



DAY OF MOURNING 2020

A worship service for faith communities to reflect on the effects of invasion and colonisation of Australia's First Peoples.



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY



UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER
CHRISTIAN CONGRESS

Across the Uniting Church we observe a Day of Mourning on the Sunday before Australia Day to lament the ongoing effects of the invasion and colonisation of Australia's First Peoples.

The Day of Mourning is an observance that was endorsed at the 15th Assembly in 2018 at the request of our sisters and brothers in the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

It was wonderful to see so many Uniting Church congregations take part in January 2019. We look forward to even greater participation in 2020.

The Day of Mourning worship service encourages us to pause to remember the violence and dispossession inflicted on our First Peoples, and to lament that as a Church and as Second Peoples, we were and remain complicit.

It is an opportunity for us to listen and learn of the hurt that has been passed down through generations of First Peoples and the ongoing disadvantage and injustice they still experience.

Importantly it is an invitation to us to follow in Christ's way of justice, healing and reconciliation, building relationships of truth and healing in our own communities and in our nation.

The artwork on the front cover is part of this invitation. In 2019, Tewantin Uniting Church in Queensland made this artwork by Sammy Ray Jones a central part of their Day of Mourning service as it tells some of the

history of their local area.

I encourage all who participate in the Day of Mourning to think about the local connections they can make with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) ministry and with First Peoples in your area.

Our decision to declare an annual Day of Mourning offers us a way to stand together in Covenantal relationship, to honour, remember and acknowledge the truth of our history.

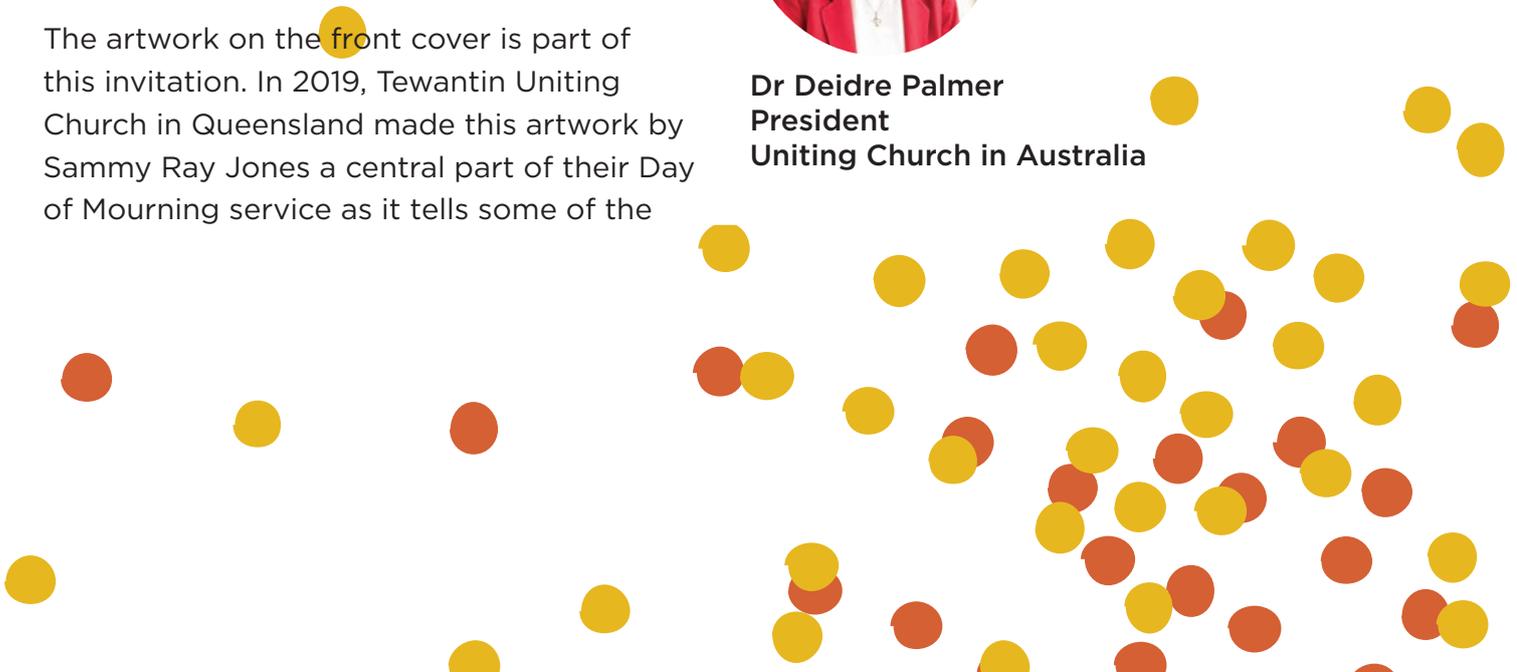
As we lament before God the injustices perpetrated on First Peoples and speak the truth about our past and present, we look to the Holy Spirit to weave us together in relationships based on mutuality, trust and Christ's liberating hope.

Thank you to all of you, in our congregations, faith communities, schools, agencies and all parts of the Uniting Church for joining us in marking the Day of Mourning. We continue to pray for justice and healing in our nation.

Grace and Peace to you,



Dr Deidre Palmer
President
Uniting Church in Australia



TRUTH TELLING

[Sammy Ray Jones](#) tells the story of the Murdering Creek massacre on the edge of Lake Weyba in 1869 through his large painting featured on the cover on this resource.

2019 is the 150th anniversary of that massacre.

This artwork was central to the Day of Mourning service held at Tewantin Uniting Church on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland on 20 January 2019.

“We were confronted with the need to mourn the suffering of the First Peoples of this nation,” said Revs Jenny and Neil Sims who helped organise the service.

Tewantin took the initiative to understand and connect with their local First Peoples stories.

During the service this year, they used the Day of Mourning liturgy produced by the Assembly and the preacher focused particularly on Micah 6: 8

What does the Lord ask of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

The Murdering Creek painting is the property of [Beulah Community](#), Buderim, and was loaned to Tewantin Uniting for the service.

We encourage all who take part in the Day of Mourning to look for ways to make local connections with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress ministry or local First Peoples organisations in their area.

We would love to hear about all the ways you participate – so please share your stories with us.

Description of the artwork:

The centrepiece of the painting incorporates six panels.

Bottom left: The killing of cattle by aborigines on Yandina Station south of Lake Weyba, Noosaville, Queensland.

Top left: Eight men from Yandina Station plan to put an end to the killing of their cattle.

Top centre: One of the eight men acts as a decoy to attract a large group of aborigines on the western shore of the mouth of Murdering Creek. They come in their canoes.

Bottom centre: The other seven men, in hiding, open fire on the aborigines killing most of them. There are no records of how many were killed.

Top right: The high-rise building, the palm tree and the pineapples represent local white society.

Bottom right: Indigenous and non-indigenous living together reconciled is the dream of the artist and many others.

The surrounds of the painting are full of the rich animal and birdlife of the Noosa area.

DAY OF MOURNING

For use on the Sunday before 26 January

Call to Worship

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.

Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.

All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.

Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.

Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the _____ peoples,
the first inhabitants of this place
from time beyond remembering.

We acknowledge that through this land,
God nurtured and sustained
the First Peoples of this country,
the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

**We honour them for their custodianship
of the land on which we gather today.**

We acknowledge that the First Peoples
had already encountered the Creator God
before the arrival of the colonisers;

**the Spirit was already in the land,
revealing God to the people
through law, custom and ceremony.**

We acknowledge that the same love and grace
that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ
sustained the First Peoples
and gave them particular insights into God's ways;
and so we rejoice

*If there is a member of
the recognised traditional
owner Clan/Nation able to
be present, then a **Welcome
to Country** may be said first
followed by the short form
of the Acknowledgement in
response.*

**in the reconciling purposes of God
found in the good news about Jesus Christ.**

OR

We acknowledge the _____ Clan/Nation
the sovereign First Peoples of this place.
We honour their elders past, present and emerging
together with all descendants of this Nation,
for their care for these lands and waters since creation.

Hymn/Song

Greeting

Today friends, we are remembering the tragic history of our nation and the violent dispossession of her First Peoples.

Today is a Day of Mourning. Today we mark in lament the truth of our shared history and we lift up to God our prayers for First Peoples and our nation.

We say sorry and we pray for forgiveness, healing and hope. But today is also a day of worship. So we come together and give thanks to God for the abundant grace and liberating hope which we know through Jesus Christ and which is for all people.

The God of all justice,
The God of all peace,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Blessings for a Sacred Place

Leader: Arrawatanha
Ngapala Nguthana

**Response: Most High
Our Maker**

**All: The land you have given us, your children.
Look on this place ...
this special place where you live;
this special place where your glory rests.
Look upon this sacred place
where your name is honoured.
Help us keep it as our
Ancestors did.**

Leader: Althaninda

Response: Happy are you.

*In the **Adnyamathanha**
language of the Flinders
Ranges, SA, Arrawatanha
means God/Most High and
Ngapala Nguthana means Our
Maker.
The meaning of Althaninda is
Happy are you.*

Prayers

Invocation

Abba, Father,
Bäpa God,
source of all life,
answer our call,
as a mother responds
to the cry of a child in the night.

Jesus Christ,
brother and friend,
Liberator,
stand beside us
as bearer of our humanity,
and sharer of God's grace.

Creator Spirit,
giver of new life,
purposeful guest,
prod us to praise,
calling us to be a people
of hope and faith in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Lament and Confession

**Merciful God,
we, the Second Peoples of this land,
acknowledge and lament
the injustice and abuse
that has so often marked
the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.**

**We acknowledge and lament
the way in which their land was taken from them
and their language, culture, law and spirituality
despised and suppressed.**

**We acknowledge and lament
the way in which the Christian church
was so often not only complicit in this process
but actively involved in it.**

**We acknowledge and lament
that in our own time
the injustice and abuse has continued.
We have been indifferent**

*Bäpa means father in the
Yolŋu languages of NE
Arnhemland and in Bahasa
languages.*

*The gathered body shares this
lament, saying it together.*

**when we should have been outraged,
we have been apathetic
when we should have been active,
we have been silent when we should have spoken out.**

**Liberating Jesus, hear our lament and
by your Spirit bring healing, hope and transformation
to the lives of our First Nations sisters and brothers
and their communities, we pray.**

**Gracious God, hear our acknowledgements —
We have not loved you
with our whole heart,
nor have we loved First Peoples
and other neighbours as ourselves.
God of mercy,
forgive us for our failures,
past and present and
give us the grace today to make a fresh start.**

**By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts
so that we may love as you have loved us,
that we may boldly speak your truth
and courageously do your will.**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Response by First Peoples

At this point in the service if First Peoples are participating they could be invited to offer a response to the lament and confession.

Declaration of Forgiveness

This is the best of all:
When we are empty, God fills us;
when we are disheartened, God is compassionate;
when we are wounded, God brings healing;
when we confess our sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ,
our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You refill the cup of life, O God.

In Christ, we find refuge, strength and hope.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

The Service of the Word

Bible Readings

Passages which could be used include:

Psalms 85: 7 – 13; Micah 6: 6 – 8; John 14: 15 – 24; Acts 2: 1 – 21;
Romans 8: 19 – 27; James 2: 14 – 26; 1 John 4: 7 – 21

Particular concepts may also be used, as follows:

Redistributive Justice – reparation, who is given the power, 2 Samuel 21

Nature of land, 1 Kings 21

Reparation Luke 19:1-10

Jubilee, a prophetic declaration for First Peoples, Isaiah 61:7-9

Luke 4:16-21 – “the year of the Lord’s favour” i.e. Jubilee (Lev 25)

Self-emptying God (kenosis) – in the “other”, Christ is revealed, Matthew 25:31-46

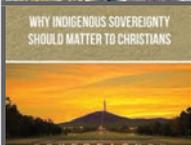
A Destiny Together – Basis of Union “the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.”, Psalms 78:1-8, 2 Corinthians 5:16-19 The Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12

Further references: Mark 10:17-31, Luke 1:46-55 Sovereign God, God creates, preserves and saves.

John 1; Psalms 19:1,2; Isaiah 40:22-31; Romans 8:19-21, Acts 17:22-28,

Preaching of the Word

Some resources for preaching could include:

 <p>WALKING TOGETHER Exploring the Covenant between First and Second Peoples Study Guide</p>	<p>Walking Together – Exploring the covenant between First and Second Peoples https://bit.ly/2QI3tpx</p>
 <p>Building Partnerships A guide to covenant renewal with Indigenous people throughout the United Church in Australia</p>	<p>Building Partnerships – A guide to covenant renewal in the UCA http://tiny.cc/2hmihz</p>
 <p>WHY INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY SHOULD MATTER TO CHRISTIANS</p>	<p>Why Indigenous Sovereignty Should Matter to Christians – Rev Dr Chris Budden https://bit.ly/2SLJpQo</p>

Time of Silence

The gathered community may be invited into a time of silent reflection

Offering

Notices

Prayers of the People

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 peoples in our communities,
especially the disadvantaged.
Help all young people to find true dignity
and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love
be the foundations on which we:
walk together as First and Second Peoples; and
build our families, our communities and our nation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

There could be a special offering for the work of the UAICC in your Synod or First Peoples community organisation you have connected with.

Sending Forth of the People of God

Hymn/Song

Word of Mission

People of God,
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,
the First and Second Peoples of this land,
have entered with one another.
Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.
Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord.
Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God,
Until God's promised reconciliation of all creation is complete.

Blessing

**Bless us therefore, as we depart this place:
give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk alongside our First Peoples,
as brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in the power of God's good Spirit:
with the gentle fire of God's zeal,
with the breath of life,
ready to work for justice and peace.
**We go in Christ's name.
Amen.**

Credit: Blessings for a Sacred Place: Rev Aunty Denise Champion as part of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress contribution to Penelope Monger (ed.) Living Water Thirsty Land (Sydney: The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, 2008), 90-91.

*Prayers of the People: Prepared by the Wontulp
Bi-Buya Indigenous Theology Working Group, Amended September 2018
Assembly Resourcing Unit*