't Forgive too Soon may be helpful. It could be good preparation if you are in a context where you need to go to a group and seek their forgiveness for example.



Psalm 29

V11 'may the Lord bless his people with peace!' Is this not what reconciliation should lead to? Peace and harmony with each other is the goal to which we would want to move when it comes to reconciliation between first and second peoples in Australia. It is always helpful to have the vision, the point to which we want to move, firmly in front of us as we consider actions that might move us along the reconciliation pathway. Peace is an oft reoccurring theme in scripture, how do we build it?

Romans 8: 12-17

This reading can also be heard as an invitation to new beginnings, to allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit on a new pathway, to take steps in a new journey. There are echoes of the readings we shared for Easter 5, John 15:1-8 and 1 John 4:7-21 with their focus on love, and being grafted into the vine that is Jesus. Or as Romans puts it being adopted, that is our relationship with God enables us to bear witness to the love of God. We can be freed to make a new beginning. We can choose, not to ignore our history, but rather not be bound by it. We can break free into the new relationships that reconciliation makes possible. What strength, energy and creativity would be freed if every person living in this land was able to live to their God given potential? While matters lie un-reconciled these possibilities get frustrated and limited. People continue to die prematurely.

There is encouragement in these words to take the freedom that is God's gift to us and not to be bound by old understandings or stereo types.

It is also a reminder that each person bears within them the image of God. It makes no difference as to what colour, culture, age or stage of life they are. The way power works as an instrument of our secular world, could be a useful theme and would provide room for exploration of how God's understanding of such things is very different and so reconciliation is an imperative.

John 3: 1-17

Nicodemus asks questions about being born again. The very act of working towards reconciliation is a form of new birth. When two parties become reconciled, a new entity is possible, new directions are agreed and journeys together begun.

Thus themes of new beginnings, new birth, and being called into active engagement in the journey of reconciliation flow fairly easily from all these readings.

This leads to us asking the question; what will give rise to new hope between first and second peoples in Australia. What signs of hope do we see already?

May the Spirit inspire your own reflections and sermon writing!

Alison Whish, May 2015

(Alison is a minister of the word in the Uniting Church currently serving in placement with the Newland Memorial Uniting Church in Victor Harbor, SA.)

Notes from Rev Ken Sumner, Reconciliation Sunday (Trinity Sunday) 2010

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 it's 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.

What this means in terms of Covenanting (Reconciliation)

As a Church we have agreed on an official covenant between the Uniting Church of 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? 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.

Often, as Christians, we choose who we want to love and be part of our lives. The challenge is to love everybody unconditionally.

(These notes were prepared by Rev. Ken Sumner, former Covenanting Officer and Congress SA Chair, now State Director the UAICC in Victoria. They were originally used for Reconciliation Sunday, also Trinity Sunday in 2010).

OTHER CHALLENGING THOUGHTS for REFLECTION or STUDY GROUPS

In discussing her sermon thoughts Alison Which “wondered whether it would be appropriate to illustrate the encouragement to become familiar with local history by the example of poisoned waterholes out of Narrandera, NSW.

These are interesting thoughts, especially when the month of May is History Month in SA, with all sorts of events on under the title of “About Time.” It makes one wonder whether there is much history presented from an Aboriginal point of view?

Alison refers us to the link of 30th June 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/racist-names-leave-a-poisonous-legacy-20130629-2p3ol.html> with comments from columnist, Peter FitzSimons,

“My thanks to all the readers who sent in suggestions for racist names that the NSW Geographical Names Board should have a look at in their review. One obvious one is Gins Leap, up Boggabri way, which is said to be where a young Aboriginal woman took her life many years ago. More obvious still is Coon Island in Lake Macquarie. (Really. In 2013). Most troubling of all is Poisoned Waterhole Creek on the Sturt Highway near Narrandera, and if you step into the next section we can discuss it.

AN UGLY HISTORY

What to do when a place name is in itself like a literary tombstone, commemorating an appalling thing that happened at a particular place, as in Poison Waterhole Creek, and nearby Massacre Island on the Murrumbidgee? I guess it is the descendants of those killed who should have the most say as to whether the name should live on as a mark of national shame or be obliterated, but at least the rest of us (should) know what happened.

A book by the name of “Wiradjuri Places” records that in the 1830’s, several groups of Aboriginal families used to camp by a waterhole near Buckingbong homestead. Very annoyed, and eager to get rid of them, the station owner poured drums of poison into the waterhole, with many dying. Survivors retreated to a place called Duck Bend, where a group of stockmen came for them and shot the whole group except for one man, who escaped.

Other Aborigines were hunted like vermin in the same parts by stockmen on horseback, getting all the way to the mighty Murrumbidgee, where oral tradition has it that they would swim to the densely timbered island with the steep slippery bank, at which point the horseman would train their rifles, massacring them – hence Massacre Island.”

Alison advises that the Wiradjuri mob have a Facebook page where they make the point arising from this discussion in 2013, that ‘they don’t want the name changed because it is a stark reminder of events’ past., and may raise questions in people’s minds.

What about local history in SA? Do we as Uniting Church members know of places and events that raise issues about our history? And could that knowledge help us on a local journey of truth telling and reconciliation?

If you have any thoughts to share please do not hesitate to email the Synod Covenanting Committee at covenanting@sa.uca.org.au

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES for READING or STUDY or DISCUSSION GROUPS

There are a number of books and DVD's which may be useful for preaching, but are also relevant for discussions groups and also youth groups.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

"First Australians, An Illustrated History" Edited by Rachel Perkins and Marcia Langton, The Miegunyah Press 2008, which has also been produced as DVD's by SBS

"Blood on the Wattle, Massacres and Maltreatment of Aboriginal Australians since 1788" by Bruce Elder, New Holland, 1988 & 1998

'Methodism and Aboriginal People in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A story of neglect, failure and atonement, and its legacy for the Uniting Church,' in Uniting Church Studies, Vo. 20, No. 2, December 2014, pages 37 – 47. This edition of "Uniting Church Studies" also contains a review of Denise Champion's book, "Yarta Wandatha" by Steve Taylor.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

"Survival in Our Own Land" Edited by Christobel Mattingley and Ken Hampton, Hodder & Stoughton, 1992

"Maralinga, The Anangu Story" also put together by Christobel Mattingley, Allen & Unwin, 2009

"Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri" by Graham Jenkin, Raukkan Publishers, 1995

"Unearthed, the Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island" by Rebe Taylor, Wakefield Press, 2008

OTHER LOCAL HISTORIES from INTERSTATE

"Jandamarra and the Bunuba Resistamce" by Howard Pedersen & Banjo Woorunmurra, Magabala Books, 1995

"Warrior, A legendary Leader's Dramatic Life and Violent Death on the Colonial Frontier" by Libby Connors, Allen & Unwin, 2015

And a GREAT BIOGRAPHY

"Maybe Tomorrow" by Boori Monty Pryor & Meme McDonald, Allen & Unwin, 1998 & 2010.