

Message for the 48th Uniting Church Anniversary – 22 June 2025

President Rev Charissa Suli

TRANSCRIPT:

Beloved friends in Christ, I greet you from Sydney Town Hall on the lands of the Gadigal People where 48 years ago the Uniting Church in Australia was born.

Today, we give thanks for the grace that has carried us and the love of God that continues to weave us together.

This year, we mark two milestones. 40 years of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, a covenant of truth, justice and deep listening. And 40 years when we declared ourselves a multicultural church. Many bodies, one body united in the Spirit of Christ.

I've personally seen the Spirit at work in quiet faithfulness, bold leadership, deep compassion and the perseverance of the faith. But friends, I'm also seeing the cracks and the blind spots of our own brokenness. I'm seeing a church under strain, congregations who are feeling the weight of change and uncertainty. Our leaders are tired, resources are stretched thin and trust has been tested. And relationships they feel the strain, and healing and reconciliation is needed.

This is not a failure, but this is a point of crossroads. And this is not a moment to dwell on where we have gone wrong, but this is a core to return to the heart of our faith, Jesus Christ.

And God is calling us to look inward with honesty. We need the courage to repent and change. We need the love to reform and we need the Spirit's renewal, just as our Basis of Union calls us to be a church always reformed and renewing so that we continue to follow Jesus Christ, who is the perfecter of our faith.

Now is the time to renew our commitments, to live out the gospel, just not in words, but also in deeds. To nurture and raise up disciples and strengthen our congregations, support our leaders so that children and refugees, migrants, seekers of faith feel welcome and feel the belonging in Jesus Christ.

So, let's embrace this moment of our anniversary, not to hold on to the past, but to look forward with courage and pay attention to the threads you are weaving into God's story.

Happy 48th Anniversary Church! Let's continue to be a church that follows Jesus Christ, investing in justice and reconciliation, celebrating our diversity and living the gospel for generations to come.

May God weave us together in love. Christ renew and reconcile us, and the Spirit breathe courage onto us.

Ofa lahi atu in Christ's name.