



RECONCILIATION SUNDAY 2026

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS

National Reconciliation Week: 27 May–3 June 2026
Reconciliation Sunday: Sunday 31 May 2026

Introduction

Mission Resourcing offers this resource pack to support congregations and faith communities in preparing for Reconciliation Sunday within National Reconciliation Week 2026, as an act of covenant faithfulness and solidarity with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICCC).

These resources are intended to assist worship leaders, ministry teams, and congregations to engage deeply in listening, learning, prayer, and action – as we live our calling to be a fellowship of reconciliation in Christ.

Reconciliation Sunday is an opportunity to both acknowledge history, and to renew the Church's commitment to walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking right relationship grounded in justice, truth-telling, healing, and hope.

National Reconciliation Week 2026 theme

The 2026 theme 'All In' calls the Church and the wider community to move beyond symbolic gestures toward sustained commitment and shared responsibility. Reconciliation Australia reminds us that reconciliation is not a spectator activity. It requires ongoing personal, communal, and structural participation as we seek relationships marked by mutual respect, dignity, and justice.

To be 'All In' is to commit ourselves to the long journey of transformation shaped by listening, humility, and faithful action.



Key dates

Date	Observance
26 May	National Sorry Day A day of remembrance marking the tabling of the <i>Bringing Them Home Report</i> (1997), which documented the history and ongoing impact of the Stolen Generations. Congregations are encouraged to mark this day through prayer, reflection, and acts of truth-telling and solidarity). Reconciliation starts well with the act of saying "Sorry"!
27 May–3 June	National Reconciliation Week
Sunday 31 May	Reconciliation Sunday

Worship planning for Reconciliation Sunday

Suggested order of service

Here is a suggested order of service which may be adapted for your local context. Where possible, prioritise resources authored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian leaders and acknowledge authorship appropriately.

1	Call to Worship	Consider using Yanakanai (Adnyamathanha language), composed by Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion.
2	Acknowledgement of Country	Where possible, invite a local First Nations person to offer the Acknowledgement. A suggested text is provided on page 4.
3	Opening song or hymn	
4	Prayer of Confession and Assurance	Draw on prayers prepared by UAICC, Common Grace, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian leaders.
5	Scripture readings	See suggested readings below.
6	Sermon or reflection	Connect Scripture with the Church's covenanting commitments and practical ways to live the call to be All In.
7	Prayers of the People	Include lament, truth-telling, intercession for justice, healing, and renewal.
8	Passing of the Peace	
9	Holy Communion	(Optional)
10	Commitment or Action	Invite the congregation to name a concrete commitment for National Reconciliation Week.
11	Blessing	Consider using a blessing written by an Aboriginal Christian leader.

Suggested scripture readings

In 2026, Reconciliation Sunday falls on Trinity Sunday. Congregations may therefore wish to use the Revised Common Lectionary readings appointed for Trinity Sunday, which connect meaningfully with themes of reconciliation, creation, community, mission, and the renewing work of God.

Trinity Sunday (2026) – Revised Common Lectionary Readings

- Genesis 1:1–2:4a
- Psalm 8
- 2 Corinthians 13:11–13
- Matthew 28:16–20

Other suitable readings related to reconciliation, justice, and unity may include:

- Micah 6:8
- Psalm 85
- Ephesians 2:13–22
- 2 Corinthians 5:16–20
- Luke 24:13–35

Acknowledgement of Country - example text

Adapt this text for local context wherever possible, using appropriate language, names, and protocols. Where a First Nations person is available, invite them to offer a Welcome to Country or the Acknowledgement in their own words.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather today, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We honour the continuing connection of First Peoples to land, waters, culture and community.

We commit ourselves to walk together in covenant as First and Second Peoples in this place.

Living the UCA-UAICC Covenant

In 1994, the Uniting Church in Australia entered into a Covenant relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). Reconciliation Sunday is an opportunity to reaffirm this Covenant and renew our commitment to walking together as First and Second Peoples.

The Covenant calls us to

- truth-telling about the history of this land
- honour First Peoples' sovereignty and self-determination
- build relationships grounded in justice and mutual respect
- listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian voices
- walk together in shared mission and hope.

Congregations are encouraged to

- display or read the Covenanting Statement or the Preamble to the UCA Constitution
- invite UAICC leaders or local First Nations Christians to help plan and lead worship
- include prayers written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christians
- follow appropriate cultural protocols
- provide appropriate remuneration for First Nations contributors.

Sermon illustration

"A Covenant that must be practised"

Sermon note: Reconciliation Sunday and Trinity Sunday

In 2026, Reconciliation Sunday (31 May) falls on Trinity Sunday – the Sunday after Pentecost on which the Church celebrates the mystery of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This convergence is not merely calendrical – it is a profound theological gift, and preachers and worship leaders are encouraged to hold both observances together rather than choosing between them.

During a walk on Country with Bush Chaplains and Congress leaders, Uncle Rev Ken Sumner – Co-Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress – offered a reflection that illuminates what reconciliation asks of the Church.

Uncle Ken spoke about Country. Country is not land to be owned, nor a resource to be controlled – it is a living presence, which carries memory, shapes identity and holds responsibility across generations.

*Reconciliation cannot be declared.
It must be practised.*

– Uncle Rev Ken Sumner, Co-Chair UAICC

These words resonate deeply with the life of the Uniting Church. When the Church entered into Covenant with UAICC in 1994, it did not simply make a statement of goodwill. It entered into relationship – a promise to walk together as First and Second Peoples for the long journey ahead. A covenant is not something framed on a wall, but something lived.

The Covenant calls the Church to repentance and transformation, to tell the truth about dispossession, violence, and the separation of children from families – not to apportion blame, but to restore right relationship. Uncle Ken's words remind us; "Until Aboriginal people are free, this nation is not free". This is not only a social statement – it is a covenantal one.

Scripture reminds us that reconciliation is costly. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul writes that God has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation: a ministry that requires humility, listening, patience, and perseverance.

The UCA-UAICC Covenant calls the Church to walk together in mutual respect: not speaking for Aboriginal peoples but listening; not leading from power but walking together in trust.

Reconciliation is therefore not an event, or a week – it is a way of being Church. To keep covenant is to keep walking, especially when the path is slow, when truth is difficult, and when faithfulness requires more than symbolism.

*This is what it means to be All In:
not perfect, but present –
not finished, but faithful.*

*Reconciliation is not declared once.
It is practised daily, as an act of covenant faithfulness
entrusted to us by Christ.*

Adapted from Frontier News, April 2026

The trinity as the ground of Reconciliation

Christian reconciliation is not primarily a social program or an ethical aspiration. It is grounded in the very life of God. The doctrine of the Trinity speaks of a God who is, in the divine nature itself, a community of self-giving love – Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal, mutual relationship. The technical term from the Eastern tradition is *perichoresis*: a mutual indwelling, a dance of giving and receiving, in which each Person of the Trinity makes room for the other.

This is the God in whose image humanity is made, and this is the God whose character the Church is called to reflect in its common life.

If the Trinity is the source and pattern of all true community, then reconciliation – the restoration of broken relationship – is an expression of the divine nature itself.

God does not reconcile from a distance.

The Son enters the breach. The Spirit sustains the journey.

The Father receives all who return.

Reconciliation is the shape of Trinitarian love made visible in history.

*Reconciliation Sunday 2026 Resources,
UCA SA Mission Resourcing*

The cost of Reconciliation: A trinitarian reading

2 Corinthians 5:17–20, one of the suggested readings for Reconciliation Sunday, offers a specifically Trinitarian account of reconciliation. Paul writes that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The initiative is the Father's, the agent is the Son, and the ministry entrusted to the Church is carried out in the power of the Spirit.

Trinity Sunday invites us to read the work of reconciliation in its full depth: not as human achievement, but as participation in a movement that originates in the heart of God, was enacted on a cross, and continues through the community of faith empowered by the Spirit.

For Reconciliation Sunday, this has concrete implications. The reconciliation the Church seeks with First Peoples is not merely a matter of political goodwill or institutional policy, it is a vocation rooted in the character of the Triune God. To be reconciled – truly reconciled – is to live into the pattern of perichoretic love: making room for the other, receiving what the other carries and allowing the other's presence to change us.

Suggested preaching threads

- The Trinity as community, not uniformity – unity in the Spirit does not erase difference; it honours it. First and Second Peoples are not called to sameness, but to covenant relationship in which difference is held in mutual respect.
- The Son as the reconciler who crosses the breach – the Incarnation as the paradigm for costly solidarity. What does it mean for the Church to cross the breach toward First Peoples, as Christ crossed the breach toward us?
- The Spirit as the one who sustains the long walk – reconciliation is not a moment but a journey. The Spirit is the Advocate who keeps the community moving forward when the path is difficult and the work is slow.
- Perichoresis and the Covenant – the mutual indwelling of the Trinity as a model for the UCA–UAICC Covenant: not one community absorbing the other, but two communities making room for each other in a shared life.

Suggested additional readings for Trinity Sunday

- Romans 5:1–5 – peace with God through Christ; the Spirit poured into our hearts
- John 16:12–15 – the Spirit of truth who guides into all truth
- Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31 – Wisdom present at creation, often read on Trinity Sunday as a pointer to relational life within God
- Matthew 28:16–20 – the Great Commission given in the Trinitarian name.

A Word for Preachers

The confluence of Trinity Sunday and Reconciliation Sunday 2026 is a rare opportunity to preach the Gospel whole – to show that the call to walk with First Peoples is not separate from the Church's confession of faith, but flows directly from it.

The God we confess is a God of relationship, mutuality, and costly love. The covenant we are called to keep is an expression of that God's own nature. To be 'All In' for reconciliation is, at its deepest, to be 'All In' for the God who is, in the divine life itself, 'All In' for us.

Congregational Resources

Common Grace – National Reconciliation Week 2026 Toolkit

Common Grace provides resources prepared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian leaders to support congregations in observing Reconciliation Sunday and National Reconciliation Week. The 2026 Toolkit includes:

- prayers and liturgical resources
- Bible study materials
- video reflections
- creative activities
- Acknowledgement of Country guidance.

*Without reciprocity, reconciliation becomes performance.
Without commitment, it becomes shallow.
When both are present, reconciliation becomes transformative.*

– Safina Stewart (Wuthathi and Mabuiag Island woman)

Suggested actions for congregations

Living the theme 'All In'

Congregations may consider participating in one or more of the following during National Reconciliation Week:

- Attend the Reconciliation SA National Reconciliation Week Breakfast (27 May 2026)
- Participate in Voices for Reconciliation choir initiatives
- Host a local walk on Country – for example, with Boandik Elder Uncle Ken Jones in the South East, on Kurna Plains, or in your own local context with appropriate First Nations leadership
- Mark National Sorry Day (26 May) by hosting a time of prayer or reflection, acknowledging the legacy of the *Bringing Them Home Report* and the ongoing impact of the Stolen Generations
- Host a study group on the UCA–UAICC Covenant
- Display NRW posters and share social media resources from Reconciliation Australia and the UAICC
- Form partnerships with local First Nations organisations
- Invite participation from groups connected with the SA Allies Network [SA Allies – Unleash Allies with First Nations People](#) or other reconciliation partners to support worship, learning, and community engagement during this week. Congregations or communities seeking guidance regarding possible groups to approach may contact Peter Murchland (Secretariat, SA Allies Network) via peter.murchland@gmail.com.

South Australia - key events and learning opportunities

- Reconciliation SA National Reconciliation Week Breakfast – Adelaide Convention Centre, 27 May 2026
- Local cultural walks and learning opportunities – including Kurna Walking Trail (Adelaide), or similar initiatives led by First Nations communities across South Australia (e.g. Barngala, Peramangk, Boandik and others)
- Reconciliation River Walk – Tea Tree Gully / Campbelltown
- Kurna Voices cultural mapping resource – City of Adelaide
- Colebrook Reconciliation Walk – Eden Hills.

Links and further resources

Reconciliation Australia	https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/
Common Grace	https://www.commongrace.org.au/national_reconciliation_week_2026
UCA Assembly Covenant Resources	https://uniting.church/covenanting/
UCA SA Reconciliation Sunday Resources	https://sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/c-resources/reconciliation-sunday-resources
Reconciliation SA	https://reconciliationsa.org.au/events
Walking SA – Kurna Walking Trail	https://www.walkingsa.org.au
City of Adelaide – Kurna Voices	https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/community/reconciliation/kurna-voices/

Contacts

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A First Peoples Heart

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, nurtured and sustained by God before invasion, are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian.

First Peoples' sovereignty is affirmed, First Peoples have a voice in the decision making of our country and are living out their right to self determination.

As First and Second Peoples, we walk together, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another.

from Our Vision for a Just Australia.



UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER
CHRISTIAN CONGRESS



The Uniting Church in Australia
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