



## OUR PENTECOST VISION

Being a Multicultural Church

2023

**Intercultural  
Neighbouring Sunday**  
Celebration Guide



# Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday

Celebration Guide

16 July 2023



## Introduction

In 2022, the 16th Assembly passed a resolution to strengthen the Uniting Church's commitment to living our life and faith as an intercultural church. This included the adoption of a new annual celebration - Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday.

By taking part in Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday, Uniting Church communities join together on this day to celebrate our cultural diversity and our commitment to being an intercultural church. At the same time, it is an opportunity for congregations and faith communities to reach out and build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in their neighbourhoods.

## Why Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday?

Research conducted in 2021 with input from Uniting Church ministers and communities found significant gaps between the high level of support for the UCA's vision of being a multicultural church and the actual implementation of the Church's commitments in local congregations. Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world with more than half of all Australians first or second-generation migrants. But compared to some other churches or the general population, the Uniting Church has a small proportion of members born overseas. Only 8.1% of us were born in non-English speaking countries. Our congregations still lag behind their neighbourhoods and other community institutions in reflecting this cultural diversity within the life of the Church.

## Becoming truly intercultural

In 1985, the fourth Assembly of the Uniting Church declared that "We are a Multicultural Church". Multiculturalism values tolerance but with no obligation to engage. How we understand our identity and life as a Church needs to shift from a 'multicultural framework' to an 'intercultural framework'. We need to be more intentionally intercultural in our worship, service, witness and discipleship and realise this is a two-way process of reciprocity. We're also called to love our neighbours and relate with them. It's time to move from a 'come to us' paradigm to a paradigm of 'going where our neighbours are', discerning and joining in with what God is already doing in our neighbourhood.

The idea of Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday is to seek ways for us to move forward in realising our vision and commitments. It emerges from a hope that we might become, not just a multicultural church in rhetoric, but a truly intercultural church, living life and faith cross-culturally.

By doing so, we can all flourish and participate in the mission of God as co-pilgrims toward a promised goal that is a renewed and reconciled world.

**Rev Dr Paul Goh,**

Being a Multicultural Church Circle Panel Member

Read more: <https://uniting.church/who-is-our-neighbour/>



## **2023 Theme: Our Pentecost vision - *Being a Multicultural Church***

We are called to be “a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole” (The Basis of Union, par 3) and that includes the “diverse gifts” showered upon us through being a Multicultural Church and becoming an Intercultural Church.

Culturally and linguistically diverse gifts and expressions of faith can enrich and renew the Uniting Church’s Pentecost vision and identity as “a fellowship of reconciliation”, and “a pilgrim people” - those from First Nations and those “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.” (Rev 7:9).

### **2023 Prayer**

God,  
Who is Spirit  
Who is Christ,  
You call us into community,  
A community of the common good,  
A community of oneness in our diversity,  
Unite us in your mission as we seek to live out your love.  
Gather us to worship you from every nation, tribe, culture, and language.

You call us from the comfort of our familiar circles,  
To go where our neighbour is,  
To help them in their need and let them help us in ours.  
You call us to be loving neighbours,

As we who are your diverse and multi-coloured people,  
One family united in the purpose of your Kingdom,  
Seeing all people as part of your kin-dom of humankind,  
Each a beloved sibling to share in grace.  
Bless us with your wisdom,

That we may walk and work together as neighbours, friends and co-pilgrims.  
And live out faith and life interculturally.  
Being a multicultural fellowship of reconciliation and renewal in our neighbourhood.  
United we pray.  
Amen.

**By Rev Jon Humphries,**  
Transforming Worship Circle Advocate and

**Rev Dr Paul Goh,**  
Being a Multicultural Church Circle Panel Member



## 10 ways to celebrate Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday

- 1. Begin a conversation:** Start with where your congregation 'is at'. Begin with a cultural audit of your neighbourhood. What is the place of the congregation within the community? Visit your local government's website to get your community's cultural profile. Identify CALD faith communities who are meeting in your church premises or neighbourhood. Consider doing a [faith-based cultural intelligence \(CQ\) assessment](#). Out of this study will come an awareness of practical ways your congregation can seek to live out this commitment to be an Intercultural Church.
- 2. Be renewed and reminded of the vision:** of being a Multicultural and Intercultural Church by reading Uniting Church documents: [We are a multicultural church: Assembly statement](#) (1985); [A Church for all God's people: Vision statement](#) (2006); [One body, many members: living faith and life cross-culturally](#) (2012).
- 3. Invite a minister or pastor from a different cultural background:** invite someone who is in your neighbourhood or Presbytery to your Sunday service to preach and/or plan to do "pulpit swap" between two congregations. Invite someone from neighbouring CALD churches to come and share their intercultural story during worship. Follow [Guidelines for Culturally Inclusive Worship](#) (2013, Assembly) and consider some ideas in "[Worshipping in an Intercultural Church](#)" and "[Towards intentionally anti-racist worship](#)".
- 4. Invite a choir from neighbouring CALD churches** to come and present to your congregation. Check out some suggestions for Worship in [Creating-an-intercultural-space](#).
- 5. Host a combined service:** Contact neighbouring CALD churches and ask their ministers/leaders whether they would like to collaborate in co-hosting a combined worship between two congregations. If you have a CALD group with whom your congregation is sharing church premises, check out [National Property Policy for the UCA](#) (2010) and [Framework for the setting up of a Covenant/Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#). If your congregation is seeking cooperation and partnership with other neighbouring churches, check out [When churches join: guidelines for UCA seeking cooperation with congregations of other churches](#) (2002) and [AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES COVENANTING TOGETHER](#)
- 6. Organise a small group visit to neighbouring CALD churches** and participate in their worship services, Bible studies, discipleship-training events, prayer meetings, or mission programs. Encourage participants to share with your Church Council/Congregation what they observed and learned from their visits.
- 7. Plan a series of intercultural learning activities** for your congregation and/or small groups with the following resources: [Share the vision: Bible studies about the vision of a multicultural church](#); [Building bridges: discussion booklet](#); [Friendship in the presence of difference: Study guide](#); [Space for grace - living in the grace margin](#); [Resources for CALD & Intercultural Ministry Formation](#)





· [Education](#) · [Discipleship](#); [Multiethnic Conversations: An Eight-Week Journey toward Unity in Your Church](#) (Download the [Leaders Guide](#)); [the GlobalChurch Project videos with small group study guides](#).

8. **Host (or co-host) an intercultural and/or interfaith dinner event** with neighbouring CALD faith communities at your church with multicultural foods, music and performance. Be inspired to read [a story of magic in breaking bread with others](#), [engaging with cross-cultural & interfaith neighbours at the table](#). Check out an Assembly guide, [Steps to hosting an Iftar](#), and an ecumenical liturgy, [Gathering Around the Table: Small Group Communion Service](#).
9. **Advocate for a multicultural approach** to key issues such as Mental Health, Domestic/ Family Violence issues and support CALD Children/Youth/Family ministries through joint initiatives and educational programs (e.g. Joint Kids or Youth Camp).
10. **Co-host a community celebration:** approach your local government council to explore collaboration in co-planning and co-organising a Neighbour Day Celebration event with your congregation and neighbouring CALD communities. For more information and resources on Neighbour Day visit <https://neighbourday.org>.

*(Compiled and contributed by Rev Dr Paul Goh)*





## Worship Guide

The ideas contained in this guide can be used to shape an entire service focussed on this theme, or can be used individually to fit into your regular liturgy. Please use these resources as best will serve your particular community and context.

### Introduction

From the traditional custodians of this land, to the many who have come from countries around the world, we are rich in culturally and linguistically diverse peoples and fortunate to benefit from the richness of the many cultures that make up our nation.

The Uniting Church rejoices in diversity of races, cultures and languages as God's gracious gift to the human family. In 1985, the 4th National Assembly of the Uniting Church declared "We are a multicultural Church". In 2022, the 16th Assembly passed a resolution to strengthen the Uniting Church's commitment to living our life and faith interculturally in our local communities and neighbourhoods.

Part of this commitment was to mark a new national celebration - Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday – to be held each year on the third Sunday in July (or another date best suited to the local setting), giving an opportunity for Uniting Church congregations and faith communities to celebrate being a multicultural church. Further, we seek to be an intercultural Christian community, living life and faith cross-culturally and building bridges with neighbouring culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of paying respect to First Peoples whenever we gather together. You can find the nation group for the land you are on by viewing the [AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia](#). UCA's bilingual poster is available in 11 different languages from the Assembly website here <https://uniting.church/acknowledgementinlanguage/>

**Option 1:** Today, as we gather to worship, we acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ First Nation 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 Torres Strait 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.



**Option 2:** Let us remember we meet on \_\_\_\_\_ land.

We give thanks for the \_\_\_\_\_ People, and their elders, past, present and emerging who have held as sacred the duty of protecting the Land and living in harmony with it.

May God honour and bless them  
**Now and to eternity.**

Together we meet in God's own country  
**Called to care for the earth**  
**Called to be reconciled to all people**  
**Called to become siblings in Christ, God's beloved family.**

*(Adapted from Acknowledgement of Country used at Enfield Uniting Church, SA)*

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

In this Season of the Spirit, we light a candle,  
reminding us that whoever we are,  
whatever nation, ethnicity or culture we come from,  
Christ is the fire of hope and freedom.

As this flame flickers in our midst,  
we commit ourselves to respect all, regardless of race or culture,  
to spread the light of Christ to the world.  
Gathered as Spirit-filled disciples of Christ,  
we are enriched in our diversity  
and in our unity in Christ  
we quiet our hearts for worship.

*(Contributed by Pastor Levon Kardashian)*

## **Call to Worship**

### **Option 1:**

Come all you people, enter the presence of God.  
**We are members of the family of God.**  
Christ has brought us peace by making us all one people.  
**From every nation, every race, culture, and language.**  
Come all who gather to praise and sing in the one Spirit.  
**Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour be to our God forever and ever! Amen!**

### **Option 2:**

We are the Body of Christ, those who remind the world of a love which knows no ending and which is given in costliness.  
**We gather here to worship the God who calls all people towards justice and demonstrates that life in the everlasting example of Jesus of Nazareth.**





We are the Body of Christ, gathered in celebration and sharing all the gifts which we can spread out into a waiting world.

**Together, life can be enlarged and enhanced, bearing witness to the creativity of God and the wonder of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God!  
Amen.**

There is celebration here today.

Here we will chat away, songs will be sung, truths will be spoken, and joy will be shared.

**Come, join us, we are all invited, no one is excluded, we are guests of the Father, guests of the Son, guests of the Holy Spirit.**

*(Contributed by Pastor Levon Kardashian)*

### **Option 3:**

Dear Pilgrim people of God, we come together today to celebrate God's gifts of unity and difference.

**We gather together to affirm that it is good to belong to a multi-cultural church in a nation of many cultures.**

God delights in our differences - of colour language, customs and the ways we think, pray, worship and speak of God.

**We will sing for joy in the presence of this God!**

Our ancestors and some of us journeyed here from many different places around the world.

**And here in this land immigrants discovered the living presence of the same God in Christ of their homelands. We are different, yet because of Christ, we are one.**

**Praise God! Let us worship this One who walks with us in every way on the journey to God's promised end.**

### **Prayer of Invocation**

Loving and Gracious God, you are the Creator who gathers us together today to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving the community in which we live.

We are nourished by its diversity, brought about by the unique gifts each person contributes.

Be with us in this time of worship and encourage us to never cease welcoming the strangers we meet and accepting the gifts they bring.

Grant that they will enrich our lives and will be a reminder of the joy that comes when all will be one in you.

Amen.

### **Song/Hymn**

**Option 1:** TiS 693. Come as you are

**Option 2:** All Are Welcome by Marty Haugen

[All Are Welcome - YouTube Music](#)



## Prayer of Thanksgiving

### Option 1:

Creator of the universe, the eternal God who is the source of times, we worship you.

We take refuge in you.

You called us from age to age, and led us step by step; you are our past, present and future.

We gather here to give thanks for the ecumenical journey of the Uniting Church in Australia.

You who brought the Church into union are continuing to shape her life to reflect your compassion, justice and diversity.

We thank you for the 38 years of journey since we declared ourselves to be a multicultural Church. It is not our making but you who have welcomed people of many cultures and languages into your Church. You invite us into a deeper fellowship and understanding in order that we may accept, appreciate, learn from and celebrate each others' faith that is expressed through their cultures.

Grant us grace, humility, wisdom and a sense of adventure as we continue our journey, as we commit ourselves to you and each other in faith and good will.

O God of many cultures help us to acknowledge the diversity you are and to receive the gospel that comes through each culture you have created.

May you continue to surprise us, and open our hearts and minds to the wonder of your creation as we learn to live in the diversity of our faith expressions and love towards you and each other.

We ask this in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*(Contributed by Rev Dev Anandarajan)*

### Option 2:

Living God, you make yourself known yet remain beyond all knowledge. You show yourself and yet remain mysterious. You have shaped this land and its people.

**We thank you, creator God. Thank you for the gift of this land and for those who have cared for it since time immemorial.**

Thank you for all these others who for centuries have come to these shores bringing their hopes and fears, gifts and graces.

**Thank you that here you welcome us, guests in your creation, weaving in us and among us threads of new life and hope.**

Yours are the diverse people who now share together in this home, Australia.



May we cherish this land, its First Peoples and all who have come after. In love may we continue to learn how to live justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with You and all our neighbours.

## **Prayer of Confession**

### **Option 1:**

**'Simply, because they are...'**

**Jesus, Friend and Brother to all, hear our prayer.**

We, who celebrate being part of your family,  
too easily forget what it is like to be not included.

**Forgotten, set aside, unseen, and unknown,**

**Nor acknowledged, welcomed, respected, or understood;**

**Nor having an opinion sought and not be listened to when an answer is offered.**

Remaining friendless, though surrounded by many,  
is a very lonely space in which to be.

*Silent prayer of acknowledgement*

In our comfort, we remain distant.

**We are informed of those seeking inclusion but do not act.**

We meet with our friends but not seek out the friendless.

**Forgive our unseeing ways, lack of empathy, and empty practises.**

We see your inclusion of all, not by  
race, religion, age, gender, societal structure,  
wealth, work role, politics, education or health,  
but, simply, because they are.

Your love flows as naturally as a drop of water on a dry cloth,  
Flowing past, around and beyond barriers set by human minds and actions,  
offering love, grace and belonging to all.

**Refresh our ways, Jesus,**

**with the water that brings life to our parched ways.**

*(Contributed by Rev Anne Hewitt)*

### **Option 2:**

We struggle to see beyond our own needs, our culture, and our distinctiveness; to see the limitations of our focus on ourselves;

We ignore the needs of our beloved siblings, the rich gifts that our differences bring.  
We decline the gift of our differences and diversity you lay before us, finding it easier to bask in separation and expectations of becoming the same.

Deluge us in your Grace, Oh God

**Deluge us in your Grace**

## Prayer of Assurance

### Option 1:

Friends, Christ has brought us peace by making us all one people.  
In assurance we pray:

Warm our hearts, so that our smile radiates welcome.  
Open our ears to hear lament.  
Reveal to our eyes the invisible ones in the 'between' spaces.  
Strengthen our actions with grace,  
so that, the space between all your people  
mirrors our connection and belonging  
to the radiating love of God.  
In your name we pray.

Amen

*(Contributed by Rev Anne Hewitt)*

### Option 2:

God is love. Through Christ Your sins are forgiven. Take hold of this forgiveness and live your life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

## Response of joy

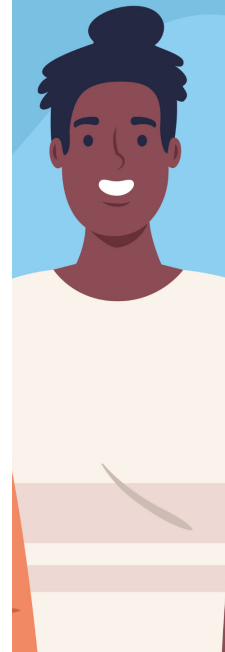
TiS 720 [from the Caribbean- a great song to move to!]

Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!  
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!  
Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le lu jah!  
Hal-le lu jah, Hal-le lu jah!

## Bible Readings & Sermon Starters

These can be read in various languages and/or dramatised by groups with those who are comfortable wearing traditional dress - reminders that the Bible speaks out of a particular culture and into every place, culture and time.

- If you have access to a data projector, a simple way to be inclusive without repeating each of the readings is to have other languages displayed on the screen.
- If you have a printed order of service, then readings can be in a variety of languages.



- If there are few Bibles in one language, then encourage those who know that language to follow the reading there while it is read aloud in another language.

## Themes

Some of the themes from the Affirmation "[A Church for all God's people](#)" [11th Assembly 2006] offer a wide range of Bible readings suitable for use in the Celebrations of Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday.

**Welcome the stranger:** Israel was required to exercise justice and compassion to strangers. In the Biblical stories there are many examples of God coming in the form of a stranger. In Genesis 18: 1-8 Abraham offered hospitality to the three strangers who turned out to be God's messengers.

The memory of our own experiences of alienation and powerlessness are to shape our response to strangers and the powerless in our communities and networks in Exodus 22: 21 and 23:9 and Deuteronomy 10: 19, 24: 17-18. The life we live, both personally and as communities, is to be lived open to others, as a matter of justice - the "fast" that God has chosen: Isaiah 58.

Strangers enhance rather than diminish the life of communities (Luke 24: 13-35 - walk to Emmaus; Acts 10: 34 - Peter, dream and Cornelius; Romans 12: 13 and Hebrews 13: 2 - extending hospitality to strangers).

**Hospitality is the hallmark of the kingdom community.** Brendan Byrne suggests that "... Luke sees the whole ministry of Jesus as a 'visitation' on God's part to Israel and the world." The question that arises is "... how will this guest, this visitor be received?" He goes on "The One who comes as a visitor and guest in fact becomes host and offers a hospitality in which human beings and, potentially, the entire world, can become truly human, be at home, can know salvation in the depths of their hearts." [The Hospitality of God, page 4].

Jesus the host challenged religious leaders and others, often his guests (Luke 19:1-10 - Zacchaeus is an excellent example), to invite to their table the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. (Luke 14:1, 7-14; Matthew 25).

His parable of the great banquet offered a picture of the generous hospitality of God reaching out to invite those who had been excluded. In the Kingdom, "People will come from north, south, east and west and feast together" (Luke 13: 9). Paul told the church in Rome to "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you" (Romans 15:7).

***The vision of the heavenly banquet includes people  
from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Revelation 7: 9).***

The phrase "heavenly banquet" also appears in some of the services of Holy Communion. In that liturgy, the Holy Communion itself is described as "... a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all..." In the book of Revelation 7: 12 we are offered a vision of an innumerable multitude of every nation, tribe, race and language each praising God in their own language.

Echoing the experiences of Pentecost in Acts 2. The 'Promised End' in Revelation is indeed multicultural! As the Holy Communion is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, so the rainbow mix of people we have within the Church today can be seen as a foretaste of life



in the heavenly realm that Jesus proclaims and a reminder that ... 'my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' (Isaiah 56: 6-8; Jeremiah 29).

Hospitality is the hallmark of the kingdom community Jesus proclaimed. People from different ethnic backgrounds take up their place, contribute their gifts and participate as equals, as both guests and hosts. A Church for all God's People is inclusive of all peoples and cultures, women and men, young and old.

### Further resources

[The Power of Our Languages](#) by Rev Seungjae Yeon

[Dear UCA - A letter from Evangelist Matthew](#) by Paul Goh

[Embracing the Other and Loving Our Neighbors](#) by Grace Ji-Sun Kim

[The "Other" Is My Neighbour, World Council of Churches](#) (oikoumene.org):

[Click here to download the table of contents, foreword and chapter 1 \(pdf\)](#)

### Song/Hymn

**Option 1:** Santo, santo (from Argentina) TiS 723

**Option 2:** In Christ there is no east or west TiS 459

**Option 3:** Kneels at the feet of his friends (Ghana) TiS 640

### Prayers for the offering

Thank you, God, for the ministries of the people of your church.

Thank you, God, for the bounty of your blessings you have poured out upon us.

We have taken a portion of our abundance and given it to you in grateful thanksgiving.  
Consecrate this offering.

May it help to support the ministries of this church that will dismantle the walls that divide us so all people will be one in the new family gathered in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

### Prayers of the People

We pray for the cities in which we live,  
the neighbourhoods, streets and homes;  
the places we play, imagine, dream,  
where we strive, work, and learn,  
where we rest, connect, refresh.

May all who dwell here with us flourish,  
may we live our lives with wisdom, courage and compassion.

We pray for the land in which we live,  
for these lands now called Australia;

we pray for the First Peoples,  
the oldest Peoples and stories and songlines;



we pray for the newer peoples  
who call Australia home:

may all who dwell here with us flourish,  
may those who lead our communities do so with wisdom, courage and compassion.

We pray for the places from which we have come;  
the places we were children, the different places we have called home,  
the lands of our ancestors.

We pray for the stories we have known, told, lived, heard, remembered,  
and the people who populate those stories.

May all who dwell in those places flourish;  
may we remember our stories with wisdom, courage and compassion.

We pray for the Uniting Church, and give thanks for the home it is for so many and such  
diverse creatures of God;

and we pray for those among us who do not feel at home;  
the homeless, refugee, migrant, lonely, isolated, those on the margins;

for those who are ill, dying, grieving, or losing their tethers to what they have known;  
we pray for the places in our Church that feel alien to some,  
as we commit to diversity that enriches the whole:

may all who dwell among us flourish,  
and may we greet strangers, neighbours and friends alike with wisdom, courage and  
compassion.  
Amen.

*(Contributed by Rev Dr Sarah Agnew)*

## **Song/Hymn**

### **Option 1:**

Ososo ososo, pyonghwa eui imgum  
[103-Come-Now-O-Prince-of-Peace.pdf \(mywtdivi1.com\)](#)  
[“Ososo / Come Now, O Prince of Peace” \(Korea\), arr. Joel Navarro - YouTube](#)

### **Option 2:**

[FEED US NOW](#) Robin Mann  
[\(43\) Feed us now - YouTube](#)



## Invitation to Communion

Communion is a sign of our oneness in Jesus Christ.  
It is a powerful reminder of our unity in Christ,  
despite theological, political, linguistic, and cultural differences.



This table is for all of us,  
near and far, high and low, east and west and north and south.

This table is for all of us, but it is not our table.  
It's God's table, for all of us, and it's a table of grace.

So come and take your place at the table.

You are welcome, you are invited, you are called:  
come, let us share this meal together.

For here at this table, the hungry are fed, strangers become friends,  
Sadness is turned to joy and love proves stronger than death.

All things of earth are holy, all things are one in you, O God.  
This earth is filled with your beauty, charged with your love.

## Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

### Option 1:

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

For this Land and the First Peoples

**We give thanks!**

For the Second Peoples

**We give thanks!**

For the culturally and linguistically diverse peoples

**We give thanks!**

For the seeds and fruits of this Land

**We give thanks!**

For the work of those who have tended the earth and prepared the feast

**We give thanks!**

For the One who breathes life into this feast

**We give thanks!**

So together with all of creation

We sing to the one who has provided all we need:

Holy, holy, holy God of all that is,  
All that was and all that will be.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,  
Hosanna in the highest.

*(Adopted from a prayer by Rev Dr Amelia Koh Butler)*

### Option 2:

For creation in all its amazing diversity, the span of the cosmos and this planet which  
supports myriad expressions of life,  
**Thank you God**

For the life you have given, the people we are connected with and for all which sustains us,  
**Yinca Leec (in Dinka) Asante Mungu (in Swahili)**

For the prophets, poets and scholars through whom you have spoken through the ages,  
ever calling us into the embrace of your love,  
**Tenda Mwari (in Shona)**

For Jesus your Son who shared our life and expressed your love, in whose dying and rising  
we know your love and have life as your people  
**Hananim Gamsahamnida (in Korean)**

For all the saints who have gone before, through whose faithful witness we have heard the  
good news about Jesus, and for the saints with whom we are gathered here today,  
**Vinaka Jisu (Fijian)**

For this meal of ordinary things made sacred by your touch and through which you reach  
out to us with blessing  
**Malo 'Eiki (Tongan)**

**Amen**

*(Adapted from a Communion Prayer written by Rev Dr Paul Chalson)*

## The Breaking of the Bread

Rice is heaven.  
As no one can monopolize heaven  
So we have to share the rice together.  
Rice is heaven.

As all share the sight of the heavenly stars,  
So rice is something which must be shared.  
Rice is heaven.

When rice passes your throat  
You accept heaven in your body.  
Rice is heaven.



Ah! Rice is something that must be shared.

**(KIM, Chi Ha, Korean poet)**

[You might like to use a rice cake instead of bread for this Communion Service and if so, substitute 'rice cake' for 'bread' in this prayer and the one that follows.]

The *bread*, we break  
Is a sharing in the body of Christ

The cup we take  
Is a sharing in the blood of Christ  
The gifts of God for the people of God

We eat this *bread* as acknowledgement of our place in God's promise.  
We drink this cup as an act of faith, believing that forgiveness is real and that the healing power of life reconciles and recreates all things anew.

Sharing *bread* is a sign of love,  
Inclusiveness and interdependence.  
So the table is set and the meal is ready.  
Come and take your place.

Come because you love a little and are open to loving more,  
Come because God longs to be in relationship with you.  
Come and receive Christ's resurrection meal,  
meal of the mystical presence, meal of fulfillment, meal of the Spirit's empowering love.

**Glory be to you, O God.**

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,  
and upon these your gifts of *bread* and wine,  
that the *bread* we break together, and the cup we share together,

may retell our common stories together  
and reshape our common bonds together,  
and remember our common grace together,

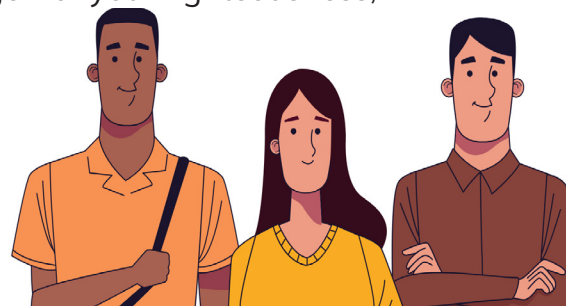
in the communion of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ,  
the one in whose life and death you have torn down our divisions.

And so may we be one with all who share this feast,  
on this day, of all days, with all your children at every corner of your table.

May we share this abundant cup with all those who thirst for your justice.

May we share this abundant *bread* with all those who hunger for your righteousness,

May we be united with every corner of your story,  
united in hope, united in vision, united in purpose,  
united in ministry in every place.





## Lord's Prayer

*Participants are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in one's own heart language/mother tongue*

## Prayer after Communion

God of many faces and names,  
You created all people in your image.

We thank you for the amazing diversity of races, languages, accents and cultures in this world you created.

We thank you for the wonderful diversity reflected within the First Peoples and Second Peoples of this land and in our church.

We thank you for the blessings and enrichment we have received from the rich diversity in the Body of Christ.

We pray that in our diversity we will find the unity that's given to us in Christ and appreciate the gifts that others bring to us.

We pray that we will reach out to those who are different from us,  
We pray that we see you in the faces of the poor, strangers and persecuted.  
We pray that we may be transformed, and drawn into intentional, intercultural relationships and community.

Help us to take the steps you call us to take, to build a more just, inclusive community, where diversity is truly embraced, where difference is respected.  
In the Name of the triune God, amen, amen, and again we say:

**Amen!**

*(Contributed by Rev Swee Ann Koh)*

## Passing of the Peace

Greet one another with "Peace be with you" in the language of your choice. Accompany your verbal greeting with Southeast Asian non-contact greeting gestures: Demonstrate the gesture by joining your hands together in front of you in a praying gesture held anywhere between chest to forehead level, the higher you position your hands the greater the respect/deference you offer.

The most common level for your peers is with fingertips at chin level.

A PowerPoint slide of ["Hello and Peace" in many languages](#)

*(Contributed by Rev Louisa Yu)*



## **Litany of Commitment**

### **Option1:**

In Christ all human boundaries are swept away!  
**This we affirm.**

Jesus Christ has made peace between  
people of every race, culture and class!

**We are witness bearers to this truth.**

Our life together can be a foretaste of the  
reconciliation of all things in Christ!

**We will seek to live as a sign and  
witness to the kingdom, and a sign of  
hope within the Australian community.**

As we move towards this new day we  
stand before God and our sisters and  
brothers to face who we are and who we  
seek to be.

**We hear the call of God to be open to the  
gifts of all God's people.**

It will mean naming the sin of racism, even  
when it exists in the body of Christ.

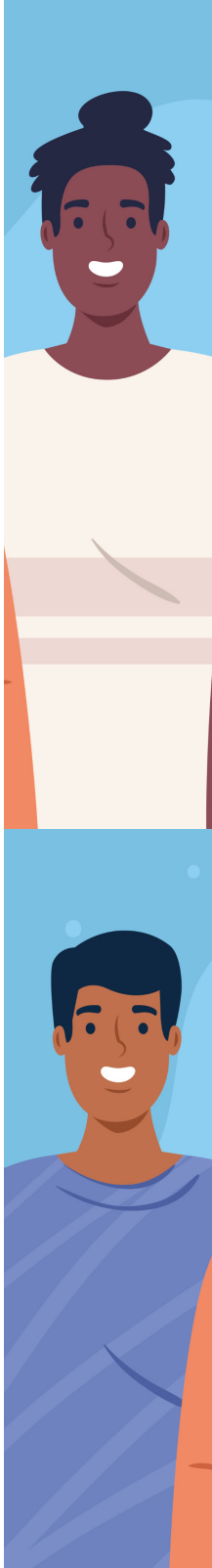
**We will work to create a community of  
justice and love.**

None of God's people are to be pushed to  
the fringes of our church.

**We will ensure that there are equitable  
rights in the use of Uniting Church  
properties; access to our church's  
resources; full participation in decision  
making in the councils of the church;  
and pastoral care for all God's people.**

And when we are tempted to hold on to  
what we have from the past and insulate  
ourselves from the hurts and struggles of  
each other.

**God give us courage to leave the  
security of the safe and familiar.**



May we celebrate the richness of our  
diversity and unity which is your gift.  
**We go forward as your people carrying  
within us the dream of God's renewed  
and reconciled creation.**  
Amen

*(Based on the 1985 Assembly document, "We are a Multicultural Church". Originally written by  
Rev Helen Richmond. Please edit as is useful for your congregation.)*

## **Option2:**

Called to be witnesses to the hope of reconciliation, we renew our commitment to being a  
Church for all God's People. Within the life of our nation, we will:  
**Recognise the place of Australia's First Peoples and work for reconciliation,  
Reflect the love of Christ for all people,  
Contribute to building an inclusive Australian society,  
Seek to minister effectively within a culturally diverse society and build bridges with  
people of different cultures and faiths,**

As a welcoming community we will:  
**Be open to receive from one another, sharing the hospitality of Christ,  
Affirm and celebrate cultural diversity, and let that diversity be a resource for ministry,  
Overcome prejudice and racism and develop a spirituality of trust, respect and  
mutuality,  
Encourage all members to embark on a journey of cross-cultural learning.**

As a community made up of people from many different backgrounds and cultures we will:

**Provide space for people from different cultural groups to maintain language and  
cultural patterns and traditions that are life giving,  
Reflect ethnic diversity in a visible way in our worship, life and leadership,  
Encourage people from different backgrounds to take up their place in the life of the  
church and contribute to its life,  
Seek to meet the needs of our diverse membership and develop policies and processes  
to assist the full participation of all members,**

As a community at mission we will:

**Encourage the development of culturally diverse congregations,  
Form, develop and train people for ministry in cross-cultural settings,  
Ensure equality and partnership in the sharing of resources so that property is a  
resource for the ministry and mission of the whole people of God,  
Utilise the gifts of all of God's people  
Be open to the transformation that the Spirit brings!**

God our Creator:

You brought this Uniting Church into being. You have called us to be your diverse and multi-  
coloured people.

**Show us how to value one another as those made in your image.**

Christ Jesus: You reached out across the barriers that divided Jews, Samaritans and Romans;

**Enable us to cross the barriers that separate us from one another.**

Holy Spirit: You are the Giver of Unity,

**Unite your people in love that we may be a community of justice, love and reconciliation  
- A Church for all God's People.**

Amen

*(Based on A Church for all God's people : Vision statement (2006). UCA Assembly)*

### **Option3:**

Creator God,  
we believe that you have created all the nations of the world to live together in peace,  
sharing their riches, enjoying their diverse languages, cultures and colours and caring for  
one another's need.

Grant us the wisdom and the courage to break down all the walls that we ourselves built  
to separate us one from another.

Empower us to rid ourselves of selfishness, indifference, prejudice and hate. Fill us with your  
glorious vision that springs from our common beginning as human beings created in your  
image and points to our common goal as your renewed creation.

*(Asia Sunday 2013 CCA)*

### **Song/Hymn**

[In a Church That's Moving Forward](#)

Words: Andrew Williams

Tune: Abbots Leigh (can also work with Austria)

### **Benediction:**

#### **Option 1:**

We have gathered, and we are sent to live out relationships that follow in the way of Jesus.  
We live as neighbours, not strangers, as beloved siblings, not 'them and us', to celebrate  
the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to peace, love and justice.

May God our Creator, bless you with eyes to see the beauty of all people and the glory of  
God's creation.

May Christ Jesus fill you with love for your neighbour near and far.  
May the Holy Spirit empower you with courage and passion to shape communities of God's  
liberating hope.

Amen.

*(Contributed by Dr Deidre Palmer)*

## Option 2:

The blessing of the Holy Trinity of love be upon you:

God, who is love, fill your hearts.

Christ Jesus, who is the new life, inspire your hopes.

The Holy Spirit, who is lifegiver,  
Spur you to deeds of compassion.

Amen.

*(Uniting in Worship 2)*

## Intercultural stories across the UCA

[Bexley Uniting Church is a house for all nations](#)

[Breaking bread with Neighbours](#) by Dr Sureka Goringe

[Engaging with cross-cultural & interfaith neighbours at the table](#) by Rev Dr Paul Goh

[Celebrating Twenty Years of Intercultural Community Service, Modbury Uniting Church](#)

['One Sunday Morning,' Broadview Uniting Church](#) by Rev Ruthmary Bond

## Appendix

**Appendix I:** [We are a multicultural church: Assembly statement \(1985\)](#)

**Appendix II:** [A Church for all God's people : Vision statement \(2006\).](#)  
[UCA Assembly](#)

**Appendix III:** [One body, many members: living faith and life cross-culturally](#)  
[\(2012\). UCA Assembly](#)

**Appendix IV:** [Share the vision: Bible studies about the vision of a multicultural](#)  
[church. UCA Assembly](#)

**Appendix V:** [Moving Forward in Being a Multicultural Church:](#)  
[16th Assembly Proposal \(2022\)](#)





