

Sunday May 31 Pentecost and Reconciliation Sunday

Scripture: Acts 2 Reading

Gathering of God's People

Today we celebrate the Day of Pentecost when the bible explains the coming of the Holy Spirit to all and all creation. Today we also recognise Reconciliation Sunday, the first Sunday of National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June each year). For the past thirteen years, the Uniting Church Synod of South Australia has encouraged this celebration as one way of continuing to recognise the Covenant between the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and the Uniting Church in Australia. Reconciliation Sunday encourages us to participate in one of the major themes of our Christian faith. God was in Christ reconciling the world. We too can contribute to this reconciling by developing mutually respectful relationships between First and Second Peoples within congregations and the wider church.

Welcome to worship through Morialta UC

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Kurna People have blessed this place through their care and concern. We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders, past and present, and pray for the future of their communities. May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

God is in the fire of compassion, justice, love and peace (**light central candle**)

God is in the land upon which we walk and share with all people (**pour red sand**)

God is in the words of Scripture revealing Gods way from ancient times to now and beyond (**open Bible**)

God is in the water, generating life, refreshment and sustainability (**pour water**)

We gather in spirit
each in our own homes
to give thanks and praise to God.
For in God's great love for us,
God has reconciled us to Godself
through the Son Jesus Christ
and even as the apostle Paul rejoices
"in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself,
not counting their trespasses against them,
and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us ." By Rev. Gowan Armstrong

Hymn/Song 494 ATW For You, Deep Stillness

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland
For you, deep blue of the desert skies

For you, flame red of the rocks and stones
For you, sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands
and when you're burnt by the journey
may the cool winds of the hovering
Spirit soothe and replenish you.

In the name of Christ, In the name of Christ

Prayer of Adoration and Hope in Christ

Some demand signs and others seek insight,
but we have only Christ crucified, stumbling block and folly to the wisdom of our time.
Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God.
In faith, we appeal to God.
In hope, we will not let God go.
In love we claim God's attention.
Let us honour the God who receives our cries,
And gathers us to Godself.

God of Holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit,
from the dawn of creation you have given your children the good things of Mother Earth.
You spoke and the gum tree grew.

In the vast desert and dense forest,
and in cities at the water's edge,
Creation sings your praise.
Your presence endures
as the rock at the heart of our Land.

When Jesus hung on the tree
you heard the cries of all your people
and became one with your wounded ones:
the convicts, the hunted, the dispossessed.

The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew,
and bathed it in glorious hope.
In Jesus we have been reconciled to you,
to each other and to your whole creation.

Lead us on, Great Spirit,
as we gather from the four corners of the earth;
enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past
into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ. Amen
By Aunty Rev'd Lenore Parker - *used with permission*

Psalm 23 – Aboriginal Style by Uncle Rev Ron Williams

My big fella boss up in the sky is like the father Emu.
He will always look after me and take me to green grass,
and lead me to where the water holes are
full and fresh all the time.

He leads me away from the thick scrub and helps me keep safe from the hunters, dingoes and eagles.

At night time when I am very lonely and sad,
I will not be afraid,
for my Father covers me with his feathers
like a father emu.

His spear and shield will always protect me.
My big fella boss always give me a good feed
in the middle of my enemies.

In hot times he makes me sit down in a cool shade and rest.

He gives me plenty of love and care all of my life through.

Then I will live with my big fella boss like a father emu:
that cares for his chicks in good country, full of peace and safety
For evermore and evermore.

As we share in this Pentecost & Reconciliation Sunday we join in prayer with all people and all tongues as we immerse ourselves in the Lord's Prayer, spoken in Kurna

<https://sa.uca.org.au/documents/covenanting/reconciliation-sunday-r2019/The-Lords-Prayer-in-Kurna.mp3>

Yeowa-rna Marngari-tti/ 'The Lord's Prayer'

Ngadluko yerli karralika tikka-ndi;/ 'Our father sits in heaven'

Ninna narri tampi-rna, kuinyunda kumarta-ppi-rna;

'Let your name be acknowledged, let it be kept sacred.'

Ninko yerliti-yerliti-nya pintya-rna;/ 'Let your rule be established'

Ninko padloni-tti yerta-ngga wappi-rna/ 'Let your want be done on earth'

Karra-ngga nammutannaintya-ndi/ 'As it is on high'

Ngadluko mai yunggu-ndo!/ 'Give (us) our food.'

Ngadluko wakkinna kumba-ppi-ndo!/ 'Take away our sin.'

Ngadlu tangka waia-re-ndi kumarta-nna-ityangga wakkinna wappe-ndi

'Have compassion for those who do wrong.'

Wakkinna-anna warti-tti/ 'Don't draw us into sin.'

Wakkinna-unangko tirra-tirga-ppi-ndo/ 'Save us from sin.'

Ninna mattanya, taingi, wilta, burti burti tarkari tundarri.

'You are the boss, the strength, the power, the glory for ever and ever.'

Wappi-rna! /let it be done/'Amen.'

We join together in the song **Filled with the Spirit's power (TIS411)**

Filled with the Spirit's power, with one accord

the infant church confessed its risen Lord:

O Holy Spirit, in the church today

no less your power of fellowship display.

Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire,

that unity may be our great desire:

give joy and peace; give faith to hear your call,

and readiness in each to work for all.

Widen our love, good Spirit, to embrace

in your strong care all those of every race:

like wind and fire with life among us move

till we are known as Christ's, and Christians prove.

Reflection/focus

The scripture readings for Pentecost are very fitting to the theme of Reconciliation and parallels to the lived experiences of First People within these passages. In Acts 2 the imagery of fire describes the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples.

Fire is a prominent symbol for many First People. It is a necessity for hunting, cooking and keeping warm and is also spiritually significant. For many First People, traditions such as storytelling, dance and art are passed down around the campfire. In smoking ceremonies, native plants are burnt and the smoke then cleanses the land and defends against evil spirits. Fire is also a sign of new life.

In recent times, we have come to learn about the benefits of cultural burning. Especially how this practice prepares the land for increased fruitfulness.

Reading the scriptures and preparing for today, I couldn't help but recall the recent fires across the nation and how this fire descended upon us – tongues of fire –leaping, raging, fear, darkness, destruction, confusion, disturbance.

Yet within the fire experience there were unifying elements – communities coming together, politics, aid, resources, Aussie battler and mateship, neighbourliness, sacrifice for others, self-giving.

Then the aftermath, for the county/nature at least – we are experiencing some form of regeneration, of new life out of the scars

One image still sits in my mind is a photo



that seemed to mimic the Aboriginal flag. Rose Fletcher took the photo at Victor Harbour as the sun rose on New Year's Day ' just after sunrise, when the fires were arguably at their worst, and hearts were heavy and people were frightened - me included,' Mrs Fletcher told Daily Mail Australia.

As I reflected this week on this photo and reconciliation and Pentecost, I wrote these words as a poem

Pentecost Reconciliation

*Flames and fears
Chaos and tears.*

*Fires severe
Arrivals draw near.*

*Red: blood ingrained:
Earth stained
History shamed.*

*Pentecost flame –
Wonder and strange
Confusion of voices
Culture and choices.*

*Peace in the dove
Peace from above
Reconciliation....
Together a nation.
(Bob Hutchinson 2020)*

This image of nature resembles something deep within our nation's history and theology. Fire, smoke and sun –able to create an image of the Aboriginal Flag? (pause)

Many saw this as a biblical '*sign and wonder*' that we should listen to the First Peoples, and especially around fire and fire prevention and cultural burning. That we should listen to their struggle, to the real history of 'the Arrival', to the fire and smoke of colonisation and the blood spilling, rejection and removal of the First Peoples.

In the Acts reading, fire is also a symbol of new life. It is the new life of the Holy Spirit, vital to our lives as Christians. Just as fire has contributed to the nourishment of people over the years, so the Holy Spirit nourishes God's people.

Acts 2:6-11 goes on to describe the Holy Spirit causing the disciples to speak a variety of languages. *The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies*, states that prior to colonisation there were 250 First Nations languages in Australia, with an estimated 800 dialects. Presently, there are only 13 First Nations languages being passed onto younger generations.

This is a great cultural loss, as a direct result of colonisation. It is devastating to realise that many Indigenous languages that carried tradition and knowledge for thousands of years are now forever lost due to the policies of colonisation that insisted First People conformed to the 'dominant culture', including the use of English to the exclusion of all other languages.

These policies disregarded the value, history and richness of Indigenous languages, and First Peoples suffered abuse and punishment for speaking their own languages similar to the disciples being rebuked for using their own languages as recorded in Acts 2:12-13.

John Van der Laar says: The marks of Pentecost have all too often been seen as personal, supernatural experiences and the benefits of Pentecost have been understood as personal edification, personal euphoria and personal strengthening.

Sometimes, the Pentecost experience has even been used as the basis for **separation** and **division** of one group from another, and as the justification for withdrawal from the world. But, in every community, every neighbourhood and every church God's Spirit seeks to enable people to "speak one another's languages", to welcome and serve one another, and to work together to serve and empower those who most need help and compassion.

When God's Spirit fills us we find ourselves being "sent" to serve others. We find ourselves seeking to bring peace and reconciliation between people. We find ourselves seeking to understand those who are different from us, and we find ourselves reaching out in compassion and service to those who are marginalised, excluded, rejected.

So, Rather than "lifting us up"- above others into a group that is somehow favoured by God, Pentecost "pulls us down" to connect with those that we would never naturally have the strength or inclination to relate to. Rather than leading us out of the world, Pentecost drives us back into it, to **proclaim and live** the prophetic message of God's reign, as Christ did.

Can we hear, or sense, the Spirit driving us out to proclaim God's grace and peace, reconciliation and hope to those who are different from us?

In what ways are we being equipped and called by the Spirit to bring people together and to serve others and to share in the experience of God's presence and activity among us, one humanity, one creation?

Song writer and worship leader, Robin Mann says: Some songs are written quickly — the Pentecost Prayer wasn't one of them.

I understand the Holy Spirit's work as being mainly recreative: producing faith in people, and the fruits of faith which can largely be summed up under the heading of LOVE. Exotic and unusual things like speaking in tongues and miraculous healings are a fair way down the list.

When this earth was created
it was God who spoke the word
and it was done;
gave his warmth to the cold earth —
all was new and all was young,
time had begun.

If I'm rough, make me gentle;
if my words are hard and sharp,
soften this heart.
If I'm weak, make me stronger,
let me look to you for strength
to make a new start.

If I'm deaf, break the silence;
if I'm blinded by the dark,
give me your light.
If I'm lame and I stumble,
let me take your hand again
and hold it so tight.

If you speak, let me hear you;
help me recognise your voice
everywhere.
If you pass, let me see you;
help me know the face is yours,
help me to care.

*Make me warm when I am cold,
make me young when I am old;
move me, touch me inside,
let your love burn in me now.*

Scripture Luke 10:30-37

³⁰ Jesus told the crowd “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, ^[k] gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the

hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Video (permission given) https://www.commongrace.org.au/parables_the_good_samaritan
The Parable of the Good Samaritan Brooke Prentis (3 minutes 44 seconds)

And so together we join in the song Christ be our Light (313 ATOK)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness
Longing for truth, we turn to You.
Make us Your own, Your holy people
Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!....

Longing for food, many are hungry
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us Your bread, broken for others
Shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!....

Longing for shelter, many are homeless
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us Your building, sheltering others
Walls made of living stone.
Christ, be our light!...

Many the gift, many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another
Making Your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light!...

Prayers for the offering of our gifts and response to the Gospel

Gracious God, Bless the offerings that have been given via Egive and Direct Debit or set aside to provide opportunities for ministry of care and love within our community and beyond. Send your Spirit on all who work to bring the good news of peace, reconciliation and love In the name of our Lord Jesus.

Reconciliation Prayer

God of Love,
You are the Creator of all things.

We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history and the sufferings of Our peoples,
We ask for your forgiveness.
We thank you for the survival of Indigenous cultures.

Our hope is in you because you gave your Son Jesus to reconcile the world to you.

We pray for your strength and grace to forgive, accept and love one another, as you love us and forgive and accept us in the sacrifice of your Son.

Give us the courage to accept the realities of our history so that we may build a better future for our Nation.
Teach us to respect all cultures.

Teach us to care for our land and waters.
Help us to share justly the resources of this land.
Help us to bring about spiritual and social change to improve the quality of life for all groups in our communities, especially the disadvantaged.

Help young people to find true dignity and self-esteem by your Spirit.

May your power and love be the foundations on which we build
our families, our communities, and our Nation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Song TIS 412 God sends us the Spirit

God sends us his Spirit to befriend and help us,
re-create and guide us, Spirit-friend:
Spirit who enlivens, sanctifies, enlightens,
sets us free, is now our Spirit-friend.

Spirit of our Father, Spirit-friend,
Spirit of our Jesus, Spirit-friend,
Spirit of God's people, Spirit-friend.

Darkened roads are clearer, heavy burdens lighter
when we're walking with our Spirit-friend:
now we need not fear the powers of the darkness:
none can overcome our Spirit-friend,

Now we are God's people, bonded by his presence,
agents of his purpose, Spirit-friend:
lead us forward ever, slipping backward never,
to your re-made world, our Spirit-friend.

Benediction

May our footsteps, on these ancient lands,
remind us of creation and connectedness, in our search for truth.
May the Gum Tree, from it's roots to it's branches,
remind us to dig deep and reach high, in our action for justice.
May the Eagle, who soars in the sky,
remind us of the power, in our call for love.
May the expanse of the lands and seas, of the sky and stars,
remind us of God's timing in our faith in hope.
May the Holy three, Creator Spirit, Lord God, Papa Jesus,
remind us of community.

BH: Dismissal

Go out into the world in the power of the Spirit;
in all things, at all times,
remember that Christ is with you;
make your life your worship
to the praise and glory of God.

Amen.