

# Order of Service

## Celebration Sunday – Seven Days of Solidarity

15 January 2022



### 1. Acknowledging Country

#### Worship Leader:

From before recorded time, the \_\_\_\_\_ People (of the \_\_\_\_\_ Nation) cared for this Land.

We praise the Creator for the beauty of this Land and honour those who have offered themselves in tending it.

We acknowledge the Elders and communities who have told the sacred stories and nurtured faithfulness to the Creator. We pay our respects to the Elders who have gone before, all who carry the stories today, and who are emerging.

We ask God's blessing on all those who continue to work for the healing and restoration of this Land and Her Communities.

Alternate forms and related resources:

[Assembly Guidelines](#) for Acknowledgment of Country

[Alternative language by Amelia Koh Butler](#)

[Translations into other languages](#)

### 2. Lighting the Christ Candle and Call to Worship

#### Worship Leader:

Once there was someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people just had to ask him who he was. One time when they asked him who he was he said:

"I am the light of the world, and whoever walks with me will never walk in darkness"

This is the one who we follow.

Jesus is light - not just of this place, of just this nation, or just of people like us. Jesus is the light of the world.

And so we gather, knowing that we are joined across the world by countless thousands of our brothers and sisters. In cathedrals and cottages, people are gathered, candles are lit, and the Spirit of God threads us together in love and grace.

Across the globe we gather to worship

Our God is here!

**Congregation:** *God's Spirit dwells with us*

**Worship Leader:** We are one in Christ

Unless this service is being done in Lent, the traditional words of the Easter Greeting can be used here to complete the call to worship

**Worship Leader:** Christ is Risen

**Congregation:** *He is risen indeed.*

If the congregation includes speakers of multiple languages, the Worship Leader may invite them to respond in their heart language.



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### 3. Opening Prayer

#### **Worship/Prayer Leader:**

God who knows no boundaries, who neither time nor space can hinder.

God who pursues us with unconditional love and inexhaustible grace.

God who lifts us out of blindness and conflict and shows us the path of reconciliation and unity with each other.

We turn our hearts and our minds to you in worship.

We come to you, each of us in our aloneness, and all of us in our yearning for true community.

Meet us here today Lord Jesus. Help us to lay aside the distractions, the anxiety and the sorrows that hinder. Fill our hearts with your presence and our minds with your guidance. Refresh and renew our spirits, so that we may once again remember the joy of being known and loved by you.

And today, as we turn our gaze to the wonders that you are working across the world, help us feel true connection and compassion for all your people across the world. Fill our hearts with joy and humility as we bear witness to the power of your love working through mere human hands. Awaken in us again that zeal to be a part of your work. Fill our eyes with your vision for a world renewed and reconciled. Give us courage to act boldly in obedience to your call on our lives.

Emmanuel, God with us.

Amen.

### 4. Song

#### **Recommended:**

- All of this is Us ([access via UME](#))

#### **Alternatives:**

- Gather Us In (TIS 474)
- O Lord my God, When I in Awesome Wonder (TIS 155)

### 5. Recap of the week

'Meet the change makers' video ([watch/download here](#))

### 6. Reflections

How this is done will depend on whether people are gathered in person or on-line or both. The leader should ask each question in turn.

In small congregations, we suggest people just raise a hand and call out their answers. In larger gatherings people may choose to speak to someone sitting near them. If online, it will depend on the streaming platform, but the chat function or the break-out room function can be deployed to enable people to interact.

After a few moments to gather responses, then the leader should proceed with the next question.

#### **Worship Leader:**

Many of you will have read the stories of God's work in Seven churches this week. Let's take a moment to share what we have discovered.



- Which of the seven stories struck a chord with you? Why? What did you take away from it?

#### **Congregation responds**

- Which of the suggested 'actions' did you successfully do this week. How did it go? What did you learn?

#### **Congregation responds**

- Do you have ideas of what we can do either individually or as a community, to stay connected with and participate in God's work in the wider world?

#### **Congregation responds**

**Worship Leader:** Lord, we thank you for these stories, and how they have opened our eyes to your work. We thank you for our partner churches and how their work and witness has enriched us. Amen.

## **7. Song**

#### **Recommended:**

- Where the Wild God Is ([access via UME](#))

#### **Alternatives:**

- The voice of God goes out (TIS 282)
- Your labour is not in vain ([find here](#))

## **8. Bible Reading**

**Option 1:** If using the David Baker sermon then use Acts 2:42-47

**Option 2:** If someone else is preaching, then use their choice of reading.

## **9. Sermon**

Option 1: Pre-recorded sermon by David Baker ([find here](#))

Option 2: The congregation's choice of speaker

## **10. Song**

#### **Recommended:**

- One in Christ – Music video produced for Seven Days of Solidarity ([watch/download here](#))

#### **Alternatives:**

- God of Jeremiah (TIS 679)
- I the Lord of Sea and Sky (TIS 658)

## **11. Prayers of Intercession**

**Worship or Prayer Leader:**



God of infinite compassion,

From age to age we tell the stories of Jesus' time on earth – comforting the suffering, healing the sick, speaking out against injustice, challenging the powerful, and bringing hope to all humanity. Though those feet no longer walk the earth, and those hands no longer rest on the afflicted, we know you still hear the calling of your people, and we bring our prayers for the world in this time.

We pray for those struggling for the essentials of life – for food, clothing and shelter, but also for healthcare, and education – we pray that every bowl and every belly might be filled, and that every child might have the hope that comes from learning and dreaming. We pray for everyone who is oppressed or exploited in this time, and for victims of violence and trauma, that their wounds might be healed with peace, grace and justice.

We pray for the effects of climate change, praying that all of humankind might have the moral fortitude to stand in solidarity to address this threat, and knowing that we all breathe the same air, regardless of what country we live in. And because we all breathe the same air, we pray especially for those whose lives have been upset or ended during this time of pandemic, just as we pray for victims of other natural disasters like floods, cyclones and earthquakes.

Beyond all of this, we pray for ourselves, in this here-and-now:

We pray for the courage to remain engaged with the messy, broken, beautiful world around us.

We pray for the integrity not to conveniently throw up our hands in despair when hope is hard to find – help us to have the constancy and the faith to continue looking for the cracks where your light shines through, knowing beyond doubt that your light is never lost.

We pray for the vision to get on board with the life-changing work that you are doing through our Christian sisters and brothers, whether that be down the street or on the other side of the world.

We pray that you will move hands and hearts, throughout this land and every land, to answer the human needs that go wanting.

And we pray that we, your people, might shine as an example of compassion and generosity in the way we use our words, our actions, our time, our talents and our resources.

Loving God, knowing you hear us and support us beyond our own strength, we lay down all that is heavy on our hearts at this time. And we take up, instead, the challenge to be your hands and feet and voice and eyes to our neighbours - next door, and in every place.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

## 12. Offering

Congregations may wish to take up an offering for the work of UnitingWorld, or to have a retiring offering for that work.

The following prayer can be offered as the offering is brought to the front.

### **Worship Leader:**

Loving God, we join today in celebration of your work in your world. We give you thanks for all the stories we have heard and shared, and for the countless more acts of grace and works of your Spirit that go unnoticed.

We give you thanks, too, for calling us to be part of this story, participants by word and deed in the work of making your Kingdom known to all.

And as part of our response to that call, we bring these gifts, and with them, we recommit ourselves into your service. Use our money and ourselves, here in our local community, and throughout your world.

For we ask in the name of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

Amen

### 13. Song

**Recommended:**

- I the Lord of Sea and Sky (TIS 658)

**Alternatives:**

- Labour Unto Glory ([access here](#))
- Beauty For Brokenness (TiS 690)

### 14. A Sending Blessing

**Worship Leader:**

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half -truths, superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation, so that you will work for justice, equity and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and change their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with the foolishness to think that you can make a difference in the world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

Amen.

