

Assembly of Confessing Congregations 40 Day Sacred Season of Prayer and Fasting

**Friday 12th June 2009
to Tuesday 21st July 2009.**

Day One 12th June, 22nd June, 2nd July, 12th July

Call to Worship: *“But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”*

Psalm 107: 4-9

Leader: Some wandered in desert wastes finding no way to an inhabited town;

All: hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Leader: Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,

All: and he delivered them from their distress;

Leader: he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.

All: let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

Leader: For he satisfies the thirsty,

All: and the hungry he fills with good things.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me

All: that I might live and endure through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with)

Bible readings

John 4:7-14

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” ¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?” ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” ¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” ¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

John 6:35

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Matthew 26:27

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Revelation 21:5

To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Prayer

Lord, I am so thirsty, my soul faints within me. I cry to you for help. Like the woman of Samaria, I wonder how you can even talk with me. Yet you come, by your grace. You give me the drink of life that washes away all my sin. You give me the drink of life, which rises up in me, like a spring of water, gushing up to eternal life. Give me this drink O Lord, that I might never be thirsty again. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 1

1. THE WAY INTO UNION

The Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia, in fellowship with the whole Church Catholic, and seeking to bear witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift and will for the Church, hereby enter into union under the name of the Uniting Church in Australia. They pray that this act may be to the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They give praise for God's gifts of grace to each of them in years past; they acknowledge that none of them has responded to God's love with a full obedience; they look for a continuing renewal in which God will use their common worship, witness and service to set forth the word of salvation for all people. To this end they declare their readiness to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ the living Head of the Church; they remain open to constant reform under his Word; and they seek a wider unity in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this union these Churches commit their members to acknowledge one another in love and joy as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, to hear anew the commission of the Risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, and daily to seek to obey his will. In entering into this union the Churches concerned are mindful that the Church of God is committed to serve the world for which Christ died, and that it awaits with hope the day of the Lord Jesus Christ on which it will be clear that the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of the Christ, who shall reign for ever and ever.

Litany based on *The Basis of Union* – the Way into Union

Leader: Christ your gift is unity

All: Christ your will is unity

Thank you for our forebears in the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches

All: Who bore witness to that unity

Leader: And entered into union

All: Under the name of the Uniting Church in Australia

Leader: With them we continue to pray that this act

All: May be to your glory our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Leader: Like them we praise you

All: For your gift of grace to us in the years gone past

Leader: Like them we acknowledge,

All: That none of us has responded to your love in full obedience

Leader: Like them we look to you our Lord, for a continuing renewal
In which you God, will use our common worship, witness and service

All: To set forth the word of salvation for all people

Leader: Like them, and before you Lord, we declare our readiness

All: To go forward together in sole loyalty to you Christ our living head

Leader: We declare our readiness

All: To remain open to constant reform under your Word

Leader: We declare our readiness

All: To seek a wider unity in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: As the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches

All: in union committed their members

Leader: Before you in this sacred season of Prayer and Fasting before Assembly 09

All: We commit ourselves afresh

Leader: To acknowledge one another

All: In love and joy as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ

Leader: We commit ourselves afresh

All: To hear anew your commission, our risen Lord, to make disciples of all nations

Leader: We commit ourselves afresh

All: To daily seek to obey your will

Leader: And with the whole of your church we commit ourselves afresh

All: To serve the world for which you Christ died

Leader: And together as your church

All: We await with hope

Leader: The day of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the kingdom of this world

All: Becomes your kingdom

Leader: And when you Christ

All: Shall reign forever and ever. Amen.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession: Spend time praying for the church. Give thanks for the rich heritage of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and their vision for union. Pray for Assembly 09 and all Uniting Church members that we would rekindle the declaration, commitment and faith of those who worked so hard for union.

The Lord's Prayer.

Day Two 13th June, 23rd June, 3rd July, 13th July

Call to Worship: *“Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a sacred assembly; gather the people.”*

Psalm 107: 33-38

Leader: He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground,

All: a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

Leader: He turns a desert into pools of water,

All: a parched land into springs of water.

Leader: And there he lets the hungry live, and they establish a town to live in;

All: they sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield.

Leader: By his blessing they multiply greatly

All: and he does not let their cattle decrease

Prayer of Confession:

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible Readings

Joel 1: 13-14, 20, Joel 2:12-16

Be dismayed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, over the wheat and the barley; for the crops of the field are ruined. The vine withers, the fig tree droops. Pomegranate, palm, and apple – all the trees of the field are dried up; surely, joy withers away among the people. Put on sackcloth and lament, you priests; wail, you ministers of the altar. Come; pass the night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God. Grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord... even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

Prayer: *I am so thirsty O Lord. Your church is so thirsty. Australia is so thirsty. So much is withering and dying within my life, within the life of the church and within Australia. Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up. Help me; help us return to you with all our heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning. Teach us what it means to rend our hearts, not our clothing. Gather us together as your people in Australia, in this sacred season of prayer and fasting. Jesus you love us the church so much, that you gave yourself up for us to make us holy. You cleanse us by washing us through water and the word. Wash us, cleanse us, renew us, that you might present us to yourself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, holy and blameless to you. In the name of Jesus Amen*

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 2

2. THE WHOLE CHURCH

The Uniting Church in Australia lives and works within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The Uniting Church recognises that it is related to other Churches in ways which give expression, however partially, to that unity in faith and mission. Recalling the Ecumenical councils of the early centuries, the Uniting Church looks forward to a time when the faith will be further elucidated, and the Church's unity expressed, in similar Councils. It thankfully acknowledges that the uniting Churches were members of the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies, and will seek to maintain such membership. It remembers the special relationship which obtained between the several uniting Churches and other Churches of similar traditions, and will continue to learn from their witness and be strengthened by their fellowship. It is encouraged by the existence of United Churches in which these and other traditions have been incorporated, and wishes to learn from their experience. It 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, and to this end the Uniting Church commits itself to seek special relationships with Churches in Asia and the Pacific. The Uniting Church declares its desire to enter more deeply in the faith and mission of the Church in Australia, by working together and seeking union with other Churches.

LITANY BASED UPON *THE BASIS OF UNION*

*Leader: Help us Lord in the Uniting Church of Australia
to live and work within the faith and unity*

All: Of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

Leader: help us Lord to relate to other churches

***All: In ways which give expression however partially
to that unity in faith and mission.***

Leader: Forgive us when we have failed to do this

All: In times gone past

Leader: Thank you for the ecumenical council of the early centuries

***All: May faith be made clearer and the Church's unity expressed in
similar councils.***

Leader: Help us be faithful members of the World Council of Churches

All: And other ecumenical bodies.

Leader: Thank you Lord for the special relationship

All: Between Uniting Churches and similar traditions.

Leader: May we continue to learn from their witness

All: And be strengthened by their fellowship

Leader: Thank you for other United Churches around the world.

All: May we continue to learn from their experience

Leader: Help us as Christians here in Australia

All: To bear witness to a unity of faith in Christ

Leader: which transcends cultural, economic,

All: national and racial boundaries

Leader: And to continue to develop special relationship

All: with churches in Asia and the Pacific

Leader: Christ, help us enter more deeply

in the faith and mission of the Church in Australia

All: By working together and seeking union with other churches.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession Give thanks to the Lord for
the whole of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and for the
relationships the Uniting Church has with different parts of this church.
Pray for strengthening of relationships.

The Lord's Prayer.

Day Three 14th June, 24th June, 4th July, 14th July

Call to Worship: *“He has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before.... In the last days it will be, God declares that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh”*

Isaiah 44: 1-5

Leader: But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!

All: Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you in the womb and will help you:

Leader: Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

All: For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;

Leader: I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.

All: They shall spring up like a green tamarisk, like willows by flowing streams.

Leader: This one will say, “I am the Lord’s”, another will be called by the name of Jacob,

All: yet another will write on the hand, “The Lord’s” and adopt the name of Israel.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible Readings

Joel 2: 12, 15, 18-19, 23-29

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people... Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. In response to his people the Lord said: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a mockery among the nations. ...

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Acts 2: 14-18

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it will be, God declares that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Prayer: Lord I am so thirsty. Your church is so thirsty. Australia is so thirsty. Help us come humbly in this sacred season of prayer and fasting. Help us seek to return to you with all our heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. And may we fast and pray in the hope that you will pour down upon us your abundant rain, that there might be an overflow of harvest for your glory. Pour out your Spirit upon us, that our sons and daughters might prophesy, and those that are old in our midst might dream dreams, and our young ones see visions. On both male and female, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us that we might speak your Words of Life. May springs of living water gush out from our mouths into this nation, so that many thirsty souls might come to your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord we are so thirsty. Fill us again. In the name of Jesus. Amen

READINGS FROM *THE BASIS OF UNION*: DAY 3

BUILT UPON THE ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the faith and unity of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church are built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ. The Church preaches Christ the risen crucified One and confesses him as Lord to the glory of God the Father. In Jesus Christ "God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19 RSV). In love for the world, God gave the Son to take away the world's sin. Jesus of Nazareth announced the sovereign grace of God whereby the poor in spirit could receive God's love. Jesus himself, in his life and death, made the response of humility, obedience and trust which God had long sought in vain. In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth, reasserted claim over the whole of creation, pardoned sinners, and made in Jesus a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love. To God in Christ all people are called to respond in faith. To this end God has sent forth the Spirit that people may trust God as their Father, and acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

The whole work of salvation is effected by the sovereign grace of God alone. The Church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit confesses Jesus as Lord over its own life; it also confesses that Jesus is Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity. God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation.

The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself. The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring; the Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal; here the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come. On the way Christ feeds the Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way.

Litany based on *The Basis of Union*

Leader: We acknowledge that the faith and unity of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic church

All: is built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: We preach Christ the risen and crucified one

All: We confess him as Lord, to your glory, our God and Father

Leader: In Jesus Christ, God, you were reconciling the world to yourself
(2 Cor 5:19)

All: In love for the world, you gave your Son to take away the world's sin

Leader: It was Jesus of Nazareth, who announced your sovereign grace

All: whereby the poor in spirit, could receive your love

Leader: It was Jesus himself, in his life, in his death

All: Who made the response of humility, obedience and trust, which you God had long sought in vain.

Leader: In raising Christ to live and reign

All: You God, confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to you on earth

Leader: You reasserted claim over all the creation

All: You pardoned sinners and made in Jesus a representative beginning a new order of righteousness and love

Leader: O God, to you in Christ,

All: all people are called to respond in faith

Leader: You have sent forth your Spirit, that people may trust you as their Father

All: And acknowledge Jesus as Lord

This whole work of salvation is effected O God

All: by your sovereign grace alone

Leader: We as the church, as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

All: We confess Jesus as Lord over our own life

Leader: We also confess that Jesus is head over all things

All: the beginning of a new creation of a new humanity

Leader: You God, in Christ have given to all people in the church, the Holy Spirit

All: As a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal

Leader: which is the end in view

All: for the whole creation

Leader: Our call as the church is to serve that end

All: To be a fellowship of reconciliation

Leader: Help us to be a body within which the diverse gifts of its members

All: Are used for the building up of the whole

Leader: Help us, God, to be an instrument

All: Through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself

Leader: We live between the time of Christ's death and resurrection

All: And the final consummation of all things Christ will bring

Leader: We are a pilgrim people, always on the way toward the promised goal

All: We don't have a continuing city, we seek one to come

Leader: On the way Christ you feed us with word and sacrament

All: We have the gift of the spirit in order we may not lose our way.

Pray that the church would build upon the One Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

Day Four 15th June, 25th June, 5th July, 15th July

Call to Worship: *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

Psalm 22: 14-15, 19 -20

Leader: I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;

All: my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

Leader: my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

All: you lay me in the dust of death. ..

Leader: But you, O Lord, do not be far away!

All: O my help come quickly to my aid!

Leader: Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!

All: Save me from the mouth of the lion!

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible Readings

Isaiah 58: 1, 6-7

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ... Look you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ... Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Matthew 25: 34-39

³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was **thirsty** and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

John 19: 28-29

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am **thirsty**." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Romans 12:20

No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads."

Prayer *Lord, I am so thirsty. Your church is so thirsty. Our country is so thirsty. Our world is so thirsty. Lord we confess before you that our prayers and fasting in the past have come from a wrong place. We have quarrelled and fought and your heart has turned from us. Help us understand what it means to have a fast that looses the bonds of injustice, that undoes the thongs of bondage, that lets the oppressed go free. Help us not only understand but help us to act, in this sacred season of prayer and fasting. Help us to share our bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless into our home, to cover the naked and not hide ourselves from our own families. Jesus, may we remember, as we do it to the least of these thirsty ones, we do it to you. As in your love, we give to the thirsty; revive our dry and withered souls.*

In the name of Jesus. Amen

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 4

4. CHRIST RULES AND RENEWS THE CHURCH

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church is able to live and endure through the changes of history only because its Lord comes, addresses, and deals with people in and through the news of his completed work. Christ who is present when he is preached among people is the Word of the God who acquits the guilty, who gives life to the dead and who brings into being what otherwise could not exist. Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith; he calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews them as his Church.

***Litany based on The Basis of Union - Christ rules
and renews the Church***

Leader: As your church, we acknowledge Lord, we are only able to live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Leader: if you come, Lord

All: And address and deal with us your people

Leader: Through the news, the good news

All: Of your completed work

Leader: So come Lord, for we confess

All: we aren't living, we are dying

Leader: Come Lord, we confess

All: We are not enduring, we are tiring

Leader: come Lord

All: Come address and deal with us

*Leader: We believe by faith, when we ask humbly in this sacred season of prayer
and fasting*

All: You will come

Leader: Christ you are present when you are preached among people

All: For You are the Word of God

Leader: You are the one who acquits the guilty

All: Who gives life to the dead

Leader: who brings into being

All: What otherwise could not exist

Leader: Acquit us Christ

All: For we are guilty

Leader: Give life to us

All: For we are dead

Leader: Bring into being a unity

All: That without you cannot exist.

Leader: Reach out Christ

All: command our attention

Leader: Reach out Christ

All: Awaken our faith

Leader: Through human witness in word and action

All: Reach out Christ

Leader: In the power of the Holy spirit

All: Reach out Christ

Leader: Crucified Lord, call us your people

All: Into the fellowship of your suffering

Leader: Crucified Lord, call us your people

All: To be your disciples

Leader: in your strange way Christ

All: Constitute us as your Church

Leader: in your strange way Christ

All: rule us as your Church

Leader: In your strange way Christ

All: renew us as your Church

Prayers for others: Pray that the Lord Jesus Christ would rule and renew us as His church.

The Lord's Prayer.

Note: Prayers in italics not from The Basis of Union

Day Five 16th June, 26th June, 6th July, 16th July

Call to Worship: *If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted ...the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.*

Isaiah 35:5-7

Leader: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

All: and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

Leader: then the lame shall leap like a deer,

All: and the tongues of the speechless sing for joy.

Leader: For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,

All: and streams in the desert;

Leader: the burning sand shall become a pool,

All: and the thirsty ground springs of water;

Leader: the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,

All: the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible readings

Isaiah 58:6-12

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly, your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Matthew 5: 6

⁶Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Prayer: *Lord I am so thirsty. Your church is so thirsty. Australia is so thirsty. As we keep the fast of love and justice, to the thirsty and poor may we call out to you, and may you hear us O Lord. As we remove the yoke, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, as we offer our food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted may our light rise in the darkness. Lord may you satisfy our needs in the parched places, and make our bones strong. May we become like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Rebuild your ancient ruins, and raise up the foundations of many generations. May we be called the repairers of the breach, the ones who restore the streets for others to live in. May we hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake, and by your grace and mercy may we be filled. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 5

5. THE BIBLICAL WITNESSES

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the Word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated. When the Church preaches Jesus Christ, its message is controlled by the Biblical witnesses. The Word of God on whom salvation depends is to be heard and known from Scripture appropriated in the worshipping and witnessing life of the Church. The Uniting Church lays upon its members the serious duty of reading the Scriptures, commits its ministers to preach from these and to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as effective signs of the Gospel set forth in the Scriptures.

6. SACRAMENTS

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ has commanded his Church to proclaim the Gospel both in words and in the two visible acts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ himself acts in and through everything that the Church does in obedience to his commandment: it is Christ who by the gift of the Spirit confers the forgiveness, the fellowship, the new life and the freedom which the proclamation and actions promise; and it is Christ who awakens, purifies and advances in people the faith and hope in which alone such benefits can be accepted.

7. BAPTISM

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ incorporates people into his body by Baptism. In this way Christ enables them to participate in his own baptism, which was accomplished once on behalf of all in his death and burial, and which was made available to all when, risen and ascended, he poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Baptism into Christ's body initiates people into Christ's life and mission in the world, so that they are united in one fellowship of love, service, suffering and joy, in one family of the Father of all in heaven and earth, and in the power of the one Spirit. The Uniting Church will baptize those who confess the Christian faith, and children who are presented for baptism and for whose instruction and nourishment in the faith the Church takes responsibility.

8. HOLY COMMUNION

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the continuing presence of Christ with his people is signified and sealed by Christ in the Lord's Supper or the Holy Communion, constantly repeated in the life of the Church. In this sacrament of his broken body and outpoured blood the risen Lord feeds his baptized people on their way to the final inheritance of the Kingdom. Thus the people of God, through faith and the gift and power of the Holy Spirit, have communion with their Saviour, make their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, proclaim the Lord's death, grow together into Christ, are strengthened for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world, and rejoice in the foretaste of the Kingdom which Christ will bring to consummation.

Leader: O God, you have given to us the books of the Old and New Testaments

All: As unique prophetic and apostolic testimony

Leader: In these books we hear your Word O God

All: and our faith and obedience are nourished and regulated

Leader: As we preach Jesus Christ, in the church

All: May our message be controlled by the Biblical witnesses

Leader: Our Salvation is dependent upon your Word O God, heard and known from Scripture

All: May we use this Word, in the life of worship and witness of the Church

Leader: Help us be faithful in laying upon all our Uniting Church members

All: The serious duty of reading the scriptures

Leader: help all ministers to preach from them faithfully

All: And to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Leader: As effective signs of the Gospel

All: Set forth in scripture.

Leader: May we proclaim the Gospel in both words

All: and in the two visible acts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Leader: Christ, you act in and through everything that we do

All: in obedience to your command.

Leader: It is you Christ who gives the forgiveness, the fellowship, new life and freedom

All: which the proclamation and actions promise.

Leader: It is you Christ who awakens, purifies and advances in us your people

All: the faith and hope in which alone such benefits can be accepted.

Leader: Christ you incorporate people into your body by Baptism

All: And in this way you enable us to participate in your own baptism

Leader: which was accomplished once on behalf of all

All: in your death and burial

Leader: It was made available to all, Christ

All: when risen and ascended you poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Leader: Baptism into your body

All: Initiates us into your life and mission in the world

Leader: so that we are united in one fellowship of love, service, suffering and joy

All: In one family of the Father of all in heaven and earth and in the power of the one Spirit.

Leader: Christ, you signify and seal your continuing presence with us

40 Day Sacred Season of Prayer and Fasting 12th June 2009 to 21st July 2009: ACC

All: In the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, constantly repeated in the life of the church.

Leader: In this sacrament of your broken body and outpoured blood

All: Risen Lord, you feed your baptized people on our way to the final inheritance of the Kingdom

Leader: Through faith and the gift and power of the Holy Spirit

All: Saviour, we have communion with you

Leader: We make our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving

All: We proclaim your death

Leader: We grow together Christ into you.

All: we are strengthened for our participation in your mission in the world

Leader: We rejoice in the foretaste of the Kingdom

All: which you will bring to consummation.

Pray: That members of the Uniting church would faithfully read the Bible, and that the Word of God be faithfully preached from pulpits each Sunday, and sacraments provided to the people of God.

The Lord's Prayer.

Day Six 17th June, 27th June, 7th July, 17th July

Call to Worship: *You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses.*
¹⁰ *Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce*

Psalm 137: 1-6

Leader: By the rivers of Babylon – there we sat down

All: and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

Leader: On the willows there we hung up our harps.

All: For there our captors asked us for songs,

Leader: and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,

All: “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

Leader: How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?

All: If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!

Leader: Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,

All: if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible readings

Haggai 1: 1-11

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house. Then the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai, saying “⁴ Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? ⁵ Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁶ You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.” Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider how you have fared. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured, says the Lord.⁹ You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away.

Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses. ¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labours.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Prayer: *Lord I am so thirsty. Your church is so thirsty. Australia is so thirsty. Lord, forgive us for we haven't known the time or the season. We have said it is not time to rebuild your house in Australia. We have been so busy building our own homes, or own kingdoms, when your house lies in ruins in this land. We've tried so hard to sow, but there's been little harvest. We've looked so hard, but it has come to little, and when we've tried to bring it home, it's blown away. There has been no rain from heaven, and we have wondered why. Forgive us O Lord, search our hearts, and together teach us what this means. Help us always remember that when we confess our sins, that you are faithful and just, and you will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 6

9. CREEDS

The Uniting Church enters into unity with the Church throughout the ages by its use of the confessions known as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. The Uniting Church receives these as authoritative statements of the Catholic Faith, framed in the language of their day and used by Christians in many days, to declare and to guard the right understanding of that faith. The Uniting Church commits its ministers and instructors to careful study of these creeds and to the discipline of interpreting their teaching in a later age. It commends to ministers and congregations their use for instruction in the faith, and their use in worship as acts of allegiance to the Holy Trinity.

10. REFORMATION WITNESSES

The Uniting Church continues to learn of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures in the obedience and freedom of faith and in the power of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, from the witness of the Reformers as expressed in various ways in the Scots Confession of Faith (1560), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) and the Savoy Declaration (1658). In like manner the Uniting Church will listen to the preaching of John Wesley in his Forty-Four Sermons (1793). It will commit its ministers and instructors to study these statements, so that the congregation of Christ's people may again and again be reminded of the grace which justifies them through faith, of the centrality of the person and work of Christ the justifier and of the need for a constant appeal to Holy Scripture.

11. SCHOLARLY INTERPRETERS

The Uniting Church acknowledges that God has never left the Church without faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture, or without those who have reflected deeply upon, and acted trustingly in obedience to, God's living Word. In particular the Uniting Church enters into the inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries, and gives thanks for the knowledge of God's ways with humanity which are open to an informed faith. The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought. Within that fellowship the Uniting Church also stands in relation to contemporary societies in ways which will help it to understand its own nature and mission. The Uniting Church thanks God for the continuing witness and service of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr. It prays that it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.

Litany based on *The Basis of Union*

Leader: We Thank you God that we are one with the church throughout the
ages

All: by our use of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

Leader: We receive these as authoritative statements

All: To declare and to guard the right understanding of our faith

Leader: Help us to carefully study these creeds

All: and to interpret their teaching for this age

Leader: to use them for instruction in the faith

All: and in worship as acts of allegiance to the Holy Trinity

Leader: Help us to keep learning of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures

**All: In the obedience and freedom of faith and in the power of the Holy
Spirit**

Leader: from the witness of the Reformers

All: As expressed in various ways

Leader: In the Scots Confession of Faith

All: The Heidelberg Catechism,

Leader: The Westminster Confession of Faith

All: The Savoy Declaration

Leader: And in a like manner,

All: the preaching of John Wesley in his Forty-four sermons

Leader: May we be committed O Lord,

All: to study these statements

Leader: so that we the congregation of Christ's people

**All: May again and again be reminded of the grace which justifies us
through faith.**

Leader: May again and again be reminded

All: of the centrality of the person and work of Christ the justifier

Leader: May again and again be reminded

All: of the need for a constant appeal to Holy Scripture.

Leader: You have never left the church God,

All: Without faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture.

Leader: or without those who have reflected deeply upon

All: And acted trustingly in obedience to, God's living Word.

Leader: We thank you God, for our inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry

All: and for the knowledge of your ways with humanity which help us to have an informed faith.

Leader: Thank you for the world wide fellowship of Churches

All: within this, help us to sharpen our understanding of the will and purpose of God.

Leader: Help us to understand our own nature and mission

All: As we stand in relation to contemporary society.

Leader: Thank you God for the continuing witness and service

All: of evangelist, scholar, prophet and martyr.

Leader: May we be ready when occasion demands

All: To confess you Lord in fresh words and deeds.

Pray: that the Uniting Church would be faithful in continuing to hold to authority of and to learn from Creeds, historical confessions of faith and Wesley's sermons. Pray Church would again and again be reminded of foundations of our faith, and importance of Scripture through these documents. Pray for theologians within our church.

The Lord's Prayer.

Day Seven 18th June, 28th June, 8th July, 18th July

Call to Worship: *Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured, says the LORD*

Psalm 42:1-8

Leader: As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

All: My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

Leader: When shall I come and behold the face of God?

All: My tears have been my food day and night,

Leader: while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

All: These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:

Leader: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God,

All: with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

Leader: Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

All: Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Leader: My soul is cast down within me;

All: therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mt Mizar.

Leader: Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts;

All: all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

Leader: By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,

All: and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible Reading

Haggai 1: 8-15; 2:1-9

⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured, says the LORD....⁹ You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts.

Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses. ¹⁰

Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain,

the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labours. Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of the prophet Haggai, as the Lord their God had sent him; and the people feared the Lord.

Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the month in the sixth month. In the second year of King Darius, in the seventh month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai, saying; Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people and say, Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you says the Lord of hosts, according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear.

Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; ⁷ and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

Prayer: *Lord I am so thirsty; your church is so thirsty, like a deer thirsting for flowing streams, our soul longs and thirsts for you, our Living God. As you show us how we've been looking after our own house, while your house in Australia lies in ruins, help us go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so you might take pleasure in it and be honoured. Stir up our spirits as you stirred the spirits of Zerubbabel, and Joshua in the days of Haggai. Stir up our spirits that we might listen, and be obedient and build your house not our own. Help us take courage when we look and grieve as we see your house, your church today as such a pale comparison of what it used to be like in its former glory. Help us take courage and know that you are with us. Help us not to be afraid, for you will once again shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. May we have faith and believe that the latter splendour of your house in Australia shall be greater than the former. Like a deer thirsting for flowing streams, our soul longs and thirsts for you, our Living God. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 7

12. MEMBERS

The Uniting Church recognises and accepts as members all who are recognised as members of the uniting Churches at the time of union. Thereafter membership is open to all who are baptized into the Holy Catholic Church in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Uniting Church will seek ways in which the baptized may have confirmed to them the promises of God, and be led to deeper commitment to the faith and service into which they have been baptized. To this end the Uniting Church commits itself to undertake, with other Christians, to explore and develop the relation of baptism to confirmation and to participation in the Holy Communion.

13. GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ. The Uniting Church, at the time of union, will recognise and accept the ministries of those who have been called to any task or responsibility in the uniting Churches. The Uniting Church will thereafter provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them, and will order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission.

Litany Based on *The Basis of Union*

Leader: We thank you Lord, for all the members

All: of the Uniting Church in Australia.

All: Those who have come into the church from union

All: from the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches.

Leader: And for all those who have come since

All: Those who have been baptized into the Holy Catholic Church in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Help us to confirm to all our members your promises O God,

All: and help us to lead them to deeper commitment to faith and service in you.

Leader: Guide us as we continue to explore and develop

All: the relation of baptism to confirmation and to participation in Holy Communion.

Leader: God, we affirm that every member of the Church

All: is engaged to confess the Faith of Christ crucified,

Leader: We affirm that every member of the Church

All: is called to be his faithful servant.

Leader: We thank you Christ, that the one Spirit

All: Has endowed the members of your church with a diversity of gifts

Leader: And that there is no gift
All: without its corresponding service
Leader: All ministries have a part
All: in the ministry of Christ

Leader: We thank you for those who have been called
All: to different tasks and responsibilities in the Uniting Church.
Leader: May we help men and women in your church
All: to exercise the gifts you bestow upon them
Leader: Help us to order our lives in response to your call
All: to enter more fully into mission

Prayer: Pray for all members of the Uniting Church , that they might go deeper in their commitment in faith and service to the Lord.

Pray that for opportunity for members to exercise the gifts given to them by God.

The Lord's Prayer

Day Eight 19th June, 29th June, 9th July, 19th July

Call to Worship: *Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns, that can hold no water.*

Psalm 78:12-17

Leader: In the sight of their ancestors he worked marvels

All: in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.

Leader: He divided the sea and let them pass through it,

All: and made the waters stand like a heap.

Leader: In the daytime he led them with a cloud,

All: and all night long with a fiery light.

Leader: He split rocks open in the wilderness,

All: and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep.

Leader: He made streams come out of the rock,

All: and caused waters to flow down like rivers.

Leader: Yet they sinned still more against him,

All: rebelling against the Most High in the desert.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work.

In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible readings

Exodus 17:1-3

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

Jeremiah 2:1-13

The word of the Lord came to me, saying. Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. ... Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are not gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit.Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns, that can hold no water.

1 John 1:5-10

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Prayer: *Living God, I am so thirsty for you. Your church in Australia is so thirsty for you. Forgive us for we are like the people of Israel in the desert. When there has been nothing to drink we have quarrelled and complained to you and our leaders. We have forsaken you, the fountain of living water. We have dug out cisterns for ourselves, cracked water tanks that can hold no water. You remember how once we loved you as a bride loves a husband. We were willing to follow you into the wilderness, trusting you to provide on the way. Yet when we have faced lean times, times of thirst, we have quickly exchanged our allegiance. We have exchanged your glory for something that doesn't profit. Instead of loving and worshipping you our living God, we have exchanged gods, for that which is not a god. Forgive us and help us not to deceive ourselves and say we have no sin, for then we make you a liar, and the word is not in us. Help us to see how we have been walking in darkness, and to once again walk in the light. As we confess our sin, wash us Jesus by your precious blood and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

READING FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 8**14. MINISTERS, ELDERS, DEACONESSES AND LAY PREACHERS**

The Uniting Church, from inception, will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognise among its members women and men called of God to preach the Gospel, to lead the people in worship, to care for the flock, to share in government and to serve those in need in the world. To this end:

(a) The Uniting Church recognises and accepts as **ministers of the Word** all who have held such office in any of the uniting Churches, and who, being in good standing in one of those Churches at the time of union, adhere to the Basis of Union. This adherence and acceptance may take place at the time of union or at a later date. Since the Church lives by the power of the Word, it is assured that God, who has never failed to provide witness to that word, will, through Christ and in the power

of the Holy Spirit, call and set apart members of the Church to be ministers of the Word.

These will preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise pastoral care so that all may be equipped for their particular ministries, thus maintaining the apostolic witness to Christ in the Church. Such members will be called Ministers and their setting apart will be known as Ordination. The Presbytery will ordain by prayer and the laying on of hands in the presence of a worshipping congregation. In this act of ordination the Church praises the ascended Christ for conferring gifts upon men and women. It recognises Christ's call of the individual to be his minister; it prays for the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to equip the minister for that service. By the participation in the act of ordination of those already ordained the Church bears witness to God's faithfulness and declares the hope by which it lives. In company with other Christians the Uniting Church will seek for a renewed understanding of the way in which the congregation participates in ordination and of the significance of ordination in the life of the Church.

(b) The Uniting Church recognises and accepts as **elders or leaders** those who at the time of union hold the office of elder, deacon or leader appointed to exercise spiritual oversight, and who, being in good standing in any of the uniting Churches at the time of union, adhere to the Basis of Union. It will seek to recognise in the congregation those endowed by the Spirit with gifts fitting them for rule and oversight. Such members will be called Elders or Leaders.

(c) The Uniting Church recognises and accepts as **deaconesses** those who at the time of union are deaconesses in good standing in any of the uniting Churches and who adhere to the Basis of Union. It believes that the Holy Spirit will continue to call women to share in this way in the varied services and witness of the Church, and it will make provision for this. Such members will be called Deaconesses. The Uniting Church recognises that at the time of union many seek a renewal of the diaconate in which women and men offer their time and talents, representatively and on behalf of God's people, in the service of humanity in the face of changing needs. The Uniting Church will so order its life that it remains open to the possibility that God may call men and women into such a renewed diaconate: in these circumstances it may decide to call them Deacons and Deaconesses, whether the service is within or beyond the life of the congregation.

(d) The Uniting Church recognises and accepts as **lay preachers** those who at the time of union are accredited lay preachers (local preachers) in any of the uniting Churches and who adhere to the Basis of Union. It will seek to recognise those endowed with the gift of the Spirit for this task, will provide for their training, and will gladly wait upon that fuller understanding of the obedience of Christians which should flow from their ministry. Such members will be called Lay Preachers. In the above sub-paragraphs the phrase "adhere to the Basis of Union" is understood as willingness to live and work within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as that way is described in this Basis. Such adherence allows for difference of opinion in matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith. The Uniting Church recognises that the type and duration of ministries to which women and men are called vary from time to time and place to place, and that in particular it comes into being in a period of reconsideration of traditional forms of the ministry, and of renewed participation of all the people of God in the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the building up of the fellowship in mutual love, in commitment to Christ's mission, and in service of the world for which he died.

Litany based on *The Basis of Union* for leaders of the Church

Leader: From the inception of the Uniting Church

All: We have been committed to seek the guidance of your Holy Spirit

Leader: to recognise among our members women and men called by you, O God

All: To preach the Gospel

Leader: to lead the people in worship

All: To care for the flock

Leader: To share in government

All: to serve those in need in the world

Leader: We pray for those

All: who are Ministers of the Word in your church

Leader: Since we as the Church

All: live by the power of the Word

Leader: We are assured that you God

All: have never failed to provide witness to that word

Leader: You will O God, through Christ,

All: and in the power of the Holy Spirit,

Leader: Call and set apart members of the Church

All: to be ministers of the Word.

Leader: Help them to be faithful as they

All: Preach the Gospel

Leader: Administer the Sacraments

All: And exercise pastoral care

Leader: so all might be equipped for their particular ministries

All: thus maintaining the Apostolic witness to Christ in the Church.

Leader: We thank you God, that in ordination, we praise the ascended Christ

All: Who confers gifts upon men and women.

Leader: We thank you Christ that you call the individual to be your minister

All: May the enabling power of the Holy Spirit equip every minister for that service.

Leader: As those who are already ordained participate in the act of ordination O God,

All: We bear witness to your faithfulness and declare the hope by which we live.

Leader: We thank you for the renewal of the diaconate within the Uniting Church

All: In which women and men offer their time and talents

Leader: On behalf of God's people

All: In the service of humanity in the face of changing needs.

Leader: We thank you Lord, for all elders and leaders

All: who have been appointed to exercise spiritual oversight

Leader: Help us find in each congregation in Christ's Church

All: those endowed by the Spirit with gifts fitting them for rule and oversight.

Leader: We thank you for all those that serve as Lay Preachers in the Uniting Church

All: Help us as your Church to recognise those endowed with the gift of the Spirit for this task

Leader: Help us provide for their training

All: And gladly wait upon that fuller understanding of the obedience of Christians which should flow from their ministry

Prayer: Pray for all church leaders.

The Lord's Prayer

Day Nine 20th June, 30th June, 10th July, 20th July

Call to Worship: *Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water'.*

Psalm 63:1-8

Leader: O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;

All: my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Leader: So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,

All: beholding your power and glory.

Leader: Because your steadfast love is better than life,

All: my lips will praise you.

Leader: So I will bless you as long as I live;

All: I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

Leader: My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,

All: and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

Leader: when I think of you on my bed,

All: and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

Leader: for you have been my help,

All: and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

Leader: My soul clings to you

All: your right hand upholds me.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible readings

Exodus 17:4-7

The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Psalm 114: 7-8

Tremble, o earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

John 7: 37-39

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.' Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Revelation 8: 15-17

for this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 17: 17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

Prayer: *Lord I am so thirsty for you. Your church is so thirsty for you. This country is so thirsty for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. We tremble before your presence O Lord, and remember how you turned a rock into a pool of water to give drink to your thirsty people. You promise that anyone who is thirsty can come to you and the one who believes in you can drink. You promise that out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water. Yet Lord, the truth is we want to come, but we can't. We want to believe, but our doubts rise up to haunt us. Help our unbelief, for we thirst so much for these rivers of living water. We thirst so much for your Spirit. We are your people, your bride in this land. We want to receive your water of life as a gift. It is not something we can earn. We know this. We are not worthy. Yet have mercy upon us. Jesus, help us place you the Lamb, as Lord, in the centre of the throne of our lives. Come Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; take your place in the centre of the throne, of the church in Australia. May we worship you day and night within your temple and as our shepherd guide us to springs of the water of life, where every tear is wiped away. Let all who hear and believe, come and drink! In the name of Jesus . Amen*

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 9**15. GOVERNMENT IN THE CHURCH**

The Uniting Church recognises that responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them. The Uniting Church therefore so organises its life that locally, regionally and nationally government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church. The Uniting Church is governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation both to the Church and the world. The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ alone is supreme in his Church, and that he may speak to it through any of its councils.

It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey God's will in the matters allocated to its oversight. Each council will recognise the limits of its own authority and give heed to other councils of the Church, so that the whole body of believers may be united by mutual submission in the service of the Gospel. To this end the Uniting Church makes provision in its constitution for the following:

(a) **The Congregation** is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world. The congregation will recognise the need for a diversity of agencies for the better ordering of its life in such matters as education, administration and finance.

(b) **The Elders' or Leaders' Meeting** (the council within a congregation or group of congregations) consists of the minister and those who are called to share with the minister in oversight. It is responsible for building up the congregation in faith and love, sustaining its members in hope, and leading them into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.

(c) **The Presbytery** (the district council) consists of such ministers, elders/leaders and other Church members as are appointed thereto, the majority of elders/leaders and Church members being appointed by Elders'/Leaders' Meetings and/or congregations, on a basis determined by the Synod. Its function is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly. It will in particular exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another's faith, to bear one another's burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus. It will promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church committed to it by the Synod or Assembly.

(d) **The Synod** (the regional council) consists of such ministers, elders/leaders and other Church members as are appointed thereto, the majority being appointed by Presbyteries, Elders'/Leaders' Meetings or congregations, on a basis determined by the Assembly. It has responsibility for the general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service in the region allotted to it, with such powers and authorities as may from time to time be determined by the Assembly.

(e) **The Assembly** (the national council) consists of such ministers, elders/leaders and other Church members as are appointed thereto, the majority being appointed by the Presbyteries and Synods. It has determining responsibility for matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline, including the promotion of the Church's mission, the establishment of standards of theological training and reception of ministers from other communions, and the taking of further measures towards the wider union of the Church. It makes the guiding decisions on the tasks and authority to be exercised by other councils. It is obligatory for it to seek the concurrence of other councils, and on occasion of the congregations of the Church, on matters of vital importance to the life of the Church. The first Assembly, however, will consist of members of the uniting Churches, appointed in equal numbers by them in such manner as they may determine, and is vested with such powers as may be necessary to establish the Uniting Church according to the provisions of the Basis of Union. Until such time as councils other than the Assembly can be established, the Uniting Church recognises and accepts the various agencies for the discharge of responsibility which are in existence in the uniting Churches. It invites any such continuing bodies immediately to enter a period of self-examination in which members are asked to consider afresh their common commitment to the Church's mission and their demonstration of its unity. The Uniting Church prays that God will enable them to order their lives for these purposes.

Litany for the Government of the Church based on *The Basis of Union*

Leader: O God, we acknowledge that the responsibility for government in the Church

All: belongs to the people of God,

Leader: by virtue of the gifts and tasks **All: which God has laid upon them.**

Leader: Thank you for those you have called into government

All: Those who bear gifts and grace which you bestow upon them

Leader: Help these individuals

All: to use these gifts for the building up of the church

Leader: Thank you for leading the Uniting Church to be governed by a series of inter-related councils

All: Help each of them to be faithful to their tasks and responsibilities in relation both to the Church and the world

Leader: Christ, you alone are supreme in Your Church

All: You may speak to us through any of our councils.

Leader: Help every council of the Church to wait upon your Word, O God

All: And to obey your will in the matters allocated to their oversight.

Leader: Help each council to recognise the limits of their own authority

All: And give heed to other councils of the Church

Leader: So that the whole body of believers

All; May be united by mutual submission in the service of the Gospel

Congregations

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of Congregations in the Uniting Church

Leader: These Congregations are the embodiment in one place

All: Of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

Leader: Forgive our Congregations

All: When they have failed in the responsibilities given to them

Leader: Help our Congregations to worship, witness and serve

All: As a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ.

Leader: Help our Congregations to meet regularly to hear Your Word

All: To celebrate the sacraments

Leader: To build one another up in love

All: to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church and to serve the world.

Leader: Help our congregations to recognise the need for a diversity of agencies

All: for the better ordering of its life in such matters as education, administration and finance.

Elder's or Leaders' Meeting

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of the Elders' or Leaders' Meetings within the Uniting Church.

Leader: Forgive our Elders' or Leaders' meetings

All: When they have failed in the responsibilities given to them

Leader: These meetings consist of the minister

All: And those who are called to share with the minister in oversight

Leader: May these meetings be used to build up the congregation in faith and love

All: Sustain its members in hope

Leader: and lead the congregation into

All: a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world

The Presbytery

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of the Presbyteries within the Uniting Church

Leader: Forgive our Presbyteries

All: When they have failed in the responsibilities given to them.

Leader: Help all Presbyteries to perform all the acts of oversight

All: necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible

Leader: Help them particularly to exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds

All: encouraging them to strengthen on another's faith

Leader: to bear one another's burdens

All: And exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus.

Leader: Help them to promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church

All: Committed to it by the Synod or Assembly

The Synod

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of the Synods within the Uniting church

Leader: Forgive our Synods

All: When they have failed in the responsibilities given to them.

Leader: Help our Synods to be faithful in their responsibility for the general oversight, direction and administration

All: Of the Church's worship, witness and service in its different regions.

Litany Prayer for the Assembly based on *The Basis of Union*

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of the Assembly within the Uniting Church

Leader: We pray for all members of Assembly

All: Including ministers, elders/leaders and other Church members, the majority being appointed by the Presbyteries and Synod.

Leader: Forgive our Assembly

All: When it has failed in the responsibilities given to it.

Leader: Help our Assembly in its role of determining responsibility

All: for matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline

Leader: Help our Assembly in the promotion of the Church's mission

All: The establishment of standards of theological training

Leader: reception of ministers from other communions

All: And the taking of further measures towards the wider union of the Church.

Leader: Guide the Assembly as it makes the guiding decision

All: on the tasks and authority to be exercised by other councils.

Leader: Help the Assembly to remember it is obligatory for it to seek the concurrence of other councils and on occasion of the congregations of the Church

All: On matters of vital importance to the life of the Church.

Agencies

Leader: We thank you Lord

All: For the life of Agencies within the Uniting Church

Leader: Forgive these agencies

All: When they have failed in the responsibilities given to them.

Leader: Help each agency to enter a period of self-examination in which members are asked to consider afresh

All: their common commitment to the Church's mission and their demonstration of its unity

Leader: We pray O God that you enable the Agencies of our Church

All: to order their lives for these purposes.

Pray: for each level of government in the church as above.

The Lord's Prayer.

Day Ten: *21st June, 1st July, 11th July, 21st July*

Call to Worship: *I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.*

Psalm 36:7-9

Leader: How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All: All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Leader: They feast on the abundance of your house,

All: and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Leader: For with you is the fountain of life;

All: in your light we see light.

Prayer of Confession:

Leader: Lord, come, assess and deal with me,

All: Come, assess and deal with us, your people

Leader: That we might live and endure

All: through these changes of history

Together: Through the news of your completed work. In the name of Jesus. Amen

(Spend a few moments in silent confession, asking the Lord to reveal those areas he wishes to assess and deal with in your own life and the life of the church in Australia)

Bible Readings

Ezekiel 17: 24 All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

Ezekiel 37:1-14 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley, it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying the valley and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God you know". Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel." They say "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophecy and say to them, thus says the Lord God: "I am going to open your graves, O my people and I bring you back to the land of Israel.

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act," says the Lord.

John 5:25, 28 "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live". For the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out

Romans 6:1-4 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Prayer: *Lord, I am so thirsty for you. The church is so thirsty for you. This land is so thirsty for you. We are a dry tree, empty, with withered crackling leaves, that have fallen to the ground. We are the dry bones, scattered in the valley that Ezekiel was led to by your Spirit. We are in the graves of despair saying "our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely". Have mercy upon us, and prophesy your words of life, living water into our souls. For we believe a time is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. Speak to these very dry bones of our diminished existence and tell us to hear your Word. Speak and tell us to come together even in our dryness, even if we rattle in the process. Tell sinews to come upon us, and flesh and skin to cover us. And then speak O Lord and command your breath, your Spirit to come into us again. We will know that when you speak, you will act. When your resurrection breath comes into us, we will live. We will stand on our feet, as a vast multitude. Then we shall know that you the Lord have spoken to us your church in Australia. Jesus, we have been buried with you in your death, now raise us up, just as you were raised by the glory of the Father, so that we too might walk in newness of life, and be raised up on wings like eagles to soar through this land.*
In the name of Jesus. Amen

READINGS FROM THE BASIS OF UNION: DAY 10

16. PARTICULAR FUNCTIONS

The Uniting Church recognises the responsibility and freedom which belong to councils to acknowledge gifts among members for the fulfilment of particular functions. The Uniting Church sees in pastoral care exercised personally on behalf of the Church an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people, would have God's loving care known among people, and would have individual members take upon themselves the form of a servant.

17. LAW IN THE CHURCH

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the demand of the Gospel, the response of the Church to the Gospel, and the discipline which it requires are partly expressed in the formulation by the Church of its law. The aim of such law is to confess God's will for the life of the Church; but since law is received by human beings and framed by them, it is always subject to revision in order that it may better serve the Gospel. The Uniting Church will keep its law under constant review so that its life may increasingly be directed to the service of God and humanity, and its worship to a true and faithful setting forth of, and response to, the Gospel of Christ. The law of the Church will speak of the free obedience of the children of God, and will look to the final reconciliation of humanity under God's sovereign grace.

18. THE PEOPLE OF GOD ON THE WAY

The Uniting Church affirms that it belongs to the people of God on the way to the promised end. The Uniting Church prays that, through the gift of the Spirit, God will constantly correct that which is erroneous in its life, will bring it into deeper unity with other Churches, and will use its worship, witness and service to God's eternal glory through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Litany Prayer based on *The Basis of Union*

Particular functions

Leader: Thank you O God, for the responsibility and freedom which belongs to councils

All: to acknowledge gifts among members for the fulfilment of particular functions.

Leader: Thank you for those who offer pastoral care personally on behalf of the Church

All: For this is an expression of the fact that You always deal personally with people

Leader: May Your loving care be known among people

All: and may individual members of the Church take upon themselves the form of a servant.

Law in the Church

Leader: As the Uniting Church we acknowledge that the demand of the Gospel

All: The response of the church to the Gospel

Leader: and the discipline which it requires

All: are partly expressed in the formulation by the Church of its law.

Leader: Thank you for such law

All: As its aim is to confess your will God for the life of the Church.

Leader: We know that since law is received by human beings and framed by them

All: this law is always subject to revision in order that it may better serve the Gospel

Leader: Help us O God, to keep our law under constant review

All: So that our life may increasingly be directed to the service of God and humanity

Leader: And our worship to a true and faithful setting forth of

All: and response to the Gospel of Christ.

Leader: Help the law of the Church to speak of the free obedience of your Children

All: and to look to the final reconciliation of humanity under Your Sovereign grace.

The People of God on the Way

Leader: We affirm that we belong to the people of God

All: On the way to the promised end.

Leader: Through the gift of the Spirit, we ask you God

All: To constantly correct that which is erroneous in our life

Leader: Through the gift of the Spirit, constantly correct that which is

All: mistaken, flawed, wrong, incorrect, invalid, and untrue in our life

(thesaurus for "erroneous")

Leader: Bring us into deeper unity with other Churches

All: And use our worship, witness and service to your eternal glory through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Pray: On our way to the promised end, pray that the Holy Spirit would constantly correct that which is erroneous (see meaning above) in our life. May we become "Uniting" not only in name, but in our ability to go deeper in Unity with other churches.

The Lord's Prayer

**40 Day Sacred Season of Prayer and Fasting
Friday 12th June 2009 to Tuesday 21st July 2009.**

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