

# Australian Church Women

WORLD  
COMMUNITY  
DAY  
1984



TOWARDS  
A  
WHOLE  
COMMUNITY



TOWARDS A WHOLE COMMUNITY

The concept of community is a key theme in the Christian tradition. Beyond the responsibility for their own needs and attitudes, the members of God's community are responsible for one another.

Some qualities of community are TOLERANCE of and TRUST in each other; RELATING, GROWING and CELEBRATING together; SHARING with and CARING for one another; LOVING one another and EXPLORING our faith together.

CELEBRATING

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: O God, it is good to be here in your presence,  
People: and to be involved with one another in your worship.  
Leader: We recognise the common bond of our humanity,  
People: and give thanks for your acceptance of us.  
Leader: Let us worship out of thanksgiving to God,  
People: and move into service out of our concern and love for one another.

HYMN: A.H.B. 367 "All Praise to our Redeeming Lord"

1. All praise to our redeeming Lord,  
who joins us by His grace,  
And bids us each to each restored  
together seek His face.
2. He bids us build each other up;  
and, gathered into one,  
to our high calling's glorious hope  
we hand in hand go on.
3. Even now we think and speak the same,  
and cordially agree;  
concentred all, through Jesus' name,  
in perfect harmony.
4. And if our fellowship below  
in Jesus be so sweet,  
what heights of rapture shall we know  
when round his throne we meet.

RELATING

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Loving God, we are grateful for the gift of prayer, for the wonderful freedom and confidence we have in prayer to come to you, to receive your direction.

Loving God, in this freedom of prayer we allow our thoughts and feelings to stretch and change and grow so that all that is within us is opened to your transforming sweetness.

Loving God, we are thankful for the delight of community. We are thankful that many pairs of hands, many feet, many voices swell the experience of being community. And to be a whole community. we know much is needed, and much is already established.

We are thankful for large hearts and generous hands which have over many centuries broken barriers and stretched out lovingly to the unwanted, the eccentric, the different, so that joyous community could begin.

We are thankful for the challenges and crises that are placed in our lives, which ask us to grow, to leap great hurdles of our own and others' making, so that we can stand beside those whom we may not have noticed or cared about before.

We are thankful for forgiveness - that mighty energy which dissolves the memory of past hurts and enables wholeness and oneness to be glimpsed, celebrated, sustained.

We are grateful for courageous women. We give thanks that your Spirit has fired and blessed them in every age - that intuition, love, service have been the golden thread of your truth running through brave women everywhere to link peoples and bind up wounds.

We are thankful that whole community begins in the simplicity of a loving heart, and that you have placed in each one of us the potential to experience this. We are thankful that we do not need to be overwhelmed by the demands in front of us when wholeness is already at the base of our nature.

Loving God, thank you for running out in front of us to make the crooked places straight. Thank you for staying in our past to make every memory a possibility for growth and awareness. Thank you for being with us now to ensure our hope, create a new spirit within us, and support us as we take risks, fall down, stand again and shout - Glory, laud and honour to our God, and to the purposes we are drawn to in this - our life on earth.

Amen.

TOLERANCE AND TRUST & GROWING TOGETHER

BIBLE READINGS: (Read by 5 people)

Micah 6:6-8; Luke 4:16-21; 2 Cor. 5:14-18; Philipians 2:1-5;  
Colossians 3:12-14.

Leader: Community means ...

Voice 1: creating an atmosphere where each feels a part of the whole;

Voice 2: granting to each other the freedom to think differently;

Voice 3: acceptance of each individual as a person;

Voice 1: growing together as persons and groups;

Voice 2: openness to change;

Voice 3: willingness to share oneself with another;

Voice 1: developing an atmosphere of understanding and trust;

Voice 2: open and honest communication;

Voice 3: seeking, helping, working together.

HYMN: A.H.B. 561 "Jesu"

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
silently washes their feet:  
master who acts as a slave to them.

Refrain: Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love,  
show us how to serve the neighbours  
we have from you.

2. Neighbours are rich folk and poor,  
Neighbours are black folk and white,  
neighbours are nearby and far away.

3. These are the ones we should serve,  
these are the ones we should love;  
all folk are neighbours to us and to you.

4. Loving puts us on our knees,  
serving as though we are slaves:  
this is the way we should live with you.

EXPLORING AND SHARING

Think about the following questions and share with two other people sitting near you.

What groups of people have been most significant in your development as a person?

What influence has this had on your present faith position?

What were the qualities of that group that made it a community for you?

CARING AND LOVING

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION:

We enter the community of prayer asking for tender hearts and open minds.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for those who experience a lack of wholeness in any form; personal, financial, political, religious. We pray that justice may be established in personal and national lives to enable every person to grow towards wholeness.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for those within our own society who struggle for a sense of community, yet believe themselves to be shut out. We pray for women at home with small children who know long and lonely days. We pray for the elderly who are cut off from work, fellowship and laughter. We pray for those in communities of despair - such as prison or unjust work environments - we pray for them in a spirit of change, renewal, restoration and hope.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for our own courage as the creators of whole community. Help us as we stand firm for justice, risk our securities to give unsparingly, and reject false values which would impoverish us and the people we are committed to help.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for wise discernment of the sorts of communities we can build. We pray for the wisdom to know where help and encouragement are needed and we pray for the common sense to leave groups and situations which are unproductive and destructive.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for compassion and understanding of many types of people who may be different from us, yet who have much to give and to receive. We pray for a right spirit of acceptance and respect for those who our society often spurns - for blacks, the disabled, for men and women with alternative life-styles, for artists and radical intellectuals, for the unemployed and very poor.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

We pray for a new spirit within us to enable us to follow the Spirit as He leads us ever into all the truth, fulfilling the words of Jesus, bringing comfort, peace and wholeness, enabling us to know that whole community is the will of God, the health of society, the glory of the Church, and the delight of the saints.

RESPONSE: Loving God - hear our prayer.

Amen.

PROJECT: Become a Building Partner

In response to the continuing needs of families made homeless by the onslaught of Cyclone Isaac, the Tongan National Council of Churches and the Australian Council of Churches have launched a program to build 100 homes on the Ha'apai group of islands in the Kingdom of Tonga.

This program is unique. It combines traditional Tongan design with cyclone resistant features, the skills of local people with the techniques of modular construction, timber from the people's own coconut palms with modern building materials.

The Australian Council of Churches invites your parish, mission group or other church organisation to share in this program by raising \$1,000 to cover the cost of building one house.

This low cost is made possible because each family supplies their own timber for their house, and works together on the house along with the carpenters. But the program remains unworkable without financial support from Australian churches.

OFFERING:

PRAYER:

HYMN: A.H.B. 571 "A New Commandment"

A new commandment I give unto you  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.  
By this shall all folk know that you are  
my disciples, if you have love one for another.  
By this shall all folk know that you are  
my disciples, if you have love one for another.

WHOLENESS

ADDRESS: "Towards a Whole Community."

ACT OF COMMITMENT: AFFIRMATION OF FAITH [all stand].

Leader: Let us recall our faith as God's people.

People: We believe that God - Creator, Redeemer and Life Giver -  
summons the church to mission in the world:  
- To witness by word and deed to God's revelation in  
Christ and the acts of love by which God reconciles us.  
- To evoke in us the personal response of repentance and  
faith through which we can find newness of life in loving  
relationships with God and with our brothers and sisters  
everywhere.  
- To bring us together into a Christian community of  
worship and love, and to send us forth into the world as  
servants in the struggle for meaning and justice.  
- To move us to live in awareness of the life-giving  
power of God's presence, in acknowledgement of God's  
rule over history and in the confident expectation of  
the final completion of God's purpose.

Amen.

OFFERING: Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Prayer: Father, we would pray that it is not with a careless  
hand that we give our coin, even if it does not mean  
much to us. We pray for the women in other countries  
who give their least coins like us, but go without their  
evening bread to share from their poverty.

Father, within your cup which feeds your lambs, our  
coins, through you, become the golden coin of fellowship  
and love.

Amen.

HYMN: A.H.B. 3 "All Creatures of Our God and King"

All creatures of our God and King,  
lift up your voice and with us sing  
alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
alleluia, alleluia!

Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest folk both warmth and light,  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness;  
O praise him, alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;  
O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

BENEDICTION PRAYER:

Great and merciful God, who has given us a new commandment that we should love one another, give us grace also that we may fulfil it. Make us gentle, courteous and tolerant. Direct our lives that we may seek to encourage others in word and action, that we may all know the richness you have for us.

Bless our search for community by the power of your Spirit, for Christ's sake, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

This service has been prepared by Lola Mavor and Florence Spurling. It has been purposely written in "inclusive" language.

The use of inclusive language is a way of building community, because it broadens our thinking to "include" people who are different from us, or who have had different experiences to us.

In this service we therefore have used the word "people" (men, women, children, all cultures, all nations, young, old) instead of "man", and are asking you to use the word "folk" in the hymns instead of "men".

Inclusiveness goes beyond replacing the generic word "man (men)". It involves a change of attitude that comes from the realisation that when we pray for families, we might also pray for those who do not live in a family situation; or that when we give thanks for opportunities to work, we also remember those who are unemployed. In this way, we more readily begin to think of community as being inclusive.

We trust that you will be open to this experience, and enjoy this opportunity of sharing together.

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