**Celebrating Being a Multicultural Church**

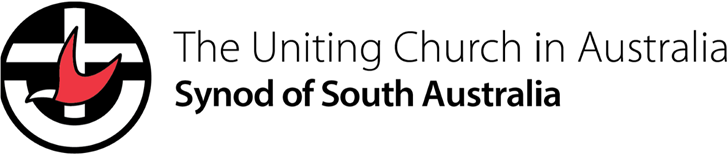
**One Great**

**Sunday of Sharing**

**Worship Resource**



**18th July 2021**

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**What is One Great Sunday of Sharing?**

The declaration of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) is a multicultural Church for all God’s people sets us on a journey to continual discovery of renewal. One Great Sunday of Sharing helps us to keep this focus at the heart of our common life in the UCA. It is held each year on the 3rd Sunday in July, or another date best suited to the local setting. Uniting Church congregations, faith communities and fellowship groups are invited to come together to share stories of being both guest and host, in personal life, in relationship with other cultures, and our experience of being Christian in a multicultural Church and multicultural Australia. It is an opportunity to spend time together with people whose culture and background is different from your own.

**One Great Sunday of Sharing Worship Guide**

**Introduction:**

From the traditional custodians of this land, to the many who have come from countries around the world, we are rich in culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, and fortunate to benefit from the richness of the many cultures that make up our nation. The Uniting Church rejoices in diversity of races, cultures and languages as God’s gracious gift to the human family. One Great Sunday of Sharing is held each year on the third Sunday in July (or another date best suited to the local setting), giving an opportunity for Uniting Church congregations, Faith Communities and Fellowship Groups to celebrate being a multicultural church since the Church declared in 1985 at the 4th National Assembly: “We are a multicultural Church”. We seek to be a more true multicultural Christian community in South Australia welcoming all God’s people and living life and faith cross-culturally and inter-culturally.

**Acknowledgement of Country:**

*An Acknowledgement of First Peoples is a way of paying respect to First Peoples whenever we gather together. UCA’s bilingual poster is available in 11 different languages in the Assembly website here* <https://uniting.church/acknowledgementinlanguage/>

Let us remember we meet on (name which aboriginal land your congregation meet)

**We give thanks for the People, and their elders, past, present and emerging who have held as sacred the duty of protecting the Land and living in harmony with it.**

May God honour and bless them

**Now and to eternity.**

Together we meet in God’s own country

**Called to care for the earth**

**Called to be reconciled to all people**

**Called to become sisters and brothers in Christ, God’s beloved family**

*(Adapted from Acknowledgement of Country used at Enfield Uniting Church)*

**Call to Worship:**

Come all you people, enter the presence of God.

**We are members of the family of God.**

Christ has brought us peace by making us all one people.

**From every nation, every race, culture, and language.**

Come all who gather to praise and sing in the one Spirit.

**Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour be to our God forever and ever! Amen!**

**Prayer of Invocation:**

Loving and Gracious God, you are the Creator who gathers us together today to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving the community in which we live. We are nourished by its diversity, brought about by the unique gifts each person contributes. Be with us in this time of worship and encourage us to never cease welcoming the strangers we meet and accepting the gifts they bring. Grant that they will enrich our lives and will be a reminder of the joy that comes when all will be one in you. Amen.

**Song/Hymn:** *All are Welcome*

[*https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=js8RtT0mJpc&feature=share*](https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=js8RtT0mJpc&feature=share)

Let us build a house where love can dwell

And all can safely live,

A place where saints and children tell

How hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,

Rock of faith and vault of grace;

Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,

And words are strong and true,

Where all God's children dare to seek

To dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness

And a symbol of God's grace;

Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found

In water, wine and wheat:

A banquet hall on holy ground,

Where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus,

Is revealed in time and space;

As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

**Video: *2021 One Great Sunday of Sharing***

*Compiled by the Multicultural Ministry Centre of Mission Resourcing and produced by the Synod Engagement Ministry Centre, this three minute video showcases some of vibrant cultural and linguistically diverse congregations and faith communities and intercultural ministries in South Australian Uniting Churches.*

*You can view and download it on the Synod YouTube channel and the Synod website:*

*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nBOHAbega8*

[*https://sa.uca.org.au/cald/cald-events-and-resources*](https://sa.uca.org.au/cald/cald-events-and-resources)

**A Prayer for Thanksgiving**

For creation in all its amazing diversity, the span of the cosmos and this planet which supports myriad expressions of life

**Thank you God**

For the life you have given, the people we are connected with and for all which sustains us **Yinca Leec (in Dinka) Asante Mungu (in Swahili)**

For the prophets, poets and scholars through who whom you have spoken through the ages, ever calling us into the embrace of your love

**Tenda Mwari (in Shona)**

For Jesus your Son who shared our life and expressed your love; in who’s dying and rising we know your love and have life as your people

**Hananim Gamsahamnida (in Korean)**

For all the saints who have gone before, through whose faithful witness we have heard the good news about Jesus, and for the saints with whom we are gathered here today

**Vinaka Jisu (Fijian)**

For this meal of ordinary things made sacred by your touch and through which you reach out to us with blessing

**Malo ‘Eiki (in Tongan)**

**Amen**

*(Adapted from a Communion Prayer written by Rev Dr Paul Chalson)*

**Responsive Confession:**

*‘Simply, because they are…’*

**Jesus, Friend and Brother to all, hear our prayer.**

We, who celebrate being part of your family,

too easily forget what it is like to be not included.

**Forgotten, set aside, unseen, and unknown,**

**Nor acknowledged, welcomed. respected, or understood;**

**Nor having an opinion sought and not be listened to when an answer is offered.**

Remaining friendless, though surrounded by many,

is a very lonely space in which to be.

*Silent prayer of acknowledgement*

In our comfort, we remain distant.

**We are informed of those seeking inclusion but do not act.**

We meet with our friends but not seek out the friendless.

**Forgive our unseeing ways, lack of empathy, and empty practises.**

We see your inclusion of all, not by

race, religion, age, gender, societal structure,

wealth, work role, politics, education or health,

but, simply, because they are.

Your love flows as naturally as a drop of water on a dry cloth,

Flowing past, around and beyond barriers set by human minds and actions,

offering love, grace and belonging to all.

**Refresh our ways, Jesus,**

**with the water that brings life to our parched ways.**

**A Prayer of Assurance**

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** *(Contributed by Rev Anne Hewitt)*

**Reading**:

Ephesians 2:11-22 (New Revised Standard Version)  
*CALD members may be invited to read in their different languges.*

**One in Christ**

**11**So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#fen-NRSV-29224a)] called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— **12**remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13**But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14**For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. **15**He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, **16**and might reconcile both groups to God in one body[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#fen-NRSV-29229b)] through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#fen-NRSV-29229c)] **17**So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; **18**for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. **19**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, **20**built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#fen-NRSV-29233d)] **21**In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; **22**in whom you also are built together spiritually[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#fen-NRSV-29235e)] into a dwelling place for God.

**Footnotes**

1. [Ephesians 2:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#en-NRSV-29224) Gk *in the flesh*
2. [Ephesians 2:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#en-NRSV-29229) Or *reconcile both of us in one body for God*
3. [Ephesians 2:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#en-NRSV-29229) Or *in him*, or *in himself*
4. [Ephesians 2:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#en-NRSV-29233) Or *keystone*
5. [Ephesians 2:22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2%3A11-22&version=NIV;NRSV#en-NRSV-29235) Gk *in the Spirit*

**Sermon Notes:**

In Ephesians 2:11-12 Paul rattles off a list of words that spelled REJECTION – at least from the Jewish point of view that he was familiar with:

Gentiles.

Uncircumcised.

Separate

Excluded

Foreigners

Without Hope

Without God

Far Away

What an amazing, radical statement then follows! (We Christians are pretty much used to this warm acceptance, but check out Acts 21-22 to read how Paul’s fellow-Jews felt about his easy-going warmth towards Gentiles.) Here in Ephesians 2 Paul goes on to assert that the barriers have been smashed down through Jesus Christ. I love the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases it in *The Message*, ‘He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over.’

Jesus came preaching peace – peace to those who thought of themselves as close to God, peace to those feeling far away from God. The feelings don’t much matter – we’re all in the same boat. And together, in Jesus Christ, we can be fellow citizens of the people of God. That is what really counts.

*Everyone* is included.

No matter who you are.

No matter what you’ve done.

No matter what your educational, racial, or social background… you *belong*.

You fully belong. (*Contributed by Rev Eric Densley*)

The moment a drop of water falls onto a cloth, the moisture disperses, gently spreading across the fabric, gradually soaking the whole piece. It is as natural as the kind smile that one face passes to another. When God’s love dwells deep in our souls, the warming, unconditional love that we express, is spread across the network of community, with all those whom we meet. Those who were ‘far away’ become connected through the grace in the space between us. This brings unity, as commandments and rules that segregated us, no longer apply in God’s family. Labels, ‘boxes’, categories, unbending rules and practices, really cause so much dissonance with the welcoming message of Jesus. The Spirit blesses us all through our common baptism. Christ has brought us peace by making us all one people. Who, then, are we to block this?

**Confessional Meditation –** **Radiating Love:**

*(This could be done on PowerPoint as a video to watch as a community. I would suggest then, blue coloured water on a white cloth)*

*FIND: A smooth bench top. A glass of water. A clean tea towel or cloth.*

* Use a clean, dry tea towel or handkerchief.
* Lay it flat on a table or bench top.
* Dip into the glass of water. Recall its coolness & refreshment on a parch tongue.
* Remember your baptism, washing over you, a visible sign of an invisible grace.
* Let some drops of water fall onto the centre of the cloth.
* Focus on how the water filters across the cloth, diffusing across the threads.

Reflect on this week:

*Has your face worn a welcoming smile as you greeted another?*

*Has your hand offered simple hospitality – a cup of cold water?*

*Have your words offered care and positive love?*

*Have your eyes seen the pain in another and acknowledged it?*

*Has unconditional love for others flowed from you? (Contributed by Rev Anne Hewitt)*

Ephesians blessed God because God's generosity had reached out beyond the Jews to include the Gentiles. The same theme remains the focus in this passage. The author reminds those who will hear this letter, that they once had no hope. It is interesting that he describes this hopelessness in very Jewish terms: they were foreigners and outsiders as far as the citizenship of Israel, the people of God, was concerned. Without Israel's God they were without God. Without Israel they were without the covenants and the promises. Such benefits are not to be denied.

This might sound patronising, but we should also note that the author has just levelled both Jew and Gentile in the previous verses. Both you, Gentiles, and we, Jews, were, for all intents and purposes, spiritually dead (2:1-5). The language of 'far away' and 'near' (2:13 and 2:17) does not mean that those who are near have arrived. This is not about incorporating Gentiles into Israel. It is about bringing both, together, to God. The reason why Gentiles now belong is not because they have been given something which the Jews already had; it is because God has done something for both which both needed.

The author's concern is to affirm the unity which now exists and to underline its basis. Both Jews and Gentiles are now members of something new. There is a new household of God, a new building, a new temple. So with imagery drawn from Jewish tradition the author nevertheless celebrates a third reality which is beyond Israel and beyond Gentiles. The author celebrates the church as a community of people who have new access to God. Christ is the cornerstone; the Christian apostles and prophets are the foundation stones. We are the building which is ever growing.

Notice that the dominant motif is reconciliation: peace with God and peace between two diverse groups. The horizontal peace is portrayed as the smashing down of a dividing wall. That wall consists of the commandments, by which the author, schooled in Paul's thought, means not simply Jewish scruples but the written law of Torah on the basis of which Israel and the peoples are separated by such practices as circumcision and food laws and a host of other provisions. For anyone, including any Christian, brought up on the assumption that the Torah is holy writ, such assertions would sound outrageous. How could the laws given by God at Sinai become an object for destruction! Ephesians seems to be written at some distance from such controversies, which dogged Paul's life. At this safe distance such outrageous claims can be made, because in the author's circle the matter is largely settled. Matthew would have a fit and Luke would have to dig deep to accommodate such thoughts - his Paul remained Torah observant all his life.

What we see here is the result of a daring process which usually meets with great controversy whenever it is attempted. It is the process of recognising that sometimes what we have revered as infallible and irreversible may by something destructive or discriminatory, including biblical commandments. The overriding (fence-bending, wall-toppling) value derives from the conviction that God must love all peoples, so that whatever discriminates negatively has to be faced up to and put aside. In our passage peace and enmity apply both in relation to God and among people. A vision of peace, wholeness, puts people first. Standing in Paul's tradition the author sees God's initiative above all in the cross. Christ's offering both brought us to God, as cultic sacrifices do, and abolished any basis of discrimination: we no longer need those laws as the basis of relating to God or relating (or not relating!) to each other.

It is possible to slide into smug self-satisfaction in this new superior people of God. Mission becomes a kind of imperialism as we grow the body or build the building, seeking to swallow up all into a single whole. Sadly, Ephesians has sometimes inspired such behaviour, both from individuals and from institutions. Then wholeness has been hijacked by power and the will to dominate. For while the language of power is strongly present in Ephesians (just look at 1:20-23), it all serves a more fundamental stance: that of compassion and valuing all people. The creation of the new people is also a new creation, as 2:15 indicates. It is still the work of the God whose intention is to fill the world with divine goodness. The intertextual echoes here of the first creation (2:15) and, through the language of far and near, with the prophecies of divine good news reaching out to all peoples (2:17; Isa 57:19; 52:7) indicate that divine good will is at the heart of all this growth and wholeness. It is not the mission to recruit strength and build power. It all depends so much on whether you see the goal as withdrawal to another source of power beyond all things or coming home to the source of love within all things which is seeking to bring and hold them together.

*William Loader,* [*Pentecost 8: 18 July Ephesians 2:11-22 (billloader.com)*](https://billloader.com/BEpPentecost8.html)

**Response to the Word:**

God of welcome

In the unity of your Son and the embrace of your Spirit we gather as your people

As we have been welcomed

Help us welcome each other and all others

As we have known your grace

Help us reflect your grace in our speech and actions

As you sent your Son that we would be strangers no longer

Help us be agents of your hospitality so that

The excluded may find welcome

the homeless may find shelter

the lonely may find community

the despairing may find hope

And so that all may know that in your love we are all part of your family

Amen (*Contributed by Rev Dr Paul Chalson*)

**Hymn:** *In Christ there is no east or west TiS 459*In Christ there is no east or west,

In him no south or north,

But one great fam’ly bound in love

Throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere

Their high communion find;

His service is the golden cord

Close binding humankind.

Join hands, then, people of the faith,

Whate'er your race may be!

Who serve each other in Christ's love

Are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,

In him meet south and north,

All Christly souls are one in him

Throughout the whole wide earth.  
*(Note: slight change of wording by John Oxenham*)

**Prayer for the offering:**

Thank you, God, for the ministries of the people of your church.

Thank you, God, for the bounty of your blessings you have poured out upon us.

We have taken a portion of our abundance and given it to you in grateful thanksgiving. Consecrate this offering.

May it help to support the ministries of this church that will dismantle the walls that divide us so all people will be one in the new family gathered in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Passing of the Peace:**

*Greet one another with “Peace be with you” in the language of your choice. Accompany your verbal greeting with South East Asian noncontact greeting gestures: Demonstrate the gesture by joining your hands together in front of you in a praying gesture held anywhere between chest to forehead level, the higher you position your hands the greater the respect/deference you offer. The most common level for your peers is with fingertips at chin level.*

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**Litany of Commitment:**

*Based on the 1985 Assembly document, “We are a Multicultural Church”. Originally written by Rev Helen Richmond. Please edit as is useful for your congregation.*

In Christ all human boundaries are swept away!

**This we affirm.**

Jesus Christ has mad peace between peoples of every race, culture and class!

**We are witness bearers to this truth.**

Our life together can be a foretaste of the reconciliation of all things in Christ!

**We will seek to live as a sign and witness to the kingdom, and a sign of hope within the Australian community.**

As we move towards this new day we stand before God and our sisters and brothers to face who we are and who we seek to be.

**We hear the call of God to be open the gifts of all God’s people.**

It will mean naming the sin of racism, even when it exits in the body of Christ.

**We will work to create a community of justice and love.**

None of God’s people are to be pushed to the fringes of our Church.

**We will ensure that there are equitable rights in the use of Uniting Church properties; access to our church’s resources; full participation in decision-making in the councils of the church; and pastoral care for all God’s people.**

And when we are tempted to hold on to what we have from the past and insulate ourselves from the hurts and struggles of each other.

**God give us courage to step out of comfort and familiar zones.**

May we celebrate the richness of our diversity, and unity which is your gift.

**We go forward as your people carrying within us the dream of God’s renewed and reconciled creation. Amen.**

**Song/Hymn:** *Brother, sister, let me serve you TiS 650*

**Benediction:**

We have gathered, and we are sent to live out relationships that follow in the way of Jesus.

We live as neighbours not strangers, as brothers and sisters, not ‘them and us’, to celebrate the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to peace, love and justice.

May God our Creator, bless you with eyes to see the beauty of all people and the glory of God’s creation.

May Christ Jesus fill you with love for your neighbour near and far.

May the Holy Spirit empower you with courage and passion to shape communities of God’s liberating hope.

Amen. *(Contributed by Dr Deidre Palmer, Assembly President)*

**WE ARE A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH**

***A statement adopted by the 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia July 1985***

1. The Uniting Church in Australia is a union of Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Its unity is both the gift of God through Christ who is the head of the Church and the fruit of the labours of those who sought to be responsive to the prayer of Christ that his disciples might be one.
2. The Basis of Union points to the fact that the Uniting Church unites not only three former denominations, but also Christians of many cultures and ethnic origins. Paragraph 2 states the Uniting Church "believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries." Jesus Christ has made peace between people of every race, culture and class. This unity too is a gift of God, a foretaste of the reconciliation of all things in Christ. It is also a goal to be achieved as we commit ourselves in one fellowship to achieve justice, affirm one another's cultures, and care for any who are the victims of racial discrimination, fear and economic exploitation.
3. The 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church welcomes the progress that has been made in the last 20 years towards the formation of a society in Australia in which people of many races and cultures live together. The Assembly rejoices that successive governments have substantially removed racial criteria from the policies covering the selection of migrants and the reception of refugees, and that in particular significant groups of people from Asia and the Pacific have been welcomed to this land.
4. The fact that our membership comprises people of many races, cultures and languages, is a reminder that the church is both product and agent of mission. In the church the Kingdom which is to come is experienced in the ambiguity of the tension between the old age which has not yet passed away and the new age which has not yet fully come. As part of that church which is a sign of and witness to the Kingdom, the multicultural Uniting Church seeks to be a sign of hope within the Australian community, and particularly to those who are pushed to its fringes on racial and economic grounds.
5. It is essential therefore to provide for full participation of Aboriginal and ethnic\* people, women and men, in decision making in the councils of the Church; to ensure that these groups have equitable rights in the use of Uniting Church properties and access to its resources; and to include their concerns and perspectives in the agendas of the councils of the Church. The Uniting Church seeks to be open to changes that the Holy Spirit will bring to the Church because of the creative contributions of people of different racial and cultural groups to its life.
6. The ethnic and Aboriginal congregations are a sign of the diversity of the cultures of the members of the Uniting Church. Organisation of the Church in ethnic congregations enables us to worship in familiar languages, to hear the Gospel in terms of our several identities and cultures, and to provide pastoral care for all our people. There is a risk, however, that the establishment of ethnic congregations will become a means whereby the rest of the church is insulated from the hurts and struggles of Australia's minorities. Opportunities should be made therefore for bilingual worship and for fellowship across racial and cultural boundaries.
7. There is a great variety among ethnic congregations. This produces diverse relationships between such congregations and other congregations of the Uniting Church. Situations in which the minister has been settled in Australia for several years will be different from those in which a minister has recently arrived from another country. First generation settlers often seek the security of a congregation of their own culture and traditions. Their desire for such close security is to be respected, and such a congregation may be organised as a parish of the Church. Where there is preparedness to reach out to people of other cultures, the Assembly encourages the establishment of multicultural parishes. It supports a policy in which ministers of different ethnic backgrounds will plan and share the ministry in congregations, some of which are culturally mixed, and some of which meet separately for reasons of language.
8. The Assembly recognises the need for special ministerial education programs to prepare people for ministry in multicultural parishes and ethnic congregations. For those who are to minister in multicultural parishes, sociological studies on contemporary urban society where different cultural groups live side by side and interact will be important. Because the Gospel speaks with direct relevance to situations of political oppression and economic exploitation, an awareness of what is happening at the points of interaction between different racial and cultural groups in Australia will be essential for ministry. The Assembly recognises that candidates for ministry with ethnic congregations need to be aware of the theological and ecclesial traditions of the church(es) from which the members of the congregation have come. Candidates also need to have an opportunity to reflect theologically on the life situation of the members of the congregation here in Australia. This may require theological study in both countries, and effective ministry will certainly be enhanced by field education with a migrant congregation in Australia.
9. The Uniting Church welcomes those Christians of other church traditions who find in the Basis of Union and the life of the Uniting Church a faith community of which they want to be part, but rejects any form of proselytism as inappropriate in the ecumenical fellowship of the church. Presbyteries are encouraged, therefore, to assist ethnic congregations of other Christian traditions to provide adequate pastoral care for their people, and to obtain access to buildings suitable for their needs.

\**Note:  Since 1985 the phrase “Culturally and Linguistically Diverse” (CALD) is increasingly used across the broader community and is a better and more appropriate descriptor than ethnic for congregations of people from cultures other than Aboriginal or mostly English-speaking descent. The expression “intercultural” is also increasingly preferred by some to “multicultural”, as it aspires to more intentional embracing of our diversity in the Body of Christ.*

**Guidelines for Culturally Inclusive Worship:**

In 1985 the Uniting Church declared itself to be a multicultural church. A multicultural church is a church that is multi-ethnic in composition and encourages participation of all its members whatever their cultural background. In 2012 the Assembly adopted a set of guidelines for living our life and faith cross-culturally in all parts of our worship, witness and service. It calls the whole church to be intentional about crossing our cultural boundaries to learn from and be enriched through this remarkable gift from God - culturally diversity. An important component of this is the way worship is conducted. While many worship services are conducted in a mono-cultural way and in one language, there is the opportunity for worship to be culturally inclusive. Below are some guidelines for considering when such worship is being planned.

Consider the nature of the worship service

* Is it a service that will include some components, such as a Bible reading, prayer or song in another language?
* Or is it fully culturally inclusive, so that the planning and all the components are decided by a culturally diverse worship team?
* Note that blending traditions well takes creativity. It is best done through face to face meetings where listening and trust are practiced.

Consider the goals of the worship service – recognising that the focus of Christian worship is God as revealed by Jesus Christ and in the Spirit

* Is it to assist people to appreciate more the culturally diverse make-up of our church and society, so what language(s) might be included; would an interview with someone be helpful?
* Is it to induct, for example, a new minister and respectfully introduce people to some of his/her cultural background?
* Is it to commission a group of new Elders or Church Councillors who are culturally diverse to value and respect some of their cultural backgrounds?

Consider who to include in the planning and conduct of the worship service

* A worship team with extra people to assist
* A specially set up worship team with a culturally mixed group of people
* Who will take part and how, e.g. singers, choir, preacher, Bible readings, drama, prayers, someone sharing something of their life and faith journey?
* How will the worship be presented if multiple languages are used, e.g. will the order of service be in written form or on a screen?
* Will the preaching be in a language other than English with a translation on the screen?
* Holy Communion, especially the Breaking of the Bread, can be conducted in another language as what is taking place is evident as the person breaks the bread and lifts the cup.

Use of symbols in the worship service

* Non-verbal elements can be meaningful to everyone so what will be included: musical instruments, dance, drama, mime, cultural objects, art, banners, mats; symbols common to all and others that are culturally specific;
* will any of these be explained and how?

What will take place before and after the worship service?

* greeters from different cultural groups; morning tea/afternoon tea/supper; a community meal – shared or with foods from one or more cultures
* can such a time be deliberately used for participants to cross-cultures – to learn names, and share stories?
* The missional purpose of what is done is important to have in mind, namely to model the inclusive multicultural nature of God’s kingdom prefigured by the church.

In 2020 Rev Radhika Sukumar-White from the Assembly’s Transforming Worship Circle and Leichardt Uniting Church authored a paper [*Towards intentionally anti-racist worship*](https://uniting.church/towards-intentionally-anti-racist-worship/)encouraging UCA to re-think how we do worship in a way that actively confronts racial inequities. She provided a list of ideas and steps people could take.

**Further resources**

*Acknowledgement of Country in language,* UCAAssembly [*https://uniting.church/acknowledgementinlanguage/*](https://uniting.church/acknowledgementinlanguage/)

*Worshipping in an Intercultural Church,* UCA Assembly

[*https://uniting.church/our-intercultural-worship/*](https://uniting.church/our-intercultural-worship/)

*Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts: A Practical Theological Approach* by Eunjoo Mary Kim (Liturgical Press, 2017)

*Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons* by Matthew D. Kim (Baker Academic, 2017)

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Rev Dr Paul Chalson, Minister at Canberra City Uniting Church

**2021 One Great Sunday of Sharing Video Resource**

With support of the SA Synod Engagement, Multicultural Ministry Centre of Mission Resourcing has produced a short video showcasing members, ministers, congregations, and faith communities from a diverse range of cultures in the South Australian Uniting Churches including

Adelaide Fijian Fellowship of Vermont Uniting Church (Filmed at Woodville Uniting Church)

Adelaide Korean Uniting Church

Ascot Community Uniting Church (Banner)

Broadview Uniting Church

Burnside City Uniting Church

Cityview Uniting Church

Hallett Cove Uniting Church with Adelaide Zimbabwean Faith Community

Glenunga Uniting Church

International Pentecostal Prophetic Church at Elisabeth Grove Uniting Church

Payneham Road Uniting Church (Signage)

Prospect Road Uniting Church

South Sudanese Uniting Church

Western Link Uniting Church with Bethel Evangelical Church Adelaide (Ethiopian)

Rev John Makuna at Generate Presbytery Conference

Ordination Service for Rev Cyrus Kung by the Presbytery of Southern SA

Induction Service for Rev Amel Manyon at Dernancourt Uniting Church

It is available to view and download on the [Synod’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nBOHAbega8) and the Synod website at <https://sa.uca.org.au/cald/cald-events-and-resources>

For further resources, please contact Rev Dr Paul Goh, Synod CALD Officer of Mission Resourcing at [**pgoh@sa.uca.org.au**](mailto:pgoh@sa.uca.org.au)