

A Pastoral Prayer of Lament and Commitment
Eighth Anniversary of National Apology
Rev Charissa Suli, President of the Uniting Church in Australia

22 October 2026

God of compassion and justice,

Today we remember those who experienced sexual abuse as children, especially those harmed within the life of the Church, where they should have been safe, protected and cared for.

We acknowledge the ongoing suffering, the trust that was betrayed and the lasting impact on individuals, families and communities.

We hold before you every person whose life has been affected by abuse, including those whose experiences remain unspoken. May they be met with care that honours their dignity, support that respects their choices, and people who will listen without judgement.

Merciful God,

We confess that we have not always been the Church you have called us to be. Those entrusted with responsibility failed to protect children. Power was misused, voices were silenced, and institutional interests were placed before the well-being of those harmed.

Bring us to honest repentance. Give us the courage to face the truth, acknowledge our failures, and make the changes justice and faithfulness demand.

Jesus Christ, who welcomed children and upheld their dignity,

Teach us never to use faith to diminish another person's suffering, to demand forgiveness, or to excuse the misuse of power.

Shape our lives and leadership by your example, so that we listen with humility, act with integrity, and protect those entrusted to our care.

Holy Spirit, renew your Church.

Form us into communities where children and young people are safe, where concerns are heard and addressed, and where every person's dignity is respected.

Give us wisdom to recognise where change is needed and the courage to carry it through, even when it challenges our established ways.

God of grace, do not allow us to grow comfortable with words of apology while the work of change remains unfinished.

May our life together bear faithful witness to the justice and love of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

