

President Rev Charissa Suli's Closing Sermon
Jakarta, 6 December 2025
"Reframing Our Future" – Revelation 21:1–5a

Opening & Acknowledgment

Before I begin, I want to give thanks.

First, to God, whose Spirit has carried us through these days of truth-telling, courage, and tender hope.

To the people of Jakarta, thank you for your warmth, generosity, and for welcoming us into your city with such grace. You have held our prayers, our stories, and our collective dreaming.

To the WCC Working Group and organisers, your vision, labour, and faithfulness have shaped this sacred space. We honour the work you have done — often unseen — to bring us together in this kairos moment.

To the women in this room, your wisdom, courage, and leadership have been the heartbeat of this consultation.

And to the men and non-binary siblings among us — thank you for your allyship, your advocacy, and your commitment to walking alongside us as partners in justice and transformation.

We gather as one community, held by God, strengthened by each other, and committed to reframing the future together.

Sermon

Sisters, brothers, family in Christ — we gather on our final morning carrying three days of courage, truth-telling, and deep spiritual discernment.

Today we stand at a threshold: the space between what has been and what must now become.

Our theme is "Reframing Our Future."

Not dreaming vaguely, not admiring ideas from a distance, but seeing the world through God's eyes — and choosing to walk toward that future with courage.

Into this moment, God speaks a promise strong enough to sustain a weary world:

“See, I am making all things new.”

1. A New Heaven and a New Earth —God’s Vision in the Midst of Struggle

Revelation 21 is written to people living under systems of violence, injustice, empire, and despair. It is not fantasy — it is resistance.

When John writes that the sea is no more, he is saying:

Chaos, instability, and fear will not define God’s future.

This week, we named the “old things” that must pass away:

- gender-based violence
- women’s economic exclusion
- discriminatory theologies
- the silencing of Indigenous and Pacific women
- ecological destruction
- racism and exclusion within our own churches

These realities are real — but they are not the final word.

God is envisioning something beyond them.

2. “God’s Home Is Among Mortals” — The God Who Moves Toward Us

Revelation continues:

“See, the home of God is among mortals... God will dwell with them.”

God does not stay at a distance. God moves toward our pain, our stories, our longing.

This echoes our Jakarta commitments, where we affirmed that every person bears the image of God, and that violence against women and girls is sin against the Body of Christ.

God’s home is not built in the halls of worldly power — but among those who have been denied justice.

3. “He Will Wipe Every Tear” — God’s Tender, Radical Justice

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes...”

This is not poetic comfort; it is radical justice.

For tears to be wiped away:

- violence must end
- poverty must be dismantled
- discrimination must be overturned
- patriarchal systems must lose their power

Every tear has a story.

This week, we heard the tears of Kaki from the Marshall Islands — carrying the intergenerational grief of nuclear testing and saying with holy defiance: “Enough. Our people are dying.”

We heard tears from Indigenous women whose lands, cultures, and voices have been diminished.

We heard the courageous testimony of Asian women who continue to challenge the injustices woven into their daily lives, refusing to let their dignity be denied.

To wipe these tears demands action, courage, and transformation — not sentiment.

4. “See, I Am Making All Things New” — Transformation, Not Replacement

God says:

“See, I am making all things new.”

God does not say:

“I am making new things.”

God is not discarding creation —

God is renewing it.

God is not abandoning our cultures —

God is transforming them.

God is not sweeping away the work of our hands —

God is breathing new life into it.

This is the heart of Revelation 21:

God restores what is wounded, strengthens what is tired, and reframes what has been distorted.

And this is our calling at Beijing +30:

- We are not starting again — we are building on 30 years of struggle and hope.
- We are not discarding our traditions — we are purifying them so they reflect the image of God in every person.
- We are not abandoning our churches — we are transforming them into sanctuaries of justice and dignity.

God's newness is renewal — not replacement.

A future reframed.

A world restored.

5. Reframing the Future — Our Call as We Return Home

As President of the Uniting Church in Australia, I carry these stories not as observations but as responsibilities entrusted to me by my church and by God.

And I know many of you feel this same weight — this same holy calling.

Reframing the future requires:

Holy Memory

We remember the women, the stories, the truths shared in this room. Memory is resistance.

Holy Imagination

We refuse to see the world only as it is. We choose to see it as God sees it — full of possibility.

Holy Courage

We carry this work home, knowing some will resist it — even within our own institutions.

But Revelation tells us: “These words are trustworthy and true.”

As we step into our final drafting today, may we write with the ink of God’s promise, not fear or fatigue.

6. A Pacific Blessing for Our Journey

As a daughter of the Moana, I hear Revelation 21 with ocean ears.

I hear the rising seas.

I hear the cries of my people.

I hear the land groaning under the weight of injustice.

And I hear God whisper:

“Even here, I am making all things new.”

The old world is passing away.

A new world is being born.

And we — women, men, every gender, every tradition — we are the midwives of that future.

Closing Charge

As you return home:

- Carry the courage you witnessed.
- Carry the commitments we shaped.
- Carry the truth that gender justice is central to God’s new creation.
- Carry a hope that is stronger than despair.

For the One seated on the throne declares:

“See, I am making all things new.”

And God is not finished with us yet.

Amen.

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings,

You have gathered us, shaped us, challenged us, and inspired us.

As we step from worship into work,

fill us with the courage of your Spirit,

the tenderness of Christ,

and the wisdom that flows from your eternal love.

Make our minds clear,

our hearts open,

and our commitments bold.

May every word we write

and every decision we make today

honour the women whose stories we carry,

the communities we serve,

and the future you are already making new.

Go before us, God.

Go with us.

And send us out as weavers of justice,

bearers of hope,

and witnesses to your new creation.

Amen.