

THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Ballarat Central Uniting Congregation



PENTECOST 12

Sunday 16th August 2026 @ 10 a.m.

INTERCULTURAL NEIGHBOURING SUNDAY

"Belonging: One Body, Many Members"

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

INTROIT: TiS 253 – O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr!

O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr,
All the power belongs to you.
Hold me by this power, O Lord,
You alone are king.

Now we praise you for your Word,
Living, true, and full of light.
Yours the hands that rest on me:
Hold me for all time.

*Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land, versified by D'Arcy Wood 1936 -
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GREETING

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

ALL: *And also with you!*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

We gather on the lands of the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nations.

We pay our respects to their elders past and present and to all descendants of these nations who have cared for this place since creation. We also honour all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples here today.

We lament the violence and dispossession inflicted on First Peoples; ongoing systemic racism and inequality; the loss of language suffered by First Peoples through colonisation— languages that carried story, prayer, and identity. Many of which are no longer spoken.

We commit ourselves to truth-telling and justice; to walking together toward healing and reconciliation in this land.

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

From the traditional custodians of this land, to the many who have come from countries around the world, we are a nation of many cultures and languages.

The Uniting Church rejoices in diversity of races, cultures and languages as God's gracious gift to the human family.

In 1985, the 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church declared, "We are a multicultural Church."

In 2012, the 13th Assembly committed to living its faith and life cross-culturally as one body with many members.

In 2022, the 16th Assembly resolved to observe an annual "Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday" on the third Sunday in July to celebrate being a multicultural church and to build bridges with neighbours from culturally diverse communities.

We are celebrating the Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday today.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Holy One, Three-in-One — we come.

You who call pilgrim people from every culture and language, from every journey and every story —

We gather as one in Christ, with many members.

We affirm that it is good to belong to a multicultural church in a nation of many cultures.

God delights in our difference — in colour, language, accent, customs and the ways we think, pray, worship and speak of God.

Christ enables us to cross the barriers and builds us as One Body with many members.

Holy Spirit unites us in love that we may be a community of justice, love and reconciliation.

We are different, yet because of Christ, we are one.

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

Adapted from the Order of Worship for One Great Sunday of Sharing, You And I Our Stories (2000), p. 76 and 'A Church for All God's People,' Assembly Vision Statement (2006).

OPENING PRAYER

Loving and gracious God, You are the Creator who gather us as one body in Christ, to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving the community in which we live. We rejoice that each person brings unique gifts, experiences, and stories that enrich our life together and reveal the beauty of your creation.

Be with us in this time of worship.

Open our hearts to welcome one another with love, to celebrate our diversity, and to grow together as your people, so that all may know they belong in your Kingdom.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Adapted from Prayer of Invocation, Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday Celebration Guide (2023) UCA Assembly, p.9.

HYMN/SONG: TiS 693 – Come as you are!

Come as you are: that's how I want you.

Come as you are; feel quite at home,
close to my heart, loved and forgiven.

Come as you are: why stand alone?

No need to fear, love sets no limits;
no need to fear, love never ends;
don't run away shamed and disheartened,
rest in my love, trust me again.

I came to call sinners, not just the righteous;
I came to bring peace, not to condemn.
Each time you fail to live by my promise,
why do you think I'd love you the less?

Come as you are: that's how I love you;
come as you are, trust me again.
Nothing can change the love that I bear you;
all will be well, just come as you are.

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Risen, Crucified God, We cry out for justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for all people of colour who are experiencing racism, hatred and violence.

Forgive us for the sin of racism, and the ways we fail to acknowledge that all people are equal, created in your image, deeply loved and of infinite worth.

Forgive us for our silence, and the ways we are complicit in racist attitudes and actions. Stir in us vision, courage and determination to work for justice in Australia.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with your compassion and reconciling love, that we might walk together as First and Second Peoples in mutuality, respect and delight in our shared life and destiny together. Through Christ, our liberator we pray. **Amen**

Adapted from a Prayer written by Dr Deidre Palmer, 2020, UCA Assembly.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

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

*Adapted from a Prayer written by Rev Anne Hewitt, Intercultural
Neighbouring Sunday Celebration Guide (2023), UCA Assembly, p. 9.*

SONG: TiS 723 – Holy, holy, holy!

Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!

My heart knows how to say to you: Holy are you, Lord.

Santo, santo, santo. Mi corazon te adora!

Mi corazon te sabe decir: Santo eres Señor!

Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!

My heart knows how to say to you: Holy are you, Lord.

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SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND NOTICES

SPECIAL TIME WITH THE CHILDREN - *Early Word*

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Reader: "Your Word O Lord is a lamp to our feet".

ALL: "A light to our path."

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Genesis 45:1-15 (NRSVUE) Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have.

¹¹ I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty.' ¹² And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you.

¹³ You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here."

¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

PSALM 133

Words and Music: Bruce Steele

Response: How good and how pleasant it is when brethren are dwelling in unity.

It is like the precious oil upon the head,
running down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron
over the collar of his robes.

Response

It is like the dew of Hermon
which falls upon the heights of Sion.
For there the Lord gives his blessing,
and life for evermore.

Response

Matthew 15:21-28 (NRSVUE)

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

Reader: "Lord, may your Word live in us."

ALL: "And bear much fruit to your glory!"

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD:

***Rev Dr David Dong W. Kim, Multicultural Ministries Coordinator,
Discipleship and Advocacy - eLM***

LITANY OF COMMITMENT

We belong to the one sovereign God, who through Jesus Christ binds together people of every race, ethnicity, culture and language.

We are one body, with many members.

We receive our cultural and linguistic diversity not as a problem to manage, but as a gracious gift of the Creator.

We rejoice in the variety of God's grace.

We confess our sins of racism, and the ways we have failed First Peoples and people of differing race, culture and language within our own life.

Lord, have mercy. Forgive us, and turn us toward justice.

We affirm our unity in Christ even as we celebrate the theological, biblical and liturgical richness that our diversity brings.

One faith, many expressions; one Lord, many tongues.

We commit to ordering our ministry, leadership and resources inclusively, justly and equitably, attentive to language- and culture-specific communities.

We will share leadership, not merely welcome.

We commit to structures that are racially just, and to advocacy for racial, social, economic and environmental justice.

We will work for justice, locally and globally.

We commit to multilingual ministry and multilingual resources, that every people may hear the gospel in their own tongue.

We will learn one another's languages, and make room for every voice.

We commit to forming disciples, training leaders, and developing new communities in ways that reflect the rich diversity of this church and this land.

We will move beyond our comfort, that all may belong.

We commit to stewardship that empowers every community, especially those long marginalised by racial discrimination.

We will share what we have been given, justly and without partiality.

We commit to monitoring our progress, and to holding one another accountable in this journey.

We will not let this commitment fade into words alone.

As one body, with many members, none dispensable and none alone —

We commit ourselves again to living our faith and life cross-culturally, in the power of the Spirit, for the glory of God. Amen.

Adapted from "One body, Many Members: Living Faith and Life Cross-culturally" (13th Assembly, 2012). Please edit as useful for your congregation.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

OFFERING

(Your offerings for the mission and ministry of God through Ballarat Central Uniting Congregation will be gratefully received during the hymn. Please remain seated until the last verse.)

HYMN/SONG: TiS 468 – We are your people!

We are your people;
Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us
to all our neighbours,
Christ's living voice, hands and face.

Joined in community,
treasured and fed,
may we discover
gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

Rich in diversity,
help us to live
closer than neighbours,
open to strangers,
able to clash and forgive

Glad of tradition,
help us to see
in all life's changing,
where you are leading,
where our best efforts should be.

Give, as we venture
justice and care
(peaceful, resisting,
waiting or risking)
wisdom to know when and where.

Christ, as we serve you
in different ways,
may all we're doing
show that you're living,
meeting your love with our praise.

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

(Followed by the Lord's Prayer in version and language of your choice)

SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

HYMN/SONG: TiS 687 – God gives us a future!
God gives us a future, daring us to go
into dreams and dangers on a path unknown.
We will face tomorrow in the Spirit's power,
we will let God change us, for new life starts now.

We must leave behind us sins of yesterday,
for God's new beginning is a better way.
Fear and doubt and habit must not hold us back:
God gives hope, and insight, and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us how to read the signs,
how to meet the challenge of our troubled times.
Love us into action, stir us into prayer,
till we choose God's life, and find our future there.

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WORD OF MISSION

Go now, as one body with many members, to challenge injustice, to stand
with the oppressed, to walk together as First and Second Peoples, and to
make room for every member to belong.

BLESSING

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.

DISMISSAL SONG: TiS 666 – We are marching in the light of God!

We are **marching** in the light of God. (x4)

*We are marching, marching,
we are marching Oo...*

We are marching in the light of God.

*We are marching, marching,
we are marching Oo...*

We are marching in the light of God.

We are **moving** in the power of God. (x4)

South African traditional tr. Anders Nyberg 1955-. Public Domain.

Worship Leaders – Revs Lauleti Tu'inauvai, Dr David Dong Won Kim, Andy Gault; **Elder** – Anita Hinton; **Readers** – Andrew Boatman, Lesley Lyons, Andy Gault; **Prayer** – Rev Dr Graeme Sutton; **BCUC Choir, Music & Choir Director** – Helen Duggan; **Pianist** – Rev Dr Graeme Sutton; **Flautists** – Karen Coad, Charlotte Withers; **Bass guitar** – Steve Holoyda; **IT, Video & Audio** – Ben Daniel; **Welcome** – Shirley Vanderbom, Susan Pierotti; **Door Stewards** – Lyn & Ron Fleming; **Morning Tea** – Jan Tozer, Miriam Gibson, Ross Sutton, Barbara Snibson.

Prayers are adapted from UCA Assembly, Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday 2026 - CELEBRATION GUIDE. Songs are covered for print and livestream under CCLI License copyrights - 92505 Size D; 956612 Size D; 100813 Size A; 51350 Size C; 23869 Size B and One License 625332-A.

To connect to our Sunday Livestream Worship at 10am go to:

www.youtube.com/c/BallaratCentralUnitingChurch

For more information, visit our website – bcuc.org.au and Church Facebook Page – **Ballarat Central Uniting Church Facebook.**