



Abundant
Grace
Liberating
Hope

Uniting Church in Australia
Assembly

President: Dr Deidre Palmer

General Secretary: Colleen Geyer

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ in our Uniting Church,

The 22nd of October 2018 is an important day in the life of our nation and our Church.

On this day, on behalf of all Australians, Prime Minister Scott Morrison will deliver a National Apology to victims and survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse at Parliament House in Canberra.

Survivors and others personally affected will gather in Parliament House's Great Hall to listen to the Apology. I encourage you all to listen to the Apology, which will be broadcast live.

In the lead-up to the National Apology, I have worked with the Moderators of all Uniting Church Synods to produce a prayer for this solemn occasion.

Please share it, use it in your worship, and above all, keep survivors and their families in your prayers.

As I said in my recent statement during National Child Protection Week, the work remains ahead of us as a Church and as a nation to create a consistent and robust culture of safety in all we do with children. That culture needs to be consistent with who God calls us to be as Church – a trustworthy, respectful, loving community, in which all people are safe and can flourish.

Our own apologies and pledges to make amends can only be honoured if members of our Church work faithfully and diligently in the years ahead to ensure the work of child safety is continually grounded in our life and witness to Christ.

Grace and peace,

Deidre Palmer
President
Uniting Church in Australia
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PRAYER TO MARK THE NATIONAL APOLOGY TO SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

We pause this day to acknowledge the failure of the church to protect so many children in its care, to say how sorry we are, to pray for those who have been abused and those who support them.

Hold a time of silence

Gracious and loving God,

We confess that our congregations, agencies and schools have not always been safe places for children and that abuse occurred where care and nurture should have been expected.

Silence

We are sorry.

We confess that we failed to listen to the voices of children when they told us of their abuse.

Silence

We are sorry.

We confess our failure. Christ Jesus, Reform our life.

We pray for survivors of child abuse,
we pray for justice, for strength and healing.

God hear our prayer.

We pray for family and friends of child abuse survivors, and all who provide care and support.
We pray for wisdom, courage and resilience.

God hear our prayer.

We pray for those whose family member or friend has died as a result of their abuse.
We pray for comfort, kindness and peace.

God hear our prayer.

We acknowledge with gratitude those who have supported survivors of child abuse to find healing and strength.

We give thanks.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work of the Royal Commission who enabled survivors to speak of their suffering, showed us our sin and called us to mend our ways.

We give thanks.

We acknowledge with gratitude, advocates who exposed the truth about institutional child abuse and who campaigned for truth-telling and justice.

We give thanks.

We acknowledge our need to change as a Church. Strengthen us to act with justice towards survivors, to listen to our children and to implement policies which create safer communities.

Reform us God.

We commit ourselves as your Church to being places of safety, free of abuse and exploitation.
We commit ourselves as your Church to be communities, where people can flourish in life-giving ways of trust and love.

Reform us God.

Through Christ we pray, Amen.
