



# DAY OF MOURNING 2022

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



**COVER ARTWORK:** *Interwoven story-telling*

*"No matter what the history, this will always be Aboriginal land, our imprint will never be invisible and we will always survive and thrive. Our stories and family lines entwine across seas, lands and skies, forever a united front."*

**Grace Williams**

Community and Cultural Resource Officer,  
Leprena - UAICC Tasmania

# DAY OF MOURNING Introduction

## 23 January 2022

Every year the Uniting Church marks a Day of Mourning to reflect on the dispossession of Australia's First Peoples and the ongoing injustices faced by First Nations people in this land. For those of us who are Second Peoples, we lament that we were and remain complicit.

The observance of a Day of Mourning was endorsed by the 15th Assembly in 2018 arising from a request of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

As an expression of the Uniting Church's commitment to justice and truth-telling, we declared the Sunday before Australia Day as a Day of Mourning.

Again in 2022, we invite you on or around Sunday 23 January to hold worship services that reflect on the effects of invasion and colonisation on First Peoples.

In marking a day of mourning, we hear the call of Jesus to a love one another. We live into our covenant relationship to stand together with, and listen to the wisdom of First Nations people in their struggle for justice. We affirm the sovereignty of First Peoples and honour their culture and their connection to country. We reaffirm our understanding that First Peoples encountered the Creator God long before colonisation. We confess and seek forgiveness for the dispossession and violence against First Peoples, we lament our part, and we recommit to justice and truth-telling.

We encourage you to use this opportunity to make a connection with UAICC or First Peoples in your local community. You might also like to take this opportunity to begin a conversation about how you will continue to live out the covenant as a faith community. As the President of the Uniting Church and the Interim National Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, we pray that our Church and our nation will continue on this journey of confession, truth-telling and seeking of justice and healing.

Grace and Peace to you.



**Rev Sharon Hollis**

President Uniting Church in Australia



**Rev Mark Kickett**

Interim National Chair Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

# DAY OF MOURNING

## Worship Resource

### 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.

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

*Suggested actions for the inclusion of children in the service.*

- > *Jump and throw your arms up high*
- > *put your hand to your ear then loosen your fingers and wave your arms around*
- > *cup your ear with your hand as if listening hard*
- > *stand still and breath deeply*
- > *tap rhythm sticks (or two small gum tree limbs), hit gum nuts with a small branch, whistle using a gum leaf or blade of grass.*
- > *tap two stones together*
- > *pretend to syphon dirt from one hand to the other*
  
- > *make a heart shape with your hands and move it away from and then towards your body*
- > *make a triangle with your hands*
- > *give yourself a hug*
- > *extend your arm as if putting it around a mate, then extend your arms as if placing your hands on someones shoulders*
- > *wiggle your arm across your body*
- > *hold your hands up high in the air*

*Other suggestions for a service that includes Children and Families can be found at the end of this document*

## 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  
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.

*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.*

## 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.

We also come together and give thanks to God for the grace which enables us to face ourselves and the wrongs in our country and seek healing and be given the courage to repent and seek to mend our wrongs.

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,  
teacher 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.**

*Bäpa means Father in  
the Yolŋu languages  
of North Eastern  
Arnhemland*

## TRUTH-TELLING AND AN INVITATION

To the shores upon they came  
Who anchors this nation's shame?  
Loving and living in harmony with the Land, caring for Mother Earth, Mother  
Earth caring for and with  
Ceremony, story lines, song lines, customs, traditions, tribes, nations and clans  
What now sits within the coloniser's hands?  
What intergenerational mourning and healing is about to unfold?

### ***Layers of mourning unfold In the stories not told***

To know mourning  
Is to know grief and loss  
Removal of lands  
Removal of children  
An injustice of the declaration of *terra nullius*  
To know the dispossession, the invasion, the colonial rule, the colonial  
persuasion, to dig deep into the layers of the mourning

### ***Layers of mourning unfold Of the stories not told***

The wailing of a mother, as a child is taken away  
The relocation to country far away  
The connections lost  
The connections severed  
The generations of injustice weathered

### ***Layers of mourning unfold In the stories not told***

In a nation, now called Australia, where is truth-telling not always told?  
To know mourning  
Is to truly know injustice  
A struggle for justice  
We seek guidance from ancient wisdom of past and present,  
To hold this mourning in our hearts and minds  
To honour, to pay respect, to know, to appreciate and to act on injustice

### ***Layers of mourning unfold In the stories not told***

A resilient people  
A mob of survivors  
Against the forces set upon  
That's to celebrate  
That's wisdom to walk with

And so we weep  
And so we survive  
And so we ensure our culture will thrive

***Layers of mourning unfold  
In the stories not told***

Today we mourn  
But we together must action much more  
Interwoven unlearning  
Interwoven truth-telling  
Interwoven restoring of justice  
Our inherent call from the Creator to justice - it's called for us all  
A call to an ongoing woven mat of justice, truth-telling and covenanting

***Layers of mourning unfold  
In the stories not told***

Creator spirit  
Praise be to you for your guidance  
Praise be to you for the healing of grief and loss  
May we each day embrace the truth-telling of the Lands we walk on, the Lands  
invaded, and together weave a basket of shared healing  
Not just for today  
Not just for tomorrow  
Not just for yesterday  
But in the now and the forever time.

## LAMENT AND CONFESSION

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

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

### **We 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 lament that in our own time**

**the injustice and abuse has continued. We have been indifferent.**

### **Gracious God, hear our confession —**

**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

You may like to share this reflection from UAICC Interim National Chair Rev Mark Kickett on **Micah 6: 6-8** and **John 14:15-24** recorded during the 2021 Day of Mourning service recorded at Nunyara Conference Centre in Adelaide.

<https://vimeo.com/656849791>

You could follow this with a time of reflection on what it means “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly” as Second Peoples in Australia seeking justice for First Peoples.

*Other resources for preaching:*

**Walking Together – Exploring the covenant between First and Second Peoples**

<https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/493>

**Building Partnerships – A guide to covenant renewal in the UCA**

<https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/288>

**Why Indigenous Sovereignty Should Matter to Christians**

– Rev Dr Chris Budden

[https://www.mediacomeshop.org.au/test/index.php?route=product/product&product\\_id=336](https://www.mediacomeshop.org.au/test/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=336)

## TIME OF SILENCE

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

## OFFERING

## 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.**

## 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.

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

## 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.

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## SUGGESTED SONGS:

**Why Lord, O Why?** by David McGregor:

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/LvhCTvt8wM0>

**How Shall we Sing?** by Craig Mitchell and David McGregor

[https://craigmitchell.typepad.com/mountain\\_masala/2018/05/new-song-how-shall-we-sing.html](https://craigmitchell.typepad.com/mountain_masala/2018/05/new-song-how-shall-we-sing.html)

A recording will be posted here by the end of December 2021: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8190244>

**How Long, How Long (Psalm 6)** by David McGregor

<https://vimeo.com/650139229>

**Lament** by Garry Jennings

Sheet music: <http://garrycondoseres.com/index.php/snippets/407-lament>

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

For an intergenerational service that helps children and families to fully participate, you might like to consider these ideas.

## SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS:

See above Call to Worship suggested actions. Find more suggested actions [here](#)

## CRAFT ACTIVITY:

- Ask your children to draw an Australian landscape as described in the Call to Worship, gum trees, desert sand, mountains etc.
- Or bring with you pieces of native trees, sand, stones to look at or to use to make a picture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES

- During the Acknowledgment of First Peoples you might like to read *Welcome To Country* By Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy by Walker Books
- Watch Aunty Joy Murphy do a welcome to country here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeBWultrpW8>

Make sure to emphasise that God was always in this Land.

## TRUTH-TELLING AND AN INVITATION

Ask these Wonder Questions:

I wonder:

- How do these words make you feel?
- Do your feelings change as the poem is read?
- Can you draw how they make you feel?
- Describe those feelings

Suggested resource: You may like to use a set of emotional cards where children can point to the cards to show how they feel. For example:

- Koala Company Cards  
<https://innovativeresources.org/resources/digital-resources/digital-card-sets/koala-company-cards-digital-version/>
- Bears Bundle  
<https://innovativeresources.org/resources/value-packs/the-bears-bundle/>
- Or use the emojis on your phone.

## LAMENT AND CONFESSION

Children might pray as they continue working on their picture or focus on the leaves and rocks while they pray.

A shorter children's prayer might be:

Great God,

Thank you for the (stone, rock, plants, mountains etc, name each in turn after the statement Thank you for)

Help me to share this land

And to learn from those who you first gave this land too.

Help me to not forget past wrongs to the First People

And not to repeat them

Amen (one clap, use clapsticks if possible)

## **BIBLE READINGS:**

Suggested activities or resources for the bible passages suggested above:

### **Psalms 85: 7 – 13:**

Make a heart card with a beautiful picture of something from Australia on it

### **John 14: 15 – 24:**

Read/Watch Tina the Tree from the Lost Sheep website:

<https://www.lostsheep.com.au/stories/tina-the-tree/>

Use the free downloads or buy the activity pack

- how many acts of love did the tree do?
- how many acts of love were done to the tree?

### **Romans 8: 19 – 27:**

Watch Aboriginal creation stories on You Tube. For example:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDI5QwAR8DI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0y3Ta5xcKV4>

### **James 2: 14 – 26:**

Read/Watch All These Things by Susie Poole:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm5EUrLP9zY>

Encourage role-play with toys where being kind can be played out.

To explore the themes suggested:

### **Redistributive Justice:**

- Read *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywelt  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZttMDho5HMw>
- Play with toys that encourage practicing interaction with others.
- Or draw a colourful picture using all the colours

### **Self-emptying God:**

Tell stories of how someone has changed their life or how you changed life for someone.

- Listen to a reading of the picture book *Come with Me* by Holly M. McGhee & Pascal Lemaître: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oW6Ne1n\\_hWs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oW6Ne1n_hWs)

- Watch this Behind the News episode on Eddie Koiki Mabo: <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/mabo-day/10530494>

### **A Destiny Together:**

- An alternative reading of the Beatitudes can be found in *The Beginners Bible* Jesus Teaches on a Mountain pp.318- 321
- Play with toys in a “garden” made from the twigs, leaves etc that you bought with you into worship.

## **BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**

***Sorry Sorry*** By Anne Kerr

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/sorry-sorry-anne-kerr/book/9781925877359.html>

***Walking the Corroboree*** by Rhanee Tsetsakos and Anne Kerr

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/walking-to-corroboree-rhanee-tsetsakos/book/9781925522747.html>

***Stolen Girl*** by Trina Saffioti, illustrated by Norma MacDonald

<https://www.magabala.com/products/stolen-girl>

***Stories for Simon*** by: Lisa Miranda Sarzin, illustrated by Lauren Briggs [https://www.](https://www.booktopia.com.au/stories-for-simon-lisa-miranda-sarzin/book/9780143784258.html)

[booktopia.com.au/stories-for-simon-lisa-miranda-sarzin/ book/9780143784258.html](https://www.booktopia.com.au/stories-for-simon-lisa-miranda-sarzin/book/9780143784258.html)

***Sea country*** by Aunty Patsy Cameron and Lisa Kennedy <https://www.magabala.com/products/sea-country>

***Day break: January 26. The day we remember*** by Amy McQuire and Matt Chun Day <https://www.booktopia.com.au/day-break-amy-mcquire/book/9781760508159.html>

***Hero, Rebels and Innovators: Inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People from History*** by Karen Wyld and Jaelyn Biunaiwai <https://www.hachette.com.au/karen-wyld-jaelyn-biunaiwai/heroes-rebels-and-innovators-inspiring-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-from-history>

## **TOY BOX ADDITION:**

If your toy collection does not have First Nation dolls in it you might like to add to your collection. A place you can do that is here

<https://www.yarnstrongsista.com/product-category/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-dolls-clothes/>

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

*Children and Families additions: Wendy Lewis, The Cross in my Backyard:*  
<https://thecrossinmybackyard.wordpress.com/>



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