

WODEN VALLEY UNITING CHURCH



UnitingWorld Sunday 12 April 2026

We Gather as People of God

The Gong is sounded three times (*calling us to gather and to be present*).

Musical Prelude (*a time for quiet preparation*).

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

Lighting the Community Candle

We light our Community Candle. As this flame shines in our gathering, so may God's word of hope and love shine in our lives

Guided by God's light, we centre ourselves for worship, open to the creative Spirit of kindness and compassion.

Call to Worship

All over the world, in villages and cities, in sweltering heat and icy cold, in the deep darkness of storm or in the stillness of blue skies, people like you and me are gathering, as we have for centuries, to remember our Christ. Storyteller, healer, hand of hope; we remember in different ways in different places, but we share the one spirit of love.

Here and now God waits to break into our experience.

To change our minds

To change our lives

To change our ways

To help us see the world and the whole of life in a new light.

To fill us with hope, joy and certainty for the future.

This is the place, as are all places. This is the time, as are all times.

O God of this place, and every place, God of this time and all time,

Here and now, unite us, nurture us, remind us of the fellowship of our brothers and sisters far away and near at hand.

Be among us. ***Amen.***

Introduction

Hymn: Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord (TiS 161)

Gathering Prayer

God of every land and people, we gather to celebrate your boundless love. You have called us to walk with our faithful partners across Asia, the Pacific and Africa, sharing hope, seeking justice, working to make lives whole and hopeful in the face of poverty, injustice and a changing climate.

For generations, Your Spirit has woven lives together in courage and grace. Today, stir our hearts with their witness — steadfast, resilient, alive with faith. Open our eyes to the needs of your world, and our hands to Your work of healing. Plant in us a bold hope that no injustice is too great, no dream of renewal too small. Together in Christ, make us sowers of justice and harvesters of joy. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we give you thanks to for the gift of life, the beauty of the universe, the serenity, and companionship. You, O God, understand the depths of our hearts intimately and we come before you now to confess:

Sometimes we look as though we are listening to others. We may even make all the right noises! But we confess that our attention is often anywhere but where it is supposed to be.

Forgive us, God, for missed opportunities.

Sometimes we are too distracted by our own concerns. We care only for ourselves, and listen only to those who say what we want to hear.

Forgive us, God, for missed opportunities.

Sometimes we don't listen to people because we don't like them, or because they are different from us.

Forgive us, God, for missed opportunities.

Sometimes we don't listen to you, God, because we are too busy, or concerned that what you might say will challenge us and call us out of our comfort zones.

Forgive us, God, for missed opportunities.

Forgive us, O God, for the times when we hear that we have to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you, but our ways of living defy your words.

We give you thanks that your ways are not our ways and that your mercy is boundless. You are always ready to receive us with open arms, and to restore us into fellowship with you.

Grant us the strength to walk in your ways, to love one another as you have loved us. May Your grace continue to abound in our lives, guiding us in the paths of righteousness and leading us into the fullness of your joy.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and friend, we pray. Amen.

Declaration of Grace

God's arms are outstretched to save the lost, to include the excluded, to raise those the world despises. Our God makes friends of foes, the outcast and the stranger, welcoming all. So friends, know God's arms are outstretched to you. You are forgiven and you are loved, now and always.

Thanks be to God!

Passing the Peace

May the peace of God be always with you.

And also with you.

You are invited to share the peace of God with your neighbours

We Reflect on the Word for our time

Bible reading: Matthew 15: 21-28

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' ^[a] 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.

UnitingWorld Video: One place at time - Lent Event 2026

Reflection

Song (Video): One in Christ (by Roxanne McLeod with musicians in Sydney for UnitingWorld)

We Respond to the Word

Hymn: Brother, sister, let me serve you (TiS 650)

Offering

Prayer of intercession:

Our God, we give thanks for your good gift of Creation and ask that we may learn to walk softly on the Earth.

We pray for an attitude of wonder and awe in the midst of the beauty and mystery of all that surrounds us.

We pray for those who suffer because of disasters, droughts, floods, fires and famines.

We pray especially for those who are impacted by our world's greed and growth, for those who suffer most and have the fewest resources to cope.

We ask that here in our own congregation we may learn to make choices which are life-giving for our brothers and sisters, in our local communities and beyond.

We give thanks for those who bring awareness of the suffering planet and work to bring about a change in our attitude towards the Earth, our common home.

Help us to change our ways and guide us to live a life which is not centred on ourselves, but on all you have created.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there? (TiS 629)

Benediction

Go now into the world in peace.

May the love of God guide you, the compassion of Christ move you, and the breath of the Spirit stir you to action.

Care for the earth, tend to one another, seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

And may the blessing of God — Creator, Christ, and Spirit — be with you and remain with you, now and always.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord in the name of Christ. **Amen**

The Community Candle is extinguished

Hymn: For You, Deep Stillness (by Robin Mann) *Sing twice*

'This week' at Woden Valley Uniting Church

Notices

Significant birthdays, anniversaries or events

Travel Candles

Fellowship

Morning tea is now served. You are invited to share in the time of fellowship.

You are also encouraged to stay on for an informal discussion with Barry over a light lunch about the work of Uniting World and the challenges it faces.

Leader: Barry Higgins (UnitingWorld)

Co-President: Evan Mann

Keyboard: Helen Swan

Reader: Carolyn Curnow

What UnitingWorld is and does (from its website):

UnitingWorld is the international partnerships agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. We collaborate with churches overseas to create lasting change together. We focus our efforts in five areas: overcoming poverty, gender equality, climate justice, emergency response and strengthening leadership. Through our work, we grow connections between God's people across the globe, deepening discipleship and supporting churches to be strong spiritual resources for their communities.