

Order of Service – 25/6/2023, UCA Anniversary

Opening verse:

The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her,
'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid.'

Genesis 21:17

Greeting and Gathering

Daniel

Friends, let's breathe together as we prepare to worship the God of unity and peace. This morning, on this 46th anniversary of the formation of the Uniting Church, we light a candle for each entwined member of our joined tradition. One for Methodism, one for Presbyterianism, and one for the Congregation Union of Australia. Together, around the Christ candle they make one light.

Laid here over the cross are the three colours of the Uniting Church – red, white, and black – reminding us of our fellowship in Christ's self-giving servanthood.

Let's sing together a song of praise for the God who never fails:

Song of Praise: Though the Mountains May Fall

*Though the mountains may fall and the hills turn to dust,
Yet the love of our God will stand
As a shelter for all who will call on their name.
Sing the praise and the glory of God.*

- 1 *Could our God ever leave you?
Could our God forget their love?
Though a mother forsake her child,
they will not abandon you.*
- 2 *Should you turn and forsake them,
They will gently call your name.
Should you wander away from them,
They will always take you back.*
- 3 *Go to them when you're weary;
They will give you eagle's wings.
You will run, never tire,
For your God will be your strength.*

SONG: [though the Mountains may fall](#), Music: Dan Schutte; keyboard acc. by Michael Pope, S.J.
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Call to Worship

Daniel

Friends, come to worship remembering who you are.
Remember that you are made in God's image.
Remember that you are loved.
Remember that though the grass withers and the flower fades,
that the word of the Lord will last forever.
Remember that though the mountains may fall and the hills turn to dust,
that the love of our God will stand.

Remember that we are siblings in Christ, sharing in the inheritance of the Kingdom, and the servanthood of Jesus. Remember that Sarah laughed, that Abraham was tested, that Joseph dreamed, and that Moses walked through the sea. Remember that Esther dared, that Daniel trusted, and that Ruth and Naomi walked together in love. Remember that Peter left his nets, that Mary wept at the doorway of the empty tomb, and that Paul regained his sight. Remember that in 1977 in this distant and southern land our church embarked upon a great endeavour of unity and reconciliation which we sustain together in our shared body. Remember who you are, and come to worship.

Acknowledgement of Country

Daniel

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation,
the traditional custodians of this land
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land
is not ours to own, but to look after;
and that if we listen,
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves
to work for justice, reconciliation,
and care of the earth.**

Welcome and Introduction

Daniel

- Welcome to those present, visiting, and those joining online
- 46th Anniversary of the Uniting Church. We will be reflecting on our tradition and our shared stories of membership and mission.
- Join us for shared morning tea in the Hall.

Let's sing together the words of Psalm 86 as we prepare to pray together.

Song: Answer When I Call, John Foley SJ

*Turn an ear to me O Lord,
answer when I call.*

*Turn an ear to me O Lord,
answer when I call.*

*1 Like an owl in the desert,
A sparrow alone and astray,
I watch I wait*

*2 Like the grass of the summer,
like shadows that wither and fade,
O Lord I wait.*

*3 Give an ear to my pleading
and hear me
God of my heart; I wait, I pray.*

SONG: [Answer when I call](#), © 1981, 1985 by John Foley, S.J., and OCP. All rights reserved.
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God of the journey, travel on with us.

As the spirit hovered over the face of the waters, it flew over the baptism of your son Jesus, it burst into flame for the Apostles, and it sails with us still. Come Holy Spirit, and fill the body of your church with your presence.

God of the long road, we walk under the colours of our shared tradition:

Black – black for mystery, black for the chaos of formless waters of new creation. Black for the dark night of the soul, black for the dark places that yearn for light, black for blindness longing for sight. Black for the night, black for sleep, black for rest.

Red – red for the Spirit. Flame red for Pentecost. Red for new life. Red for food and wine. Red for the body of Christ that walked the hard road of discipleship to the end. Red for the sunset and the dawn. Red for the breakfast fire on the beach. Red for the new day and the breaking in of the Kingdom.

White – white for the new Jerusalem. White for the new heaven and the new earth. White for hope, white for truth. White for the angels that sung choruses over Bethlehem, that rolled away the grave stone. White for the shining robes of Christ's transfiguration. White for peace and white for the justice of God like foams like waves crashing on the shore.

God of faithfulness, hold us true to our traditions of discipleship together. We trust you, and we trust in the work that you will do through us in times to come.

In the name of Christ,
Amen.

Word of Grace

Friends, though the mountains may fall and the hills turn to dust,
know that the love of our God will stand.

This is the good news: through Christ, in Christ and because of Christ your sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Song: Answer When I Call, V3 and refrain

Refrain:

*Turn an ear to me O Lord,
answer when I call.*

*Turn an ear to me O Lord,
answer when I call.*

*3 Give an ear to my pleading
and hear me*

God of my heart; I wait, I pray.

Gospel Reading: John 17:20-26

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the

creation of the world. "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

Thanks be to God

With the Children

Ian

Bring fabric out from cross over the communion table.

Colours of the UCA logo – chaos, hope and promise

Ask congregation for words to describe a church: what is important to you in a church, what do you look for in a church?

Song: Peace Salam Shalom

*Peace salaam, shalom,
Peace salaam, shalom,
Peace salaam, shalom,
Peace salaam, shalom.*

SONG: [Peace, Salaam, Shalom](#) © 2001 Pat Humphries and Sandy Opatow.
Moving Forward Music BMI www.pathumphries.com.

Hebrew Scriptures: Genesis 21:8-21

Peter

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word:

Thanks be to God

Reflection

Ian

Including discussion questions for the congregation.

1. *Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*
2. *We are pilgrims on a journey
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.*
3. *I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.*
4. *I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.*
5. *When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.*
6. *Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.*

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Prayers of the People

Peter B

Lord in our lifetime we have witnessed unraveling
In our communities
In our world
In our environment
In our churches
In our nations
There is no sign of this unraveling ending
Or rebinding
Or reforging a path to peace in our world.

As our world unravels
We pray that we would be a people of peace,
A pilgrim people that follows you, Lord Jesus,
Upon the path of discipleship,
Wherever that may lead,
And no matter the cost.

We thank you God for the witness of this church,
And for the Uniting Church in Australia
For the commitment to justice,

Reconciliation, to our natural environment,
For the care of the poor,
And the faithful witness to Christ in the world.

We thank you that despite our faults and imperfections
This witness continues.
We pray that this church and the Uniting Church in Australia
Will continue to weave the threads
of justice
Of reconciliation
Of care for our planet
Into our witness,
Into our lives, our mission,
and into all that we do.
We pray that this thread may help bind the wounds in our world.
For all these things we pray in the name of Jesus,
Amen.

Notices

Ian

Ian: Today we conclude the 26 days of prayer across the national Uniting Church begun on Pentecost Sunday. We have been particularly praying for Koonung Heights UCA in Melbourne and Aldinga Uniting Church in rural South Australia. While two other congregations out there pray for us. May God bless them and the whole UCA as it continues to seek the unity of God's love.

Sending Song: And On This Path MV8

*And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide,
And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide,
And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide!
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide, the gates are open wide!*

*So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide,
So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide,
So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide!
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide, the gates are open wide!*

SONG: [And on this path](#), from the poetry of Lynn Baumen, setting by Linnea Good, from [More Voices](#), United Church of Canada, Woodlake Publishing Inc. Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE #604502

Blessing and Sending

Ian and Dan

Ian: please join in the responses on screen during this blessing.

Dan: Jesus prayed for us, his church, saying, "may they all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Ian: Brothers and Sisters, go in peace

All: **Christ is our peace!**

Ian: Go with hope

All: **Christ is our hope!**

Ian: Go to love
All: **God is love!**

Ian: Go with the blessing of God
the Source of Life,
the Hope of Unity,
the Spirit of Peace.

All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Thank yous

Thank you for joining us, and thank you to...

Liturgist:
Daniel Broadstock

Bible readers:
Julie McKinnon
Peter McKinnon

Children's time &
Reflection:

Ian Ferguson
(Minister of the Word)

Prayers of the People:
Peter Blair
(Olive Way Pastor)

Musicians:
Natalie Sims
(co-ordinator)
Mikul Denison
Ralph Eduardo
Anthony Hinds
Clementine Loynd
Maggie Somerville

Editing / Production:
Jane Allardice
Hugh Brown
Ray Cameron
Saide Cameron
Ian Ferguson
Dave Miller
Mal Rowe

Images:
UCA Logo

Postlude Song: Peace
Salaam Shalom, © 2001
Pat and Sandy Opatow,
Moving Forward Music BMI
www.pathumphries.com.
Musicians: Shawn Whelan,
Natalie Sims, Steph Gesling
& Josh Whitty, Dave Miller,
Maxine, Clementine & Harriet
Loynd, Jess and Anya
Kvansakul, Kate Scull, Elaine
Potter, Glenice Cook, Ian
Ferguson

Closing verse:

'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—
I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.' **John 17:22**