

1985-2020: Celebrating 35 Years of Cultural Diversity

One Great Sunday of Sharing Worship Resource



19th July 2020



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

What is One Great Sunday of Sharing

The declaration that the Uniting Church in Australia is a multicultural Church for all God's people sets us on a journey of continual discovery and renewal. One Great Sunday of Sharing helps us to keep this focus at the heart of our common life in the UCA. It is held each year on the 3rd Sunday in July, or another date best suited to the local setting. Uniting Church congregations, faith communities and fellowship groups are invited to come together to share stories of being both guest and host, in personal life, in relationship with other cultures, and of our experience of being Christian in a multicultural Church and a multicultural Australia. It is an opportunity to spend time together with people whose culture and background is different from your own.



President's Message for 2020 One Great Sunday of Sharing

Dr Deidre Palmer

1985-2020: Celebrating 35 Years of Cultural Diversity

“From the traditional custodians of this land, the First Peoples, to the many who have come from countries around the world, Australia is rich in culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and fortunate to benefit from the richness of the many cultures that make up our nation. The Uniting Church rejoices in the diversity of races, cultures and languages as God's gracious gift and seeks to be a truly multicultural church living its faith and life cross culturally' and interculturally.

This year marks 35 years since the 4th National Assembly declared ‘the Uniting Church in Australia is a multicultural Church.’”

It is a Pentecost vision that people hear and share the good news of Christ in their own language and cultural context, as the Holy Spirit weaves us together as God's beloved community.



Today we worship in 49 languages other than English. We have more than 201 groups, who worship in a language other than English and we have 13 National Conferences which support congregations and communities from across our cultural diversities. This One Great Sunday of Sharing held on the third Sunday in July, gives an opportunity for Uniting Church congregations, faith communities and fellowship Groups to celebrate that our present, and our future as the Uniting Church, is Christ-centred, Spirit led, intercultural and intergenerational in its leadership, ministry and expression of faith.

It has been a joy for me as President to share with Uniting Church communities across our country in different languages in a diversity of cultural contexts. It has been so encouraging to participate in National Conference gatherings, where we have celebrated in worship, in singing and dancing, our praise to God and our joy at being one in Christ. We have encouraged one another in God's mission of love, justice and reconciliation.

We live with a common identity in Christ – followers of Jesus, infinitely loved by God, gifted with God's grace. We honour the cultural contexts in which that common identity in Christ is nurtured. We are committed to being who God calls us to be – a “Church for all God's People”

In this time of global crisis, where we are witnessing tragic losses of life and devastation of communities and health and economic systems, we need more than ever, to remember who we are called to be as Christ's Church – a loving, inclusive, multicultural community.

In this time, where the sin of racism continues to undermine our common life, creates fear and threatens the safety and wellbeing of individuals and whole communities of diverse cultures, races and religions, we need to stand in solidarity affirming our call to live out the way of Christ, who breaks down all the barriers that would separate us, and speaks the good news of God's inclusive welcome and love for all cultures and races.

Please note that the President's video message is available to watch on [here](https://vimeo.com/436650989).

<https://vimeo.com/436650989>



One Great Sunday of Sharing Worship Guide

Introduction and welcome

From the traditional custodians of this land, to the many who have come from countries around the world, we are rich in culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and fortunate to benefit from the richness of the many cultures that make up our nation. The Uniting Church rejoices in diversity of races, cultures and languages as God's gracious gift to the human family. One Great Sunday of Sharing is held each year on the third Sunday in July (or another date best suited to the local setting), giving an opportunity for Uniting Church congregations, Faith Communities and Fellowship Groups to celebrate 35 years since the Church declared in 1985 at the 4th National Assembly: "the Uniting Church in Australia is a multicultural Church". The future of the Uniting Church is intergenerational, Christ-centred and intercultural in leadership and in expression.

Acknowledgement of Land

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which I am standing, the Kaurna people of the Adelaide plains. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging and their continuing culture from time immemorial. I also pay my respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are part of this online worship. As the Uniting Church we are committed to truth-telling, justice and reconciliation, and walking together as First and Second Peoples.

Welcome to worship

People may be invited to say 'welcome' or 'welcome to worship' in their different languages.

Call to Worship

We come, God of the Journey: a people from different places, different histories and different cultures.

We come hoping to find companionship for the journey, solidarity for the struggle.

We gather, God of Hospitality, around your "welcome table, a table not yet round, but rounding."



We gather seeking to become a “round-table people, welcoming of all, with no preferred seating, no firsts and no lasts, and no corners for ‘the least of these’”

(Chuck Lathrop).

We yearn, God of diversity, for a new way of living and relating... as neighbours not strangers, as brothers and sisters, not ‘them and us’.

We yearn to live fully celebrating both the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to peace, love and justice. Amen.

Song/Hymn: *In Christ there is no east or west* TiS 459

In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north,
But one great fam’ly bound in love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind.

Join hands, then, people of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be!
Who serve each other in Christ's love
Are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
In him meet south and north,
All Christly souls are one in him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

(Note: slight change of wording by John Oxenham)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Creator of the universe, the eternal God who is the source of times, we worship you.
We take refuge in you.

You called us from age to age, and led us step by step; you are our past, present and future.

We gather here to give thanks for the ecumenical journey of the Uniting Church in Australia.



You who brought the Church into union are continuing to shape her life to reflect your compassion, justice and diversity.

We thank you for the 35 years of journey since we declared ourselves a multicultural Church. It is not our making but you who have welcomed people of many cultures and languages into your Church. You invite us into a deeper fellowship and understanding in order that we may accept, appreciate, learn from and celebrate each others' faith that is expressed through their cultures.

Grant us grace, humility, wisdom and a sense of adventure as we continue our journey as we commit ourselves to you and each other in faith and good will. O God of many cultures help us to acknowledge the diversity you are and to receive the gospel that comes through each culture you have created.

May you continue to surprise us, and open our hearts and minds to the wonder of your creation as we learn to live in the diversity of our faith expressions and love towards you and each other.

We ask this in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. *(Dev Anandarajan)*

A Responsive Confession

Let us now look into ourselves and see where we have deviated from God's will for us to live in harmony, justice and peace with one another.

We confess our participation in all that has caused our disunity, conflicts, separation and brokenness from one another.

We live in a world where people are still judged by their skin colour, ethnic background, accent, gender, economic status, political conviction, religious affiliation. We come from a world where people are lumped together by external likenesses, where people are accepted or rejected because of particularities of their personal or group identity.

We seek a different vision of life.

**We seek a more inclusive community,
a more expansive welcome,
a more holy hospitality for all people.**

We confess, O Holy One, that we are part of the problem.

We acknowledge that we mirror in ourselves the fragmentation of the world around us.



We have been influenced by its values and well trained in its patterns of thought and action. We are immersed in its subtle oppressions as well as its blatant acts of injustice. Even without knowing it, our lives have been polluted by popular opinion and shaped by cultural rituals and routines.

We seek a cleansing of our souls.

We seek a softening of our hearts.

We seek to be saturated in your love.

We seek to reach out and include those who are different from us.

We seek to live in the authentic community of the Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Reading: Romans 8:12-25 (New Revised Standard Version)

CALD members may be invited to read in their different languages.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.



Communal Reflection or Intercultural Dialogue as a Response to God's Word

Minister or Worship leader may say:

One of the purposes of this Service is to bring together people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to engage in dialogue with each other in the context of our worship.

True dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons of differing views. The primary purpose of dialogue is for each person to learn from the other so that we can change and grow.

We believe our commitment to dialogue with each other will effect constructive change in intercultural relations within the church and in our multicultural Australian communities.

One of the lectionary readings for 19th July, Romans 8:12-25, offers an opportunity to explore being children of God together, and to share stories of faith, suffering and hope with people whose culture and background is different from one's own. People may be invited to reflect on Romans 8: 12-25 together and share their responses to the following questions:

1. **"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God"** (Verse 14).
What does it mean for you (and your people) to be children of God together with other sisters and brothers in the Uniting Church?
2. **"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us"** (Verse 18).
What have been the sufferings, difficulties, and challenges for you and your people in terms of immigration, racism, and very recently COVID-19 pandemic?
3. **"For in hope we were saved"** (Verse 24).
How is your faith sustaining you and keeping your people praising God through this challenging time? What hopes are you holding for your faith community, the Uniting Church, and this troubled world?



Sermon Notes: Commentary & Reflections on Romans 8:12-25

"By speaking of "children of God" Paul is using the language which meant so much to converts whose entry into Christ was celebrated by baptism. For many today the experience of coming to faith is gradual and baptism celebrated that at its (and our) infancy rather than in adulthood. This should not prevent us from grasping Paul's meaning and insight. Paul's point is precisely that being a child of God is not guaranteed by an occasion of ours from the past but by an ongoing relationship that continues in the present, a relationship that in that sense baptism (even in infancy) celebrates in advance. We spend our lives realising the potential it celebrates for us, entering more fully into the once for all story it depicts.

8:15 makes it clear that he is using the language of relationship. We are not in a relationship of slavery, but in one of freedom. We have been adopted into the family, itself, and have been made heirs (8:17). Like children who grow up in the household we address our father in intimate terms. Paul may be reflecting a widespread tradition in the beginnings of Christianity of retaining the Aramaic family address of children to fathers: "Abba". It probably reflects Jesus' own tendency to do theology by pointing to what parents do when they operate rightly: they care, they confront, and they love.

Even self-assurance is not based on fetching the certificate of membership or recalling an event of the past, but a sense of oneness or otherwise with the being of God the Spirit moving within our lives (8:16). It is a sense of being together in ourselves, including God's presence within us, rather than counting up extraordinary experiences or measuring the depths of the mystical into which we can descend. Paul is always pragmatic. Love is the fruit of the Spirit - not hard to recognise. It grows where it has soil. It doesn't need specialists of intellect or charisma or achievement or meditation, as valuable as each can be. At most we may need specialist help to remove the clutter that blocks the light of love reaching deeply into our lives. It is just as likely to be found among the ordinary people going about their daily round as it is among those who know all about it.

Lack of assurance or false self-assurance plagues people at many levels and leads to compensatory behaviours that are frequently destructive to self and others. Paul is confident in love and assumes this is what God's goodness does for people. It frees people from their self-preoccupations. But of course others have a big investment in



wanting to keep people back in their sense of inadequacy - including, alas, some in the name of Christ!

In 8:18 Paul takes off from present confidence to future hope - just as he did in 5:3-5. Adversity does not topple his confidence. He expects it. In 2 Corinthians and elsewhere he expounds this by pointing to Christ's suffering resurrection. Christ is the model. We live mainly on the cross side of his story, for even though we also have some of the new life now, the real change to resurrection lies in the future. Here Paul speaks of glory, a favourite image of God's presence and being. Paul's hope is not golden streets and shinier rewards, but God and God's presence.

In 8:19-24 Paul clearly moves beyond just his own situation in which some of his adversities come from his fellow believers. His grasp of God's goodness enables him to see "God-wide" into the broader context including both all humanity and all of creation. He is not a gnostic who can't wait to escape this evil material world. He is not a dualist who limits the focus of God's goodness to just some segments of creation. He is not one of those ancient and modern Christians who see salvation in terms of the salvation of souls alone. His passionate heart goes out to all creation. He looks to its renewal, its rebirth.

We might wonder at Paul's explanations. He sees it all as part of God's plan for the universe, while at the same time he clearly does not attribute destructiveness and failure to God's action. In his understanding the universe (much smaller of course than the way we see it and geocentric) is like a mother in the final stages of pregnancy. We all belong in this mother image. The Spirit also belongs. It is almost as though he sees the Spirit as the panting in the birth process, though that is my connection not his. The image is remarkable nevertheless. The Spirit - indeed God - is travelling with us for change.

The sense of solidarity is remarkable. The compassion knows no limits to its extent. The goodness which Paul celebrates as the good news is now fully universal. His mere hints send us out to look in awe and respect not only all humanity but all creation. Ignoring the plight of the world's eco-systems becomes impossible. Tossing off concerns about the environment is a gross outrage against God's goodness - against future generations, but more than that: against creation itself.

Paul's sense of hope is firmly rooted in present engagement with God's goodness in the world of people and of creation. His dreams envisage a renewal that will see us all (like creation as a whole) transformed into a new form of reality - raised in transformed



bodies like Christ's resurrection body. That was a common belief of his time. He also envisaged that the cosmic re-birth would happen as early as his own lifetime. We find ourselves necessarily distanced from his times and his timing, but also from how he conceptualised the fulfilment. Our universe is larger than the one his generation envisaged by a factor of trillions and more. In this light we may be tempted to treat the passage as little more than a relic of a past hooper. It is that, but it is more. Our hope is perhaps more naked, but its central truth remains: in the end: God. But our engagement with God's goodness in the present usually lags far behind Paul's vision. Two millennia behind us, he walks far ahead of us and leads the way more than any other New Testament writer. Our challenge remains: to walk according to this Spirit and not according to "the flesh" (*William Loader, First Thoughts on Year A Epistle Passages from the Lectionary*). <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/AEpPentecost7Ord16.html>

"We are all part of a family. That is another thing we all have experienced. Birth family, adoptive family, step family, foster family, institutional family. Family determines so much of who we are, whether we're talking genes or experience, family of origin or the people we now call family. But we are also all part of God's family—children of God, says Paul. Loving, supportive, accepting, encouraging, helping. That sounds easier than it is. Because real life is made up of real people, we usually act like real people. Meaning: imperfect, flawed people. We gather together, greet each other with good words and handshakes and hugs, hear one another's joys and worries and pain, pray for each other with thanksgiving and intercession, confess our sins together, experience forgiveness together, enjoy and encourage the children, and we laugh together. Together. That's the operative word. If allowed only one word to describe how Trinitarian thought impacts the world of the church today, I would choose "together." It is relational, expresses equality and friendship, and has a hopeful sense to it. Together, we can be so much more and do so much more than we can alone. Together. God's family. All of us."

<https://melissabanesevier.wordpress.com/2015/05/25/the-family-of-god-yes-that-means-you/>

"There is a unique and special Korean prayer style called "Tongsung Kido." Tongsung means, "cry out together loudly," and Kido means, "pray." Tongsung Kido has a strong connection with the idea of Han, a term used to describe an experience unique to Korean people. Han is defined as an unresolved resentment or psychosomatic pain



that is carried by a person, it is a kind of internalised grudge. Han is frustrated hope, resentful bitterness, and can be interpreted as "the wounded heart of God". Throughout their modern history Koreans have experienced hard times, such as the Japanese colonisation (1909-1945), the national division between North and South, the Korean War (1950-1953), and the military dictatorship (1961-1992) in South Korea. Because of these painful experiences, Koreans held Han in their hearts for a long time and Korean Christians prayed to God with their pain, suffering, and broken hearts. We couldn't pray silently and quietly. Rather, our pain, tears, and bitterness mixed with Han made us cry out to God loudly and ardently.

Through praying together, we can be given a deep sense of unity and togetherness in Christ: we belong together, we live and work together. This sense of unity and togetherness can sustain us in hope as we continue our journey as a multicultural Pilgrim people of God toward the reconciliation and renewal of all creation in worship, service and witness." (Paul Goh)

Hymn: *Be thou my vision* TiS 547

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art -
thou my best thought, by day or by night;
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be,
thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only first in my heart,
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.



Prayer for the offering

Gracious God, you create more than we could ever hope to return. You share more than we could ever hope to deserve. And yet, we pray, accept these humble gifts. May they honour and glorify you in all creation, and may they empower us for the work of witness and service, for the sake of justice, and for the sake of peace, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers for others: Prayers for a Diverse Church

Creator of all races and ethnicities, help us see that a diverse church and community is the way to deepen our lives and to know you more deeply. Guide us to see that entering into a vital and just relationship with others who are different from us is the way to make ourselves whole.

God who creates diversity

hear our prayer.

This year we celebrate the UCA 35th year declaration of being a 'multicultural' church – continue to journey with us as we seek to make this declaration a reality in all aspects of church life.

Open our hearts and minds that we will be willing to embrace all things necessary for a truly inclusive church.

God who creates diversity

hear our prayer.

Guard us from fear of the "other," from the fear that our own security is threatened if we become truly willing to make a place at the table for all.

Open us to live out what we profess to believe:

That our true security is in You and in your call to justice and peace,

That we are a part of your global family,

That, because of your Incarnation,

the human dignity of everyone is sacred,

and that we are constantly called to conversion and inclusive community.

God who creates diversity

hear our prayer.

Journey with us God,

as we pave and create new ways of being a truly inclusive church -

give us the courage to breakdown structures that divide and open our hearts to be

challenged to things that are different from our worldviews. Give us the spirit to

embrace diversity and difference.

God who creates diversity

hear our prayer



We pray that you help us recognise any forms of prejudice in our hearts,
and in our legal systems and social structures.

Forgive us for our sins of exclusion.

Heal our souls and spirits.

Ground us in compassion for all through your grace.

**God who creates diversity
hear our prayer.**

Help us take the steps you call us to take

To build a more just community and inclusive church,

Where difference is respected

and where we can all join hands

and rejoice in the common good. Through the mercy of God, we pray.

Amen. (Fie Marino)

A Prayer of Commitment

“Creator God, we believe that you have created all the nations of the world to live together in peace, sharing their riches, enjoying their diverse languages, cultures and colours, and caring for one another’s need. Grant us the wisdom and the courage to break down all the walls that we ourselves built to separate us one from another. Empower us to rid ourselves of selfishness, indifference, prejudice and hate. Fill us with your glorious vision that springs from our common beginning as human beings created in your image and points to our common goal as your renewed creation.”

(Asia Sunday 2013 CCA)

Song: Feed us NOW (Robin Mann)

1. Feed us now, Bread of life, in this holy meal;
let us know your love anew: we hunger for you.
Feed us now, Bread of life, come and live within;
let your peace be ours today, Lord Jesus, we pray.

2. Piece of bread, glass of wine: Lord, this food is good;
love and mercy come to us — your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, glass of wine; who can understand
how his mercy works in these? Yet, Lord, we believe

3. God is here, O so near, nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go; Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, O so near, in this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you — on the bread that is true.



Invitation to Communion

Communion is a sign of our oneness in Jesus Christ.
It is a powerful reminder of our unity in Christ,
despite theological, political, linguistic, and cultural differences.
This table is for all of us,
near and far, high and low, east and west and north and south.
This table is for all of us, but it is not our table.
It's Christ's table, for all of us, and it's a table of grace.
So come and take your place at the table.
You are welcome, you are invited, you are called:
come, let us share this meal together.

For here at this table, the hungry are fed, strangers become friends,
Sadness is turned to joy and love proves stronger than death.
All things of earth are holy, all things are one in you, O God.
This earth is filled with your beauty, charged with your love.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

For this Land and the First Peoples

We give thanks!

For the Second Peoples

We give thanks!

For the Culturally and linguistically diverse peoples

We give thanks!

For the seeds and fruits of this Land

We give thanks!

For the work of those who have tended the earth and prepared the feast

We give thanks!



For the One who breathes life into this feast

We give thanks!

So together with all of creation

We sing to the one who has provided all we need:

Holy, holy, holy God of all that is,

All that was and all that will be.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory,

Hosanna in the highest.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Rice is heaven.

As no one can monopolize heaven

So we have to share the rice together.

Rice is heaven.

As all share the sight of the heavenly stars,

So rice is something which must be shared.

Rice is heaven.

When rice passes your throat

You accept heaven in your body.

Rice is heaven.

Ah! Rice is something that must be shared. (KIM, Chi Ha, Korean poet)

The bread, (or rice cake), 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

We eat this rice cake as acknowledgement of our place in God's promise.

We drink this cup as an act of faith, believing that forgiveness is real and that the healing power of life reconciles and recreates all things anew.



Sharing bread or rice cake is a sign of love,
Inclusiveness and interdependence.
So the table is set and the meal is ready.
Come and take your place.
Come because you love a little and are open to loving more,
Come because God longs to be in relationship with you.
Come and receive Christ's resurrection meal,
meal of the mystical presence, meal of fulfilment, meal of the Spirit's empowering love.
Glory be to you, O God.

Prayer

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,
and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,
that the bread we break together, and the cup we share together,
may retell our common stories together
and reshape our common bonds together,
and remember our common grace together,
in the communion of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ,
the one in whose life and death you have torn down our divisions.
And so may we be one with all who share this feast,
on this day, of all days, with all your children at every corner of your table.
May we share this abundant cup with all those who thirst for your justice.
May we share this abundant bread with all those who hunger for your righteousness,
May we be united with every corner of your story,
united in hope, united in vision, united in purpose,
united in ministry in every place.

Lord's Prayer

Members of the congregation are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in one's own heart language/mother tongue.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.



PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, we offer our thanks,
for the whole communion of saint's witness to this feast,
and for the ministry of churches around the world who gather with us today. By this
broken bread may we each be restored for the work yet to come.
By this shared cup may we each be claimed for the proclamation of your Kingdom.
At this shared table may we be united as children of your promise,
children of your word, dying and made new again,
sent boldly together into the world as servants of your peace.
Amen.

(Alternative PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION)

God of many faces and names,
You created all people in your image.
We thank you for the amazing diversity of races, languages, accents and cultures in
this world you created.
We thank you for the wonderful diversity reflected within the First Peoples and Second
Peoples of this land and in our church.
We thank you for the blessings and enrichment we have received from the rich
diversity in the Body of Christ.
We pray that in our diversity we will find the unity that's given to us in Christ and
appreciate the gifts that others bring to us.
We pray that we will reach out to those who are different from us and see you in the
faces of the poor, strangers and persecuted.
We pray that we may be transformed, and drawn into intentional, intercultural
relationships and community.
Help us to take the steps you call us to take, to build a more just, inclusive community,
where diversity is truly embraced, where difference is respected.
In the Name of the triune God, amen, amen, and again we say: Amen! (Swee Ann Koh)

Song/Hymn

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer TiS 569 or *Brother, sister, let me serve you* TiS 650

Alternatively *While Earth Remains* (traditional Korean tune)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5WFIXpZkng>



God who made the earth
Declared it good in the beginning
Planned a time and purpose
For all things that were and would be
Refrain While earth remains
 There will be seed time and harvest
 summer sun and winter moon
 The dead of night, the bright day

Though humanity
Defiled the Eden God had cherished,
God did not despise the
World whose worth its Maker could see.
So, in Christ God came
From paradise to imperfection,
Repossessing earth and
People through a tomb and a tree.

Wood, though felled to earth
Produced a blossom none could perish;
Seed, though dead and fallen
Burst to life and rose up again.

We, who follow Christ,
Discover heaven through limitation;
Pruned, we bear more fruit, and
Grafted to the Vine we are free.

(Words by John L Bell, copyright 1999 WGRG Iona Community Glasgow)

Benediction

We have gathered, and we are sent to live out relationships that follow in the way of Jesus. We live as neighbours not strangers, as brothers and sisters, not 'them and us', to celebrate the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to peace, love and justice.



May God our Creator, bless you with eyes to see the beauty of all people and the glory of God's creation.
May Christ Jesus fill you with love for your neighbour near and far.
May the Holy Spirit empower you with courage and passion to shape communities of God's liberating hope. Amen. (Deidre Palmer)

Or

[The blessing of the Holy Trinity of love be upon you:]

God, who is alive, fill your hearts.
Christ Jesus, who is the new life, inspire your hopes.
The Holy Spirit, who is lifegiver,
Spur you to deeds of compassion.
Amen. (Uniting in Worship 2)

For a postlude, you might like to watch a music video of

THE BLESSING AUSTRALIA - Churches UNITE to sing The Blessing over Australia
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOt7baaVSbE>

"THE BLESSING"

Words and Music by Christopher Joel Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick
© 2020 Capitol CMG Publishing/Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

"THE BLESSING AUSTRALIA"

© Copyright 2020 WorshipCollective.co/The Blessing Australia

Producer's Note: During this time of uncertainty and physical isolation, over 300 local churches united together in Australia to sing a blessing over our nation. This is the first time this has happened. You can find a full list of all churches across who sent in a submission here, we honour every one. <https://theblessingaustralia.com/churches>



WE ARE A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

A statement adopted by the 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia July 1985

1. The Uniting Church in Australia is a union of Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Its unity is both the gift of God through Christ who is the head of the Church and the fruit of the labours of those who sought to be responsive to the prayer of Christ that his disciples might be one.
2. The Basis of Union points to the fact that the Uniting Church unites not only three former denominations, but also Christians of many cultures and ethnic origins. Paragraph 2 states the Uniting Church "believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries." Jesus Christ has made peace between people of every race, culture and class. This unity too is a gift of God, a foretaste of the reconciliation of all things in Christ. It is also a goal to be achieved as we commit ourselves in one fellowship to achieve justice, affirm one another's cultures, and care for any who are the victims of racial discrimination, fear and economic exploitation.
3. The 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church welcomes the progress that has been made in the last 20 years towards the formation of a society in Australia in which people of many races and cultures live together. The Assembly rejoices that successive governments have substantially removed racial criteria from the policies covering the selection of migrants and the reception of refugees, and that in particular significant groups of people from Asia and the Pacific have been welcomed to this land.
4. The fact that our membership comprises people of many races, cultures and languages, is a reminder that the church is both product and agent of mission. In the church the Kingdom which is to come is experienced in the ambiguity of the tension between the old age which has not yet passed away and the new age which has not yet fully come. As part of that church which is a sign of and witness to the Kingdom, the multicultural Uniting Church seeks to be a sign of hope within the Australian community, and particularly to those who are pushed to its fringes on racial and economic grounds.
5. It is essential therefore to provide for full participation of Aboriginal and ethnic* people, women and men, in decision making in the councils of the Church; to ensure that these groups have equitable rights in the use of Uniting Church properties and access to its resources; and to include their concerns and perspectives in the agendas of the councils of the Church. The Uniting Church seeks to be open to changes that the Holy Spirit will bring to the Church because of the creative contributions of people of different racial and cultural groups to its life.
6. The ethnic and Aboriginal congregations are a sign of the diversity of the cultures of the members of the Uniting Church. Organisation of the Church in ethnic congregations



enables us to worship in familiar languages, to hear the Gospel in terms of our several identities and cultures, and to provide pastoral care for all our people. There is a risk, however, that the establishment of ethnic congregations will become a means whereby the rest of the church is insulated from the hurts and struggles of Australia's minorities. Opportunities should be made therefore for bilingual worship and for fellowship across racial and cultural boundaries.

7. There is a great variety among ethnic congregations. This produces diverse relationships between such congregations and other congregations of the Uniting Church. Situations in which the minister has been settled in Australia for several years will be different from those in which a minister has recently arrived from another country. First generation settlers often seek the security of a congregation of their own culture and traditions. Their desire for such close security is to be respected, and such a congregation may be organised as a parish of the Church. Where there is preparedness to reach out to people of other cultures, the Assembly encourages the establishment of multicultural parishes. It supports a policy in which ministers of different ethnic backgrounds will plan and share the ministry in congregations, some of which are culturally mixed, and some of which meet separately for reasons of language.
8. The Assembly recognises the need for special ministerial education programs to prepare people for ministry in multicultural parishes and ethnic congregations. For those who are to minister in multicultural parishes, sociological studies on contemporary urban society where different cultural groups live side by side and interact will be important. Because the Gospel speaks with direct relevance to situations of political oppression and economic exploitation, an awareness of what is happening at the points of interaction between different racial and cultural groups in Australia will be essential for ministry. The Assembly recognises that candidates for ministry with ethnic congregations need to be aware of the theological and ecclesial traditions of the church(es) from which the members of the congregation have come. Candidates also need to have an opportunity to reflect theologically on the life situation of the members of the congregation here in Australia. This may require theological study in both countries, and effective ministry will certainly be enhanced by field education with a migrant congregation in Australia.
9. The Uniting Church welcomes those Christians of other church traditions who find in the Basis of Union and the life of the Uniting Church a faith community of which they want to be part, but rejects any form of proselytism as inappropriate in the ecumenical fellowship of the church. Presbyteries are encouraged, therefore, to assist ethnic congregations of other Christian traditions to provide adequate pastoral care for their people, and to obtain access to buildings suitable for their needs.

**Note: Since 1985 the phrase "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse" (CALD) is increasingly used across the broader community and is a better and more appropriate descriptor than ethnic for congregations of people from cultures other than Aboriginal or mostly English-speaking descent. The expression "intercultural" is also increasingly preferred by some to "multicultural", as it aspires to more intentional embracing of our diversity in the Body of Christ.*



"On this anniversary, we give thanks to God for who we are and from where we've come. But we also look forward to where we are going towards an intergenerational and *multicultural* Christian community, centred in Christ. led by the innovative, creative Holy Spirit of God."

Excerpt from President's 2020 Church Anniversary Message by Dr Deidre Palmer

"God is calling us to be a church which is *culturally and linguistically diverse at its core*"

Excerpt from President's 2015 Church Anniversary Message by Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney

"God is calling us to be a church which is culturally and linguistically diverse at its core – not essentially British with add-ons from other cultures. The church is called to be "a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole" (The Basis of Union, paragraph 3) and that includes the "diverse gifts" showered upon us through being a multicultural church.

To release this diversity of gifts we'll need to grow the UCA "ethos" to reflect the wisdom of our whole fellowship – giving prominence to faith sharing and outreach, to prayer and Bible study, to the dynamic of church planting and church growth – the stuff that our members and congregations from the Pacific, Asia and Africa know is at the heart of Christian identity. We'll need to address the Euro-centric assumptions we bring to matters like recognising new congregations, receiving ministers from other denominations, and educating our leaders both lay and ordained. We'll need to address the accident of history that almost all the material resources that the Uniting Church has inherited is in the hands of one cultural-linguistic group, the English-speaking community. There's nothing easy about this, but it is the kind of church God is calling us to be".



Acknowledgements

This worship resource has been put together by the Multicultural Ministry Centre of Mission Resourcing in the Synod of South Australia in collaboration with Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide. In developing this material, we drew and adapted from various resources including Assembly website,

<https://assembly.uca.org.au/mcm/resources/build-crosscultural-understanding/item/825-one-great-sunday-of-sharing>

A special thankyou to following contributors:

Dr Deidre Palmer, President of the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

Rev Sandy Boyce, Minister at Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide

2020 One Great Sunday of Sharing Worship Service Video

In collaboration with Rev Sandy Boyce, Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide, and the SA Synod Multicultural Ministry Centre of Mission Resourcing, a pre-recorded video has been produced. It is available to view and download on the YouTube channel here. It features members, ministers, and congregations from a diverse range of cultures in the South Australian Uniting Churches. UCA Assembly President Dr Deidre Palmer has contributed a [video message for One Great Sunday of Sharing](#) service and our SA Synod Moderator has offered a [prayer of thanksgiving](#). It also includes an [intercultural Communion](#) with two CALD ministers and a Zoom conversation with four of our CALD leaders on what it means to be children of God together sharing faith. They also reflect on sufferings and hope in the midst of immigration, racism and the COVID-19 pandemic. This video could be used as part of a local service or watched in its entirety in place of the local service.

This Worship Resource can be downloadable on the SA [Synod website here](#).

<https://sa.uca.org.au/cald/cald-events-and-resources>

For further resources, please contact Rev Dr Paul Goh, Synod CALD Officer of Mission Resourcing at pgoh@sa.uca.org.au

