

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH



14TH MARCH
LENT 4

WALKING TOGETHER AS FIRST AND
SECOND PEOPLES



Rev Ronang Garrawurra, chair of the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress & Uniting Church President Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney at the 13th Assembly of the Uniting Church

The 13th Triennial Assembly meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia, held in Adelaide from 15 to 21 July 2012, was another example of the power of people moving together towards a promised goal.

Almost 300 Uniting Church members gathered to celebrate *Life Overflowing* (the Assembly theme) and participate in decision-making and direction setting for the Uniting Church for the next three years.

Standing side by side, new Assembly President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, and Rev Rronang Garrawurra, the new National Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, showed the nation it is possible to walk together as one people of God.

The vigil was a simple but powerful gesture that made a marked difference on the rest of the meeting.

This morning in our worship we will be holding a conversation about what we as a congregation can do to advance the cause of reconciliation. This is both a movement which will arise from prayerful hearts and active spirits. We will engage in a conversation, telling the stories of how we shaped in our attitudes towards Australia's indigenous people and how we as a nation are coming towards a more honest and kinder attitude. We pray you will be able to join us in spirit and participate in the conversation as you are able.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We wait on God, His time is the right time. We wait for him to make his Word clear to us. We don't worry. We know that in time and in the spirit of *dadirri* (that deep listening and quiet stillness) his way will be clear.

Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr – senior Australian of the year 2021

HYMN:

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found

in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Text © 1994 GIA Publications, Inc.
Tune: TWO OAKS (see RW #219)

PRAYER

Holy Father, God of Love,
You are the Creator of all things.

We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history and the sufferings of Our peoples,
We ask for 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 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.

The Gospel of John 3. 14-21

... just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.’

HYMN: TIS 253

O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr*,
all the power belongs to you.
Hold me by this power, O Lord,
you alone are king.

Now we praise you for your Word,
living, true and full of light.
Yours the hands that rest on me:
hold me for all time.

Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land
versified by D’Arcy Wood 1936-

* ‘Marrkapmirr’ is a term of endearment,
and means in this context ‘altogether lovely, and worthy of affection’.

REFLECTING

Over the course of many decades there has been a slow movement toward reconciliation between first and second peoples of Australia. But it feels as though suddenly we are in rapidly rising groundswell. For a long time white people have thought that we could fix indigenous people’s issues. What a failure this has been. Finally it seems we are learning how to listen. As Miriam-Rose describes it, what is required in this reconciliation work is *dadirri* – deep listening and deep stillness. This is not something that can be achieved in a single political cycle; not something we can pin political or promotional slogans to. This calls for a long commitment.

We are as Christians people of the truth – not truth as facts and figures but we are called to truthfulness in our being. As Australians we are being called to truth telling by our indigenous people. At the heart of our identity as Christians is a narrative of truth-telling – it is the gospel. In the

Gospel of Mark, which we are reading this year, almost one half of that short gospel is a truth-telling narrative about what took place with Jesus. That he was condemned to death; he was handed over to people antagonistic to him and his message; that he was mocked, spat upon, flogged, and killed. Jesus understood that because of what he taught and did he would be subjected to these things – that there were many who hated the light. His disciples denied that this would happen, insisted that it wouldn't and when it did they variously abandoned him, denied him, betrayed him. Father forgive; they don't know what they are doing.

The gospels are a truth-telling about what took place. And in the pattern of Jesus' death and resurrection we, in telling our truths, are invited to pass through difficult experiences, conversations, reflections on our lives, difficult interactions - to reconciliation and healing and wholeness on the other side; through death to life. This is the paschal mystery.

As Australians we are being called into this pattern, called onto this path. Will we put our hand to the plough?

Today we are invited to reflect on how as Ormond Uniting Church we may make a stand and commit to action both personally and collectively. We are invited to explore what that might look like and to move toward participating in this together. In our service this morning we will be reflecting on these questions together. You may like to ponder them too.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

What old stories are you giving up?

What new stories are you embracing?

What do you find difficult to believe?

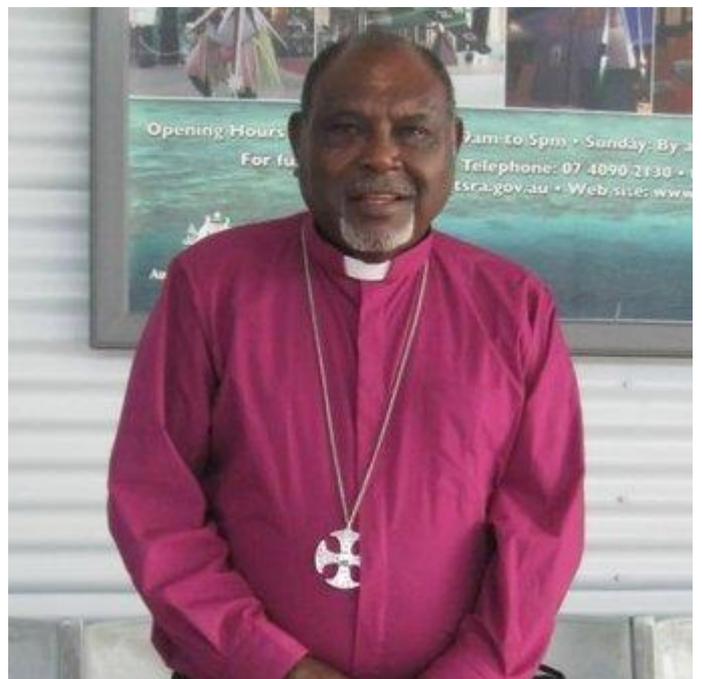
What do you find difficult to talk about?

What else? Your community's ideas or intentions ...

Bishop Saibo Mabo's Prayer for 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 for 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, one heart,
and in one action so that we can continue
the journey of reconciliation,
to solve the divisions of our growth
and enable all Australians to work together
in love, peace and joy.



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

© 2012 Bishop Saibo Mabo, Chairperson
National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC)

HYMN: TIS 383

Joyful the morning when Jesus Christ is risen!
Golden light is dawning, the dayspring radiant shines,
all the hosts of heaven raise on high their psalms divine.
*O Let us too be happy, rejoice and cry out 'Hallelujah!'
He is risen and opens heav'n for all those who believe.*

Now earth awaking is raising shouts of praise,
'Jesus now is risen!' All creatures now rejoice –
they are in the care again of their triumphant Lord.
refrain

All peoples living in lands washed by the seas,
nations under all four directions of the wind,
can be joyful in the resurrection of the Lord.
refrain

Traditional Torres Strait Islands hymn
tr. David Thompson 1941-
adapted by Wesley Milgate 1916-

WORD OF MISSION

May the God of all wonder who set the stars in the sky,
bless you with relentless unsettledness –
that drives us to seek truth.

May the God of all justice who gave motion to the rivers,
bless you with righteous anger –
that drives us to seek freedom for all.

May the God of all love who placed laughter in the kookaburra,
bless you with the friendship –
that looks like the love where one lays down their life for another.

May the God of all comfort who determined the height of the mountains,
bless you with tears from shared pain and mourning –
that shows us hope.

Go with wonder, righteous anger, sacrifice, and lament –
**We go in truth, justice, love, and hope –
to Change the Heart of Australia.**

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- Reconciliation Prayer from Wontulp Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group, 13 March 1997
- Word of Mission: Brooke Prentis: Benediction at the 2020 #ChangeTheHeart Prayer Services.

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NEWS AND NOTICES

SUNDAY EVENING WALKS DURING LENT

As part of our Lenten observance this year you are invited to take part in a meditative walk each Sunday evening over the six weeks. We will gather at Allnutt Park on Wheatley Road at 6pm and be given a provocation and question to reflect on as we walk. We will gather at the Wright Street Rotunda near the centre of the park. Enquiries to: Ron Townsend.

WANDERING WALK Saturday, March 20 (Meet at 10am Mt Waverley area)

Hoping you are able to join us on a leisurely walk, on a fairly flat track next Saturday morning. There are a couple of walking tracks that we are considering, so to help us decide the location, and to determine the distance, please contact Marg Davis on 0411 250 214, by Wednesday, March 17

PALM SUNDAY - WALK FOR REFUGEES

Walk for Justice for Refugees on Palm Sunday (28th March) is an important opportunity to raise awareness of the continuing injustice and cruelty experienced by refugees and people who are seeking asylum. This year Palm Sunday actions are calling for:

- Provide Permanent Protection
- Provide Family Reunion
- Provide Safety Net Support in the community (access to Jobseeker)
- End Mandatory Detention
- End Offshore – bring the refugees here or take up the NZ offer to resettlement offer

When: Sunday 28 March, 1:30 PM (AEST)

Where: State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanson Street, Melbourne

PALM SUNDAY - WALK FOR REFUGEES cont.

Speakers include:

- Julian Burnside AO, QC - long standing Refugee advocate and civil liberties lawyer
- Mostafa Azimbitar (Moz from Manus) - freed Medevac refugee
- Faith Communities Council of Victoria representatives
- Sr Brigid Arthur - Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project
- Rally Chairs: Michele O'Neil - President Australian Council of Trade Unions & Ahmad Hakim - Refugee Voices

On Palm Sunday people from cities and towns around Australia will be holding rallies and vigils to call for Justice and a Fair Go for Refugees.

You can support justice for refugees by attending on the day and joining and sharing this event on social media.

This event will be COVIDsafe, please wear a mask, and register with our QR codes on the day.

ROSTER FILL-INS

We are seeking anyone interested to assist with Counting Duties on the following weeks of Worship, due to the availability of some members now limited.

Weeks that fill-ins are required are:

28 March, 16 May, 20 June, 1 August, 5 Sept, 10 Oct, 14 Nov.

If free to help any of these weeks please contact the office by email with your availability.

office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

ROSTER for Sunday 21 March 2021

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|---|-------------------|--------------|
| READING | Marg Davis | |
| PRAYERS | David Baxter | |
| DOOR DUTY | Graeme Davenport | Marg Davis |
| SOUND | Gary Richter | |
| COUNTING | Jan Rose/Dot Rose | Hans Tilstra |
| MUSIC | Peter Hurley | |
| RESOURCES DELIVERY (Fri 19 March) | Marg Davis | |