

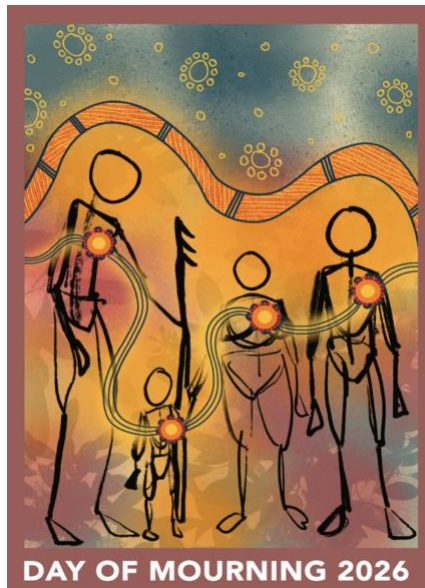
# Woden Valley Uniting Church



25 January 2026

Epiphany 3

**Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here.**



## WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD

**The Gong is struck three times.** *The gong calls us to gather, to be present in this time of worship.*

**Prelude** (*a time for quiet preparation - please be seated and listen closely*). **Own native Land**<sup>1</sup>

**Acknowledgement of First Peoples**

**Lighting the Worship Candle.** *The Worship Candle is lit*

**Come light, light of hope and love, give light to creation  
Enlighten our hearts and show us your truth. Amen**

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<sup>1</sup> From Jessie Lloyd's profoundly moving Mission Songs Project that reveals the daily life of Australian Aboriginal people on the missions, settlements and reserves during the Missions Era of 1901 to 1967. The Project explores the human reality when Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their homelands and moved onto managed lands, either as inmates or wards of the state. In a time of great distress, these truthful songs are surprisingly filled with optimism and hope, revealing a forgotten story on an unexplored corner of Australian history. The photograph of PM Gough Whitlam pouring sand in the palm of Gurindji leader Vincent Lingiari was taken by Rob Wesley Smith, a young activist, as it happened in August 1975, accessed at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-03/activist-took-original-gough-whitlam-vincent-lingiari-sand-photo/7805880>.

## **Call to worship**

We gather today, recalling the Sabbath when Jesus revealed his mission in the temple:

May goodness and love be present amongst us today.

Bless our gathering with love, hope, unity, vision and service.

**Come stir your hope within our hearts and renew our faith.**

We pray for unity.

**Build in us all a deep respect for one another so that your church may be one.**

We pray for vision.

**May your vision fill our lives as we seek to reveal your love.**

We pray for service.

**May our service reflect the message of Christ.**

May we be a welcoming, inclusive, progressive and outward looking Christian community that nurtures spirituality and faith and encourages service.

**We ask all this in the name of Jesus. Amen.<sup>2</sup>**

**Hymn: TIS 474 – Here in this place new light is streaming**

## **Welcome and Introduction**

### **Passing the Peace**

In love, hope and unity, with vision and service, let us greet each other with a sign of peace. May the peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

**Hymn: TIS 188 - Where wide sky rolls down**

## **WE REFLECT ON WORDS FOR OUR TIME**

The first **Day of Mourning** took place on 26 January 1938, when aboriginal and other protesters marched through the streets of Sydney. A deputation led by William Cooper presented Prime Minister Joseph Lyons with a proposed national policy for Aboriginal people. Sadly, although the Prime Minister received these representations, he ignored them.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from [https://www.prayerscapes.com/FilmPages/opening\\_prayer.html](https://www.prayerscapes.com/FilmPages/opening_prayer.html)

In a revised preamble adopted in 2009, the Uniting Church acknowledge that our predecessor in the denominations which joined in 1977 to form the Uniting Church have been “complicit in the injustice that resulted in many of the first peoples being dispossessed from their land, their language, their culture and spirituality, becoming strangers in their own land”. That is a cause for lament and mourning; it also presents Second Peoples with a call to work together with First Peoples to ensure justice in our nation.

Since 2019 the Uniting Church has marked a **Day of Mourning** to reflect on the disposition of Australia’s first peoples and the ongoing injustice faced by first Nations people in this land. In Services held each year many Congregations have reflected on the effects of invasion, colonisation and racism on First Peoples. For those of us who are Second People from many lands, this Service invites us to reflect on the past and to lament that we remain complicit in injustice. This year, this occurs on Sunday 25 January.

The following poem **Walking Together** invites such reflection. It was written in 1990 by Auntie Karen Brown OAM, a Yaegi woman of the Bundjalung nation living on Bidjigal country. She attends CRAVE Metropolitan Community Church and is a graduate of United Theological College, Sydney.

### **Walking Together**

The drowning of the didgeridoo  
as the music sticks play along;  
the sounds of my people’s Corroboree  
as they sing their dreaming songs.

For 60,000 years or more,  
my ancestors walked the land.  
Our homes have changed in many ways,  
sometimes hard to understand.

But they long gone my tribal ways  
after millennia of age,  
I cannot forget our history:  
for this is my heritage.

But to live in anger of the past is wrong,  
as hate is such a wasted emotion.  
So, let’s forgive the past, say “hello my friend”,  
and forge a greater Nation.

## 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

### A Church Divided Over Leaders

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.<sup>11</sup> My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas<sup>[b]</sup>"; still another, "I follow Christ."

<sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

### Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

## The Productivity Commission's Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap<sup>3</sup>

The National Agreement came into effect on 27 July 2020 when signed by First Ministers of all Australian governments, the Lead Convenor of the Coalition of Peaks and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. It provides a clear roadmap of Priority Reforms to align efforts at all levels of government and different sectors to deliver better outcomes for First Nations people and communities and achieve the Closing the Gap socio-economic targets.

Since the National Agreement came into effect, there has been much goodwill and effort but as several reports have shown, change has been too slow. The Productivity Commission's first 3-yearly Review of the National Agreement (Productivity Commission's Review) released on 7 February 2024 found that governments are not adequately delivering on the commitments in the National Agreement and have not fully grasped the scale of change required to their systems, culture, operations and ways of working to deliver the unprecedented shift they have committed to. The Productivity Commission's Review concluded there has been no systematic approach to determining what strategies need to be implemented to disrupt business-as-usual practices of government.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/commonwealth-closing-gap-2024-annual-report-and-2025-implementation-plan>

The Productivity Commission’s Review made clear that delivering the Priority Reforms requires proactive and positive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision-making on policy and program design, implementation and evaluation. Governments must establish strong foundations for trust with communities to share decision-making and genuinely engage. Governments must evolve new mindsets, loosen government processes and work hand-in-hand with First Nations people and communities on solutions that will work in individual communities.

Fulfilling the National Agreement will require genuine shared decision-making and trust, real accountability, real collaboration and coordination, and real support for First Nations people.

**Reflection – Recognise, Reconcile and Rejoice.**

**Music for Reflection<sup>4</sup> - Etwalkur’ inthurra unkwanganga (Nearer, My God, to Thee)**

## **WE RESPOND TO THE WORD**

**Hymn: TIS 648 – Help us accept each other**

### **Offerings**

We acknowledge that in addition to this collection, many do so elsewhere through direct debit or any other means, and so many of our community contribute in many other ways to our shared mission. We give thanks for the gifts of faith and trust and patience, which we bring with our offering today. **Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

*The Care Candle is lit*

May we turn from confining understandings of God and ourselves, opening our eyes to the presence of wonder all around us.

May we not limit the potential of other people but seek the wisdom that lies in every human life.

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<sup>4</sup> Premiered Oct 22, 2019. The Williams Family, hailing from Hermannsburg (Ntaria), NT, are siblings Genise, Damien and Nicholas Williams. This song was performed in the endangered Australian Aboriginal language of Western Aranda. This video was created as a part of the Therrka Endangered Languages Music Series 2019 launch at CAAMA Music Studio in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, Australia. Video accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u93TOPN8YyA>

May we welcome the stranger in friendship and with justice, that our own lives may be enriched, inspired and broadened, and that our blessings may be shared.

May we be moved to act in compassion and stand up against the hard-heartedness and self-interest which turns away those in need.

May we celebrate the earth as our home, a blessing to all people from the creative Spirit, and work for its healing and wellbeing.

In community with each other and all people of good will, regardless of race, creed or philosophy, may we be a presence of reconciliation and peace, overcoming division, in the spirit of the God who knows no borders, and whose grace is hospitable to all.

**Response: Make this our manifesto. Amen.**

## COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.     **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts.     **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks and praise to the Lord our God.   **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

With all we are, we give you glory, O Holy God, sovereign of all time and space.  
We bless you for this wide, red land, for its rugged beauty, its changing seasons, for its earliest people and for all who have come here over the centuries and the community we have become.  
You have called us to be the church in this place, to bring love, respect and service to all who live here.

Jesus said “Come to me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

**In response to your invitation, Jesus, we come;  
With our burdens and our treasures, we come;  
With our anxieties and aspirations, we come  
Longing to live a life of value and meaning.  
But with nothing but ourselves to give, we come.**

We pray that you are present with us, risen Lord Jesus, as you were with your disciples, and that you will make yourself known to us as we share this food and drink. For you live and reign with the Father and Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Let us remember:

On the night before he died, on the evening of his betrayal,  
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:

“This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.”

In the same way, he took the cup after supper saying:

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in memory of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

O God, by your word and Spirit bless this food and this drink,  
that they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Christ,  
and that he may ever live in us and we in him.

Make us one with him, one with each other, and one in ministry in the world, until at last,  
we feast with him in the kingdom.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in your holy church, all glory and honour are yours,  
Father Almighty, now and for ever.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen**

**Aboriginal Our Father<sup>5</sup>**

**You are our Father, you live in heaven,  
we talk to you Father, you are good.**

**We believe your word, Father,  
we are your children, give us bread today.**

**We have done wrong, we are sorry,  
teach us, Father, all about your word.**

**Others have done wrong to us,  
and we are sorry for them, Father, today.**

**Stop us from doing wrong, Father,  
save us all from the evil one.**

**You are our Father, you live in heaven,  
we talk to you Father, you are good. Amen**

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<sup>5</sup> Aboriginal Our Father from the “Missa Kimberley” used with permission of the Catholic Diocese of Broome, accessed at <http://acmlismore.org.au/pray/prayers/aboriginal-our-father/>.

And now, with thanksgiving, we take this food and this drink and proclaim Jesus' death and resurrection until he comes.

When strawberry gum leaf is dried and crushed, its goodness is released – this reminds us of Jesus' body broken for us. In his suffering he took on our pain..

The healing properties of rosella juice remind us of the power and strength of Jesus blood shed for us and for all people.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Let us receive what we are given. Let us become what we receive.

I invite you now to come forward and take the elements – the juice and the shortbread. As you come, greet someone, say hello. This is a table of connection. When we are all seated, we will eat and drink together in a celebration of deep relationship with self, community, country and creator.

A celebration of reconciliation – here, now and still coming. A sacred moment of hope.

### **Prayer after communion**

**Loving God, you have fed us with the food and drink of salvation. You have lifted our burdens and shown us the way of wisdom, of service and of love. Give us ears to hear, lives to respond and voices to proclaim the good news to all. Amen**

## **WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD**

### **Words of Mission**

What does the Lord require of us?

**To seek justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.**

### **Words of Blessing**<sup>6</sup> *We say together*

**Lead us on, to learn willingly, to love well, to live in trust.**

**Surround us with hope, shield us from harm, set us on our way rejoicing,**

**May this be our manifesto. Amen**

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<sup>6</sup> Joanna Love, The Church of Scotland, *Second Sunday after Christmas – 3 January 2021*, [https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/72450/3-January-2-Sunday-after-Christmas.pdf](https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/72450/3-January-2-Sunday-after-Christmas.pdf)

**Song: I Am Australian<sup>7</sup>**

*adapted from The Seekers*

I came from the Dreamtime, from the dusty red soil plains  
I am the ancient heart, the keeper of the flame  
I stood upon the rocky shore, I watched the tall ships come  
For forty thousand years I'd been the first Australian

I came upon the prison ship, bound down by iron chains  
I fought the land, endured the lash, and waited for the rains  
I'm a settler, I'm a farmer's wife on a dry and barren run,  
A convict, then a free man, I became Australian

I'm a daughter of a digger who sought the mother lode  
The girl became a woman on the long and dusty road  
I'm a child of the Depression, I saw the good times come  
I'm a bushy, I'm a battler, I am Australian

We are one but we are many  
And from all the lands on earth we come  
We share a dream and sing with one voice  
I am, you are, we are Australian

I'm a teller of stories, I'm a singer of songs  
I am Albert Namatjira and I paint the ghostly gums  
I'm Clancy on his horse, I'm Ned Kelly on the run  
I'm the one who waltzed Matilda, I am Australian

I'm the hot wind from the desert, I'm the black soil of the plain  
I'm the mountains and the valleys, I'm the drought and flooding rains  
I am the rock, I am the sky, the rivers when they run  
The spirit of this great land, I am Australian

We are one, but we are many  
And from all the lands on earth we come  
We share a dream and sing with one voice  
I am, you are, we are Australian. I am, you are, we are Australian.

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<sup>7</sup> "I Am Australian" (or "We Are Australian") was written by Bruce Woodley of The Seekers and Dobe Newton of The Bushwackers in 1987 – lyrics accessed at <https://genius.com/The-seekers-i-am-australian-lyrics>.

*The Worship and Community Candles are extinguished*

## **Postlude - *Waltzing Matilda***



## **Notices & Sharing**

### **Acknowledgements:**

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