

Aboriginal Sunday

Gathering

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle. This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green cloth** or scarf to signify that we are in the time of "Epiphany".

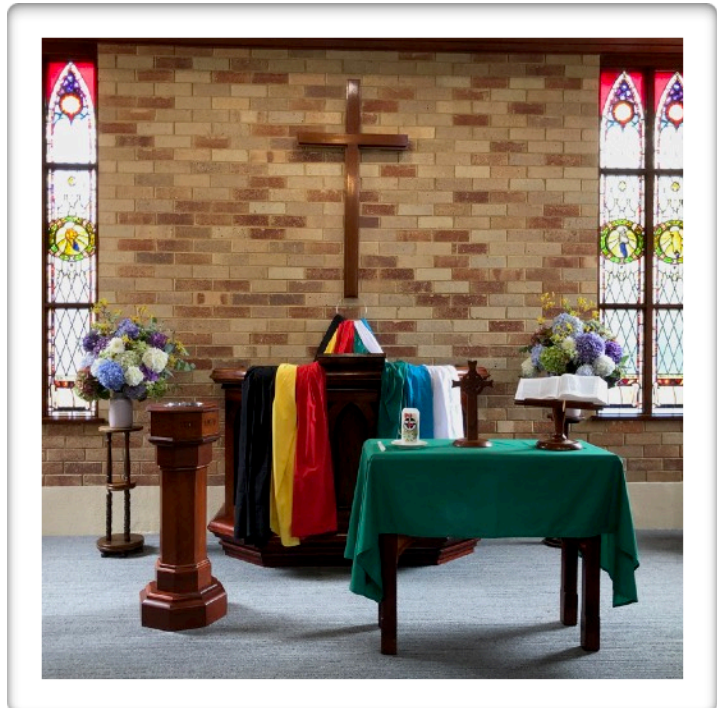
Or you might like to find something that reflects the Aboriginal flag - black, **yellow** and **red** - and/or the Torres Strait Islander flag - **green**, **blue** and white.

Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.

If you are wondering why we are focusing on Aboriginal Sunday today, have a look at this short video featuring Assembly President, Rev Sharon Hollis, and the Interim Chairperson of United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Rev Mark Kickett:

<https://vimeo.com/666639626?>

[embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=3458198](https://vimeo.com/666639626?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=3458198)



Light Candle

The candle reminds us of the light of Christ - shining in the darkness. And come what may, it cannot be overcome.

Call to Worship

Our land is alive with the glory of God;
desert sands hum and gum trees dance.
Brown grasses sing
and mountains breathe their stillness.
All created things add their rhythms of delight
and even stones rap out their praise.
Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;
may our hearts join the beat of her joy,
for our triune God is with us:
the Source of all being surrounds and upholds us.
Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.
The Spirit moves within and between us.
Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.

Acknowledgement of Country

Today, as we gather to worship,
we acknowledge the Wodi Wodi peoples of the Darahwal nation,
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 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.

Sing - Gather Un In (Together In Song 474)

Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our
dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;
we are the old, who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of
history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take of wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your
daughters,
call us anew to be salt of the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven light years away,
but here in this space, the new light is
shining,
now is the kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in, and hold us forever;
gather us in, and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Video - Interview with Aunty Jean Phillips - the importance of prayer
Aunty Jean Phillips has served many Aboriginal communities, churches of all denominations, raised up the next generations of Aboriginal Christian Leaders, and has called non-Aboriginal Christians to come on the journey of fighting injustice for decades. Aunty Jean currently lives in Brisbane and is still in full time ministry serving the Brisbane and Logan communities.

<https://vimeo.com/668422937/65327eb80d>

Prayer

We pray...

Abba, Father,

Bäpa God¹,

source of all life,

answer our call,

as a mother responds

to the cry of a child in the night.

Jesus Christ,

teacher and friend, Liberator,

stand beside us

as bearer of our humanity, and sharer of God's grace.

Creator Spirit,

giver of new life,

purposeful guest,

prod us to praise,

calling us to be a people

of hope and faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Lament and Confession

Merciful God,

we, the Second Peoples of this land, lament the injustice and abuse that has so often marked the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

We lament the way in which their land was taken from them and their language, culture, law and spirituality despised and suppressed.

We acknowledge and lament the way in which the Christian church was so often not only complicit in this process but actively involved in it.

We lament that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued. We have been indifferent.

Gracious God, hear our confession —

We have not loved you with our whole heart,

nor have we loved First Peoples and other neighbours as ourselves.

God of mercy, forgive us for our failures, past and present and give us the grace today to make a fresh start.

By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts so that we may love as you have loved us, that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

¹ Bäpa means Father in the Yolŋu languages of North Eastern Arnhemland

Declaration of Forgiveness

This is the best of all:

When we are empty, God fills us;

when we are disheartened, God is compassionate; when we are wounded, God brings healing; when we confess our sin, God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ and because of Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

You refill the cup of life, O God.

In Christ, we find refuge, strength and hope. Amen

Sing - Beauty For Brokenness (Together in Song 690)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPvioAt5fq4>

Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord in the suffering,
this is our prayer,
bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset your kingdom
increase.

Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who
can't speak.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love from a spark
to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned,
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we
need.

God of the poor...

Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their
praise.

God of the poor...

© Make Way Music,
Words and music: Graham Kendrick

Listening for God's Voice

Reading: Micah 6:6-8

⁶ 'With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Reading: John 14:15-24

¹⁵ ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸ ‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’ ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?’ ²³Jesus answered him, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Reflection

We share this reflection from UAICC Interim National Chair Rev Mark Kickett on Micah 6:6-8 and John 14:15-24 recorded during the 2021 Day of Mourning service recorded at Nunyara Conference Centre in Adelaide.

<https://vimeo.com/656849791>

Responding

Song - What Does The Lord Require Of You? (Together In Song 751)

What does the Lord require of you?
What does the Lord require of You?
Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.
To seek justice,
and love kindness,
and walk humbly with your God.

Jim Strathdee

Prayer for Others

Echoes of our Journey – Dorothy McRae-McMahon p159-160

God of imagination and love,
We thank you that we are not created the same,
That you have given to us
The exciting riches of our diversity.

**Thanks be to God for the gift
Of peoples of different races
And colours and cultures – to love,
To care for, to share lives with.**

God of justice and reconciliation,
We thank you that you will not let us rest
Until we all enter into your abundant life,
Life which is full and free and gracious.

**Thanks be to God for the hope
That we may live for better things,
For justice for First Nations people,
For release from exploitation and greed.**

God who listens,
God who empowers and saves us,
We pray for the struggle to end
Aboriginal deaths in custody.
Let justice be done, O God.

For all children in this country
to have the same chance for life and health.
Let justice be done, O God.

For an end to prejudice and discrimination in attitudes and services.
Let justice be done, O God.

For the bringing of a new order where we live
together in thankful harmony because we have
rightly shared the land, paid our debts and
recognised the dignity and worth of all people.
Let justice be done, O God.

We also bring before you most Gracious God, the people of Tonga this day after the
volcano eruption and tsunami.

We pray for Good News for family and friends.

We ask that resources might make their way quickly to where they are most needed.

We pray about swift access to fresh water, food and medicines.

Go with the rescuers, medical teams and emergency workers O Lord.

In the face of tragedy it is difficult to find the words and so we ask for your Holy Spirit to
guide us. Provoke us into compassionate action to share what we can in Your Name.

(adapted from a prayer by Amelia Koh-Butler)

Let justice be done, O God.

God, hear our prayers and make us part of your answer. Amen.

Offering

Take a quiet moment to consider your response to God, and your offering.

If you would usually put something in the offering plate, perhaps take a moment now to put it to one side for the time when we can gather again.

Gracious, eternal, mysterious God,
we bring our gifts
with hopeful and faithful spirits.

Bless the offering
of these gifts and our lives
that new hope and new possibilities
are made real in the lives of those
whom we serve in following Jesus.
Amen.

Sending

Sing - O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing (Together in Song 270)

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of our God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

He speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive,
new life the dead receive,
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Jesus! The name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
that bids our sorrows cease;
such music in the sinner's ears
is life, and health, and peace.

Hear him, you deaf; his praise, you
dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
your loosened tongues employ;
you blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, you lame, for joy!

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean,
his blood availed for me.

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

Words: Charles Wesley

Word of Mission

People of God,
go from here to live out the covenant into which we,
the First and Second Peoples of this land,
have entered with one another.

Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it.

Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same.

Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them. Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord. Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God, Until God's promised reconciliation of all creation is complete.

Blessing

Bless us therefore, as we depart this place:
give us a generous spirit, a kind heart,
and the grace to walk alongside our First Peoples,
as brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in the power of God's good Spirit:
with the gentle fire of God's zeal, with the breath of life,
ready to work for justice and peace.
We go in Christ's name. Amen.

Collated by Rev Janice Freeston

23 January 2022

from resources provided by Common Grace: https://www.commongrace.org.au/aboriginal_sunday

and the Uniting Church Assembly: <https://uniting.church/dayofmourning/>