

ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Trinity and Reconciliation Sunday

30th May



'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'

– Marc Chagall

WORSHIP AT HOME

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday when the church gives particular attention to the mystery of the three-in-one and one-in-three who we know as God. The nature of God is inter-relationship, mutual abiding as it is called in the Gospel of John. Into this mutuality we are invited by Jesus. And the promise comes to fruition in us in the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. By this we know we are children of God, we read last week.

Today, we also mark Reconciliation Week as our whole nation is invited to reflect on the need for reconciliation between First and Second Peoples. This is work that our church has been committed to for decades. Reconciliation Australia's theme for 2021, More than a word. Reconciliation takes action, urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.

Reconciliation Australia calls Australians to remember the importance of privileging and amplifying First Nations' voices as we add our voices to calls for reconciliation and justice.

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

2021 marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal reconciliation process.

We prayerfully give our attention to these things.

This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.

Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.

Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.

The world belongs to God,
the earth and all its people.

Love and peace come together,
justice and peace join hands.

How good and how lovely it is
to live together in unity.

If the Lord's disciples keep silent
these stones would shout aloud.

Lord, open our lips
and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Prayer

Adoration

God of Holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit,
from the dawn of creation
you have given your children
the good things of Mother Earth.
You spoke and the gum tree grew.

In the vast desert and dense forest,
and in cities at the water's edge,
Creation sings your praise.
Your presence endures
as the rock at the heart of our Land.

When Jesus hung on the tree
you heard the cries of all your people
and became one with your wounded ones:
the convicts, the hunted, the dispossessed.

The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew,
and bathed it in glorious hope.
In Jesus we have been reconciled to you,
to each other and to your whole creation.

Lead us on, Great Spirit,
as we gather, people from the four corners of the earth;
enable us to walk together in trust
beyond the hurt and shame of the past
into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ.
Amen

Lament and Confession

Gracious God of all,
We, with hearts of thanksgiving,
acknowledge that we receive
so many gifts at Your hand;
we are thankful for them all.

However, we also gather
in the knowledge
that there are times when we,
in part or in whole,
cause loss, hurt and pain.

At this time, as we seek reconciliation,
humbly acknowledge
the actions that have been taken
which caused pain or loss to
the First Peoples of our land,

for the years it took
for the First Peoples to be embraced by the Church,
for the mistreatment, abuse and neglect
of those vulnerable people
who placed their faith in the church and its care,
for the lack of welcome and cold hearts,
for harsh words, lack of care, arrogance,
insensitivity and pride
that have damaged relationships;
to people so dear to You.

We are sorry for this sin against you
and First Peoples, our brothers and sisters.
We pray for forgiveness and seek reconciliation.
As you bring reconciliation
through Your Son, Jesus Christ,
we pray that you will enable all of us
to be reconciled to one another
through the power of Your Spirit.

Amen

Affirmation of Hope in Christ

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 'But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5

In faith, we appeal to God.
In hope, we will not let God go.
In love we claim God's attention.
We honour the God who receives our cries,
And gathers us to herself even as we continue to call,
Lord, have mercy!

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Today we give particular attention to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. What does the Uluru Statement mean ?

The Uluru Statement from the Heart (Uluru Statement) represents a historic consensus of Indigenous leaders in seeking constitutional change to recognise First Australians through a Voice to Parliament.

Following the First Nations National Constitutional Convention that brought together 250 Indigenous representatives from across the country, the Uluru Statement was issued on the 26th of May 2017.

The Uluru Statement is the first time that the matter of constitutional recognition has reached an agreement after years of sometimes heated debate from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Uluru Statement is an invitation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”. It calls for structural reforms including constitutional change to establish a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution.

The Voice to Parliament will empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to have a say on the laws and policies that impact them. It will be a permanent institution that will provide advice to the Parliament and Government on important issues.

The Uluru Statement is a historic opportunity to reimagine our nation. It is our chance to come together to deliver real change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so they can take their rightful place in our nation.

It has not been an easy road for the many indigenous nations of Australia to be able to come to this watershed agreement. The road has been paved with grief and pain and conflict. To achieve this agreement and make this call to the nation is a huge feat. We need to pay attention and grant their call to the nation the respect and response it deserves. This is an invitation to justice and the reconciliation and the healing it can bring to our nation’s heart. This is the Uluru Statement:

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.



Old testament – Isaiah 6. 1-8

This theophany, a vision of God, for Isaiah is much like the theophany for Moses at the burning bush. These visions of God for Isaiah and Moses bring with them a call to speak and to act. But both protagonists feel unfit to the task: Moses, apparently, is a stutterer and while he is called to go to pharaoh and tell him to “let my people go”, he is sent to the place from which he has fled because he has murdered an Egyptian overseer. And Isaiah sees himself as unfit to speak because “I am a man of unclean lips, living amongst a people of unclean lips.” In their theophanies, both are seared with fire and filled with a burning ability to speak. We are reminded of the similar experience of the disciples at Pentecost, where tongues, as of fire, enable them to then speak of God.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’



The Six-Winged Seraph - Mikhail Vrubel, 1905

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

Epistle – Romans 8. 14-17

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.

Gospel – John 3. 1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And



Jesus & Nicodemus - Rembrandt

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.

Reflecting

Over the last weeks we have read from chapters of 15 and 17 of the Gospel of John. These chapters are part of a kind of farewell speech by Jesus, overheard by us as we learn and contemplate what it is Jesus considers most important in being children of God. Through these chapters we hear of a radical and disarming intimacy between the Father and Son, into which the disciples are being invited. It is from these chapters, particularly, that we gain the understanding of God as one-in-three and three-in-one, God as Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit; Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. The nature of this God disclosed to us by John is of a mystical mutuality and being.

Of the Father, Jesus says to the disciples: *what I have heard from the Father I have said to you*. Of the Spirit Jesus says: *When the Spirit of truth comes, she will guide you into all the truth; for she will not speak on her own, but will speak whatever she hears, and she will declare to you the things that are to come*. As disciples of Jesus, we are invited into a mutual abiding, both in God and with each other, a gift of the Spirit grounded in love, the very nature of God. This love is to characterise the disciples being together.

It strikes me that this love involves attention, being attentive to God and to each other. In practising this we see each other as children of God. It is what we are called to practice and to be.

The indigenous people of Australia are calling us to both see them as they truly are and to hear them. We have not been willing to do this. Until 1967 we were not willing to “see” them as Australians. Indeed, some didn’t even “see” them as human. In this time, we are being called to hear them. In the Uluru Statement they seek a voice to be able to address the Parliament of the Nation, a status enshrined in the Constitution, and to be able to be heard. To be willing to accede to this is to undertake a work of the Spirit, a willingness to hear the divine Spirit as she is created and embodied in Australian indigenous peoples. How could we not be willing to do this?

We have inherited a legacy which tried to both make indigenous people invisible and to silence them. They have been, and continue to be, deeply gracious toward we invaders. They ask for us to both see and hear them. In doing so we will see God more fully and come to comprehend the deep and diverse mystery of this God we see embodied in human flesh.

Prayers — prepared by Heather Baxter

God: Father of all peoples and all creation;
Jesus, friend and healer;
Spirit, comforter and encourager,
we pray that we will have listening hearts.

We pray that we will hear the voices of the homeless,
the refugee, the mentally ill, the abused, the anxious and the isolated.
We pray that we will hear the voice of the First Nations peoples of Australia,
as expressed in their Uluru Statement from the Heart.
Jesus, you showed us how to listen with our hearts,
to act with compassion when a need was seen or heard.
Help us to respond to the voices of the dispossessed with open hearts.

Encouraging Spirit,
too often we are like fairy penguins.
we know what to do...
we've seen the need...
before us is a matter requiring our action...
and yet...
we hesitate...
we stop,
we turn away,
we do nothing.

Inspiring Spirit
Galvanise us to dive in.
Give us courage to go into territory that is unfamiliar,
Grant us strength for the journey,
Give us eyes to see,
Ears to hear,
Hearts that will beat with concern,
Minds that will know the way forward.

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 the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen

Blessing

May our footsteps, on these ancient lands,
remind us of creation and connectedness,
in our search for truth.
May the Gum Tree, from its roots to its branches,
remind us to dig deep and reach high,
in our action for justice.

May the Eagle, who soars in the sky,
remind us of the power
in our call for love.

May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars,
remind us of God's timing,
in our faith in hope.

May the Holy three, Creator Spirit, Lord God, Papa Jesus,
remind us of community.
So with grace, mercy, and peace,
We go in truth, justice, love and hope.

Acknowledgement of use of prayer by Jan Trengrove: Mission Prayer Handbook 2005, National Assembly UCA

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NEWS AND NOTICES

CHURCH EVENTS

Just a reminder that Bob's Boys Breakfast (Sat 29 May) and this Sunday's lunch at Bentleigh Club have both had to be postponed due to the lockdown. Stay tuned for an update with regards to the Bike Ride scheduled for 5 June 2021.

Pathfinder material due Monday 31 May by 6pm

Material for Pathfinder is due this **Monday evening 31/5 by 6pm**, if you have anything you'd like to submit, please get in touch with Dianne Richter.

ROSTER for Sunday 6 June 2021

(pending if there are any lockdown restrictions)

READING	Heather Baxter	
PRAYERS	Marg Davis	
COMMUNION	Lorraine Denniston	Karen Roberts
DOOR DUTY	Hans Tilstra	Lynne Parker
SOUND	Gary Richter	
COUNTING	Ruth McLeod	Dennis Taylor
MORNING TEA	Susie Fergusson	Lisa Saffin
MUSIC	Peter Hurley	
FLOWERS	Lorraine Denniston	Lynne Parker
RESOURCES DELIVERY 4 June '21.	Marg Davis	

REMINDER: Ormond Learning Hub course commences another online course this Thursday evening (3rd June 2021).

TOPIC: *Exploring the New Testament*

DATES: Thurs 3rd June to 26th August (12 week course - Thursday nights)

TIME: 7.30pm – 9.00pm

FORMAT: Online

COST: \$120 = course text (eBook or hard copy)

FACILITATORS: Andrew Boyle and Brad Denniston

ENQUIRIES and ENROLMENT: learninghub@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

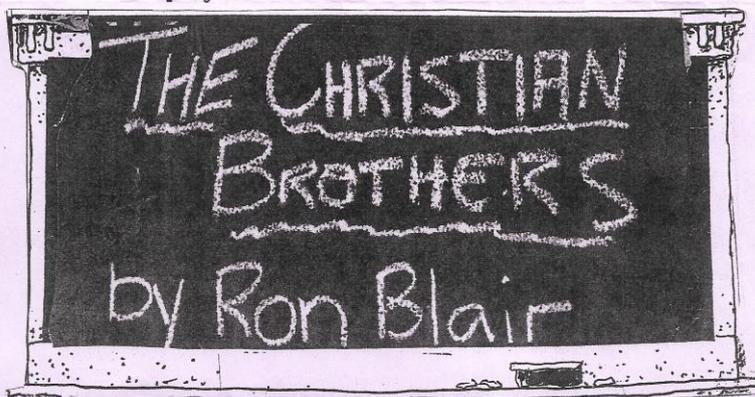


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Saturday June 26th at 2 p.m.

Saturday June 26th at 8 p.m.

Sunday June 27th at 2 p.m.

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* Bookings essential

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*Ample parking in Booran Rd.

Frontier Services write: We Urgently Need Help Today

Our hearts are broken. Coonamble and outback NSW is trying to rebuild from the worst drought in Australian recorded history. The first good season and now they are overrun with Mice. Stock food destroyed. Houses being damaged because the mice are eating concrete foundations!

This community and surrounds were already struggling financially and emotionally. Now they are overrun with mice. They are reaching out to us for help:

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If you'd like to donate using a cheque simply address the cheque to "Frontier Services" and pop it in an envelope to "PO Box 3424, Parramatta NSW 2124"

Please include a slip of paper with:

- Your name and address – so we can send you your receipt
- Where you would like your funds to go – Perhaps Bush chaplaincy, Outback Links. If unsure we often let people know to direct funds to "Where most needed"

With thanks.