



Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**

Synod of South Australia
Mission Resourcing

2020 Break The Silence Sunday Worship Guide

Background

At the 2019 SA UCA Presbytery and Synod meeting, it was agreed to adopt the last Sunday in April for Break the Silence Sunday. BTSS is an effort to open up a conversation within the church about rape and sexual assault. This may be an aspect of domestic violence, or it may be rape and sexual assault by strangers, striking at random in the community. This initiative began in the United States from a variety of faith communities, each with a deep appreciation and experience of the wisdom in the breadth of the Christian tradition. The idea of creating a dedicated Sunday in the church calendar, the Fourth Sunday of April each year, has now gone global.

This year, the liturgy reflects a changing landscape. COVID19 has meant many people are now at home in physical isolation, and families are under strain dealing with uncertainties about employment and financial challenges. Movement restrictions that aim to stop the spread of COVID19 may lead to violence in homes becoming more frequent, more severe and more dangerous, for those living at home with violent and abusive partners. Home is not a safe place for all. Domestic violence often goes up when people are spending 24 hours together inside a home. Intense psychological as well as physical mistreatment can escalate. The requirement to maintain isolation has interrupted support networks, making it far more difficult for victims to get help or escape. Many will lack the space they need to make safety plans. As the financial impact of the pandemic takes effect, access to the money needed to build a new life of safety may be even more limited.

Dr Merrindahl Andrew, Program Manager for Australian Women Against Violence Alliance: “All the evidence tells us that as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, more women and children will face increasing threats to their safety, as abusers’ use of violence escalates with increased isolation, stress and lack of community accountability – a pattern we know from natural disasters in Australia and worldwide. People who choose to use violence against their partners and family members often have a pattern of abuse. This typically involves coercion, surveillance and cutting off their partner’s relationships with co-workers, friends and family. Isolation due to COVID-19 will intensify this kind of coercive control by abusers. Women’s and children’s safety must be prioritised as an integral part of the pandemic response, and that means immediately increasing funding to specialist services and communicating to the public that everyone has the right to be safe in their home”

(<https://awava.org.au/covid-19-resources>)

If you or another person is in immediate danger, please phone 000. For counselling about family or domestic violence or sexual assault contact 1800RESPECT online or by phoning 1800 737 732. For men who might be concerned about using violence, call the Men’s Referral Service on 1300 766 491.

Liturgy For Break The Silence Sunday ~ April 26, 2020

Acknowledgement of land

We acknowledge the Kurna people, the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains. We acknowledge the wisdom of their Elders both past and present and pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australian. We pray that in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit we might work together for reconciliation and justice in this land.

Introduction

Welcome to you, wherever you are. Today we remain in our homes as we share worship together. This is my home, a place of safety and sanctuary. But home is not a safe place for everyone. In this time of the COVID19 pandemic, the 'Break the Silence Sunday' service changes focus to those at home, living with physical and social isolation and facing uncertainties about employment, and financial challenges. Restrictions in place to stop the spread of COVID19 may contribute to violence in homes becoming more frequent, and able to be hidden when there is less opportunity for community accountability. When people are spending 24 hours together inside a home, intense psychological as well as physical mistreatment can escalate. The safety of home is compromised for those with violent and abusive partners. COVID19 restrictions cut off many of the usual avenues of support including being able to make phone calls. Those living with domestic violence may lack the psychological space to make safety plans and may lack access to financial resources to help build a new life. This 'Break the Silence Sunday' service recognises that women's and children's safety must be prioritised as an integral part of the pandemic response.

Lighting of the Christ candle

As we 'break the silence', we trust in the good news of God's incredible love for us, and for all the world. For all of us, living in the confines of home, we hope that this time affirms God's deep love for you, and the assurance of Christ as companion and the Spirit who is comforter. We may be in isolation, but we are not alone. We gather this day: united by God's Spirit, trusting in God's grace, confident of Jesus' love. We gather this day to listen, to hear, to speak out, and to break the silence!

Song: God of Creation *(tune: Morning Has Broken)*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1.
God of Creation, gentle life-giver
Present at birth, and, all through our days
Author of sunrise, song in the night sky
Here in this place, we, offer our praise | 3.
Spirit of Comfort, blow through Creation
stir up new life, breathe, peace through our world
Healer of hearts, and, hope for tomorrow
weave all our sorrows, into new dawn |
| 2.
Jesus, Companion, teacher and healer
friend of the grieving, suffering, the poor
Stand with your people, whisper among us
promise of mercy, goodness for all | 4.
Here we give thanks for, life in its fullness
blessings received, your gifts to us all
Make us a people, filled with compassion
selflessly giving, serving your world
<i>(Words: Craig Mitchell, 2010)</i> |

Video: Luka <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZt7J0iaUD0>

My name is Luka. I live on the second floor. I live upstairs from you. Yes I think you've seen me before. If you hear something late at night, some kind of trouble, some kind of fight. Just don't ask me what it was....
I think it's because I'm clumsy. I try not to talk too loud. Maybe it's because I'm crazy. I try not to act too proud. They only hit until you cry. After that you don't ask why. You just don't argue anymore....
Yes, I think I'm okay. I walked into the door again. If you ask that's what I'll say. And it's not your business anyway. I guess I'd like to be alone. With nothing broken, nothing thrown.
Just don't ask me how I am
My name is Luka..... *(Words and music by Suzanne Vega)*

Reflection

There is a sound, God, when grief spills from the corner of an eye, and stains the earth with its wetness.
It is not a quiet sound, although it may be difficult to hear,
and it is not a strange sound;
we know its compelling rhythms all too well,
because it is, after all, the sound of your voice.
You fill every tear with your nail-scarred presence,
and breathe into every gasp, your comforting Spirit.
And in every broken voice, you call, inviting us to find you in the weeping.
Thank you for the grace that shouts in the pain of our world,
and that teaches us to listen for life in the sound of tears. (Source: John van de Laar, *Sacredise*)

Prayer

O God, Life giver, Pain bearer, you know what our siblings hold in their hearts, and minds.

Open us, Holy One.

You know the things they are afraid to speak, because they have been silenced by fear and shame, and by our discomfort and fear.

Open us, Holy One.

Open us that together we may listen with compassion, and speak with conviction, that we may no longer be silent.

Open us, Holy One. Amen.

Breaking The Silence: A Time For Prayer

Silence in worship can be powerful, a time for people to listen to the voice of their heart and soul. However, this is Break The Silence Sunday, a time to no longer keep silence. This time of prayer seeks to acknowledge the reality of domestic violence. Some of the following will be presented, followed by the sound of a bell after each one. Violence against women is a complex and widespread issue. These statistics are not an exhaustive list. They should be viewed as underestimates. Many women will never share their experience of violence, either with Police or researchers from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

1 in 4 women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Personal Safety Survey 2016. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

Almost 40% of women continued to experience violence from their partner while temporarily separated.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Personal Safety Survey 2016. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

Intimate partner violence is a leading contributor to illness, disability and premature death for women aged 18-44.

Ayre et al. (2016). Examination of the burden of disease of intimate partner violence against women in 2011. Sydney: ANROWS.

Children of mothers experiencing domestic violence have higher rates of social and emotional problems than other children.

Shin H., Rogers H. & Law V. (2015). Domestic violence in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. Canberra: Department of Social Services.

1 in 3 young people don't think controlling someone is a form of violence.

Hall and Partners Open Mind. (2015). The Line campaign. Summary of Research Findings. Melbourne: Our Watch.

1 in 3 young people presenting alone to homelessness services have experienced domestic violence.

Source: AIHW (2018). Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2016-17.

Violence against women is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$22 billion a year.

KPMG. (2016). The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia. Canberra: Department of Social Services.

Indigenous women are 32x more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-indigenous women.

Website: Hall and Partners Open Mind. (2015). The Line campaign. Summary of Research Findings. Melbourne: Our Watch.

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and their children.

AIHW. (2017). Specialist Homelessness Services 2016-17. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian police deal with domestic violence every two minutes.

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/understand-domestic-violence/facts-violence-women/domestic-violence-statistics/>

1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). Personal Safety Survey 2016. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

In Australia, on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner. Bryant, W. & Bricknall, S. (2017). *Homicide in Australia 2012-2014: National Homicide Monitoring Program report. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.*

Invitation To Confession

We have, as the church and as its individual members, too often been silent when the lives of those who we know have been shattered by domestic violence. We have shied away from those who would share their stories, afraid of what we might hear, of what it might mean for us, and for our lives. The time for silence as the church is over. Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr once said, "In the end we will remember, not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." (*"The Trumpet of Conscience" Steeler Lecture, November 1967*).

It is time for us, the body of Christ, to open our hearts, our minds, and our churches to the reality of those living with domestic violence. It is time to share with them the hope of God's grace that is with us in our moments of deepest despair, and can in time bring hope. Together, trusting in God's grace, let us confess our responsibility in creating and perpetuating a culture of silence.

Song: Silent No More (*Amy Brooks, 2018 to the tune of "Stille Nacht" by Franz Gruber*)

1.	2.
Silent day, silent night,	Silent day, silent night,
Broken trust, abuse of might.	Name the wrong, claim the right
Whispered threats of shame and fear	Beat the drum and ring the bell
Keeping quiet for all of these years	Share the tale that is yours to tell.
Asking, "Who would believe?"	Know that I believe you.
Asking, "Who would believe?"	Know that I believe you.

3.
Holy day, holy night
Candles burn, clear and bright
Brave survivors sound the alarm
Bravely we receive stories of harm
We are silent no more
We are silent no more.

Assurance Of God's Grace

Christ affirmed that giving one cup of cool listening is worth a world of blessing. We are forgiven, and given a chance to listen and love again. (*Maren C Tirabassi, © 2015, used with permission*)

Song: You will be found <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFZmT-LRMBM>

Have you ever felt like nobody was there?
Have you ever felt forgotten in the middle of nowhere?
Have you ever felt like you could disappear?
Like you could fall, and no one would hear?
Well, let that lonely feeling wash away
Maybe there's a reason to believe you'll be okay
'Cause when you don't feel strong enough to stand
You can reach, reach out your hand
And oh, someone will come running
And I know, they'll take you home
Even when the dark comes crashing through
When you need a friend to carry you
And when you're broken on the ground
You will be found
So let the sun come streaming in
'Cause you'll reach up and you'll rise again
Lift your head and look around
You will be found.....
Out of the shadows

The morning is breaking
And all is new, all is new
It's filling up the empty
And suddenly I see that
All is new, all is new
You are not alone..... *(Music and lyrics: Benj Pasek and Justin Paul)*

Reading: Luke 24: 13-35

Now on that Sunday two of the followers of Jesus were going to a village called Emmaus, about 11 kilometres from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all the things that had happened that led to the crucifixion of Jesus. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Witness: Dr Deidre Palmer, President, Uniting Church in Australia

Video: How can anyone ever tell you
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=85&v=FPIsQTet2Cg&feature=emb_logo
How could anyone ever tell you
You were anything less than beautiful? How could anyone ever tell you
You were less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice
That your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you're connected to my soul. *(Words and music by Libby Roderick)*

A Time Of Prayer

Holy One, you filled the world with your love, and your Spirit, breathing into each of us the breath of life. You named each of us, and claimed each of us as your very own, but some of us, some of your beloved children have been hurt, deep in their souls. Some have experienced great distress through domestic violence. They ask to be heard. They seek healing. They ask us to stand with them, and to work for justice.

We thank you for the ways that you encounter us, giving us hope in the midst of despair and comfort and strength, when we are at our most vulnerable.

We pray for healing for them, O God, and for your love and grace to be poured out abundantly. May your healing presence guide each one in their path towards wholeness, and hope. Grant us wisdom to know what we need to comfort those who struggle, and the commitment we need to work tirelessly for the wholeness of all your people. Grant us the strength to listen, to speak out, to be bold. May your courageous Spirit fill all of us this day. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be 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 yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Song: Help Us Accept Each Other *Lyrics: Fred Kaan; Tune: Aurelia ("The Church's One Foundation")*

1. Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.
Be present, God, among us, and bring us to believe
we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.

2. Teach us, O God, your lessons, as in our daily life
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,
to love them as we find them, or as they may become.

3. Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved
in living situations to do the truth in love;
To practice your acceptance, until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.

4. God, for today's encounters with all who are in need,
who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread,
Bring us new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on;
renew us with your Spirit; God! Free us, make us one!

At this point the offering would normally be received. We acknowledge those whose offerings come electronically, and by envelopes, cash and cheques to the office, to further the mission and ministry in and through the church.

Prayer Of Dedication

Generous God, we offer our gifts, signs and symbols of our hope and gratitude. We entrust them to you in faith that the work Christ began – listening to people's stories, healing the brokenness of the world, and restoring creation – might continue in us and through us. May we contribute to relationships of mutuality, respect and equality. Strengthen our commitment to shaping communities and families, where children are loved and feel safe in their own homes, where children and women can flourish, and all of us can grow into our fullest humanity. Grant us the courage to listen, to pray, and to speak out. In faith we pray, **Amen.**

Committing Ourselves To Change

Let us commit ourselves to working towards a vision of the Beloved Community where all can live in dignity and peace. Let us stand in solidarity with those living with domestic violence.

We commit ourselves to be open to their stories, and with the grace of God, to listen without judgment.

We know the promise of wholeness, and the hope that Jesus came to bring to the world.

We affirm the promise of God's love for all those living with domestic violence, those whose stories are known to us, and those whose stories are still shrouded in silence and fear.

We know we have been silent when those around us have been struggling. We look forward with hope, trusting in God's ability to give us strength to listen with courage, and to be silent no longer.

We commit ourselves to listen and move together, from fear and pain towards God's realm of peace and justice. Amen.

Song: We are the church where we are *(Words and music: Geoff Boyce; sung by Rod Boucher)*
We are, we are the church where we are
We carry the Way in our hearts
Caring together, apart.
Free... free for the fight for equality
The freedom to live life with dignity
That comes from a sharing humanity (repeat)

Benediction

May the love of the faithful Creator,
the peace of the wounded Healer,
the joy of the challenging Spirit,
the hope of the Three in One
surround and encourage you,
today, tonight and forever.
(Source: Kathy Galloway, The Pattern Of Our Days, Wild Goose Publications, 1998)

God's peace be with you. **And also with you.**

Bring to mind people in our community as we sing this song of blessing

Song: May the feet of God walk with you <https://soundcloud.com/user-744942151>
May the feet of God walk with you, and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you, and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you, and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you, and his love bring you home. *(Music: Robin Mann; Words: Aub Podlich)*

Acknowledgements

This Worship Guide was prepared by Rev Sandy Boyce.
Prayers by Rev Moira Finley, <https://breakthesilencesunday.org>
Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide will be uploading the Breaking Silence Sunday Service, 26th April 2020, to their YouTube channel, with links from the Pilgrim website, www.pilgrim.org.au, and also on Pilgrim Uniting Church's Facebook page.
Further resources are available at <http://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/?p=5280> and <https://sa.uca.org.au/justice-advocacy/peace/break-the-silence>

