

L.2 May the patient work of pastors, theologians and Christian people continue to progress and bear lasting fruit:

A: *We ask you, O God.*

L.1 We have begun to covenant together, committing ourselves to pray for and with each other and to engage in common pastoral witness:

A: *We thank you, O God*

L.2 That we may be able to face and resolve the difficult issues which still divide us:

A: *We ask you, O God.*

L.1 For our annual gatherings of prayer for unity among Christians:

A: *We thank you, O God*

L.2 That prayer in common may become a normal feature of our local congregations:

A: *We ask you, O God.*

L.1 For common witness to Christ, which we have given in times of crisis, for justice, peace and humanitarian aid:

A: *We thank you, O God*

L.2 That our unity may one day become such that the whole world may believe in the Christ you have sent.

A: *We ask you, O God.*

L.1 For the Indigenous peoples of Australia, for their unsurpassed antiquity, their cultures and the dreamtime and for the various ways they witness to the Spirit in this land:

A: *We thank you, O God*

L.2 That we may have courage to work for more just and equitable relationships between Aboriginal and Islander peoples and other Australians, and to build a society which has roots of justice and bears fruits of peace:

A: *We ask you, O God.*

[Other prayers of thanksgiving / Intercession may be added]

Offering

A hymn or musical presentation may be sung during the collection.

Sending Forth God's People

L.: We have been enlightened by Christ and filled with his Spirit.

May we go out bearing witness to the Spirit who shows the path to unity where there is division, to reconciliation where there is estrangement, to justice where there is inequity, to peace where there is hurt.

[Conclude with the saying of The Grace]

Closing Hymn

Adapted for use in Australia by the
National Council of Churches in Australia
02 9299 2215; www.ncca.org.au

Ecumenical Worship Service

Prayer for Reconciliation and Christian Unity

2006

Where two or three are gathered in my name.

(Matthew 18:20)

"L" refers to leader(s) of worship,, and "A" to the assembly gathered for worship.

Gathering of God's People

Commences with lights dimmed, and a voice reading Exodus 40:1-4. The lights are then turned on fully, and Exodus 40:34 is read.

Procession, Hymn and Welcome

During the singing of a hymn, leaders from the churches enter in procession. The host church's leader welcomes those present, in the name of the Triune God.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of the Land

A welcome is offered and the traditional custodians of the land acknowledged.

Greeting God's People

L: Grace and peace be with you

A: **Grace and peace be with you in the name of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

L: We come together to pray for reconciliation in this land and for visible unity among Christians. The theme and bible readings for this time of prayer in 2006 have been chosen by the churches of Ireland. Ireland has a deep and painful history. Political and religious aspirations have rent communities apart and caused real hurt on all sides. God has been present in the midst of pain and has brought healing to many of the physical and psychological wounds. In small gatherings of two or three and in great gatherings of many hundreds the comforting, gracious presence of God has been experienced. For these reasons, they have chosen the words of Jesus, "*Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them*", to be the focus of our prayer. God calls us together and shows how love and forgiveness go hand in hand. The experience of Ireland in the search for reconciliation is relevant to Australians as we pray for reconciliation and unity. The people of God everywhere are called to reach out and forgive; to find a way forward, which recognises and acknowledges the hurt and pain of people, and the scandal of division in the Body of Christ. In that understanding, we seek to find forgiveness, wholeness and the new way of Christ.

L: Jesus, Risen Lord

A candle is brought forward and lit

A: **We gather in your name.**

L: Jesus, Word of life

A Bible is brought forward

A: **We gather in your name.**

L: Jesus, friend of the poor

Old worn clothes are brought forward

A: **We gather in your name.**

L: Jesus, source of all forgiveness

Soap, water and towel are brought forward

A: **We gather in your name.**

L: Jesus, Prince of Peace

A cross is brought forward

A: **We gather in your name.**

A: **Lord Jesus Christ, you call us together in faith and love.
Breathe again the new life of your Holy Spirit among us,
that we may hear your Holy Word
pray in your name,
seek unity among Christians,
work for reconciliation in this nation
and share more fully in your way of life.
All glory and honour be yours, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn

Teaching God's People

Reader: Matthew 18:15-22

The Sermon

A period of silence may be kept

Turning Point for God's People

All face the back of the worship place

L: Living, loving God, in many ways we fail to follow you

A: **We fail to live as your children as sisters and brother together.
We try and imprison you in our own words and ideas, and do not let you
work freely among us.
We forget that you stand beside us and do not see your presence with us.
Merciful God, forgive us.**

All face the outer walls of the worship place

L: Strong and gracious God, in many ways we fail to accept each other.

A: **We refuse to understand each other's way of life, and are not troubled
by our own pride and contempt.
We turn our back on those in need and do not want to see Christ in the
stranger.
We just want an easy life and shrink from the demands of love.
Redeeming God, forgive us.**

All face the front of the worship place

L: Hear what Jesus says:

‘Your sins are forgiven’.

‘Come, follow me’.

Now let us walk the way of reconciliation and unity, the way of love.

In peace, harmony and mutual forgiveness, we say the prayer Jesus taught his followers:

Face inwards towards each other

A: **The Lord's Prayer** (Ecumenical version)

L: What we have confessed with our lips let us make real in our lives.
By sharing in the sign of peace we renew our commitment to a new way of
life, which makes our confession to God and to one another a turning point in
our lives.
Let us exchange a sign of peace.

Hymn

Reading

Revelation 22: 1 – 5

To be read from within the congregation, all seated.

*During the reading, a blue cloth and branches/shrubs are arranged near the
other symbols*

Prayers for Others

Remembering God's gifts, we pray together:

L.1 Lord of heaven and earth, we have begun to listen to your Spirit, calling us to
unity in Christ:

A: **We thank you, O God.**

L.2 May we be more attentive to your inspiration and more ready to listen to one
another:

A: **We ask you, O God.**

L.1 We have begun to dialogue with one another, celebrating our common faith
and seeking to understand our difference:

A: **We thank you, O God**