

OPENING PRAYER

BIBLE READINGS: **Philippians 2: 9-11.**

Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV)

Leader

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Reader 1

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

Leader

7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Reader 2

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Leader

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Reader 3

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Leader

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

BIBLE READINGS: **1 Corinthians 3: 10-15**

Reader 1

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Reader 2

12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

Reader 3

14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

PARAGRAPH 1: BASIS OF UNION

Reader 1

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.

Reader 2

They pray that this act may be to the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Reader 3

To this end they declare their readiness to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ the living Head of the Church...

REFLECTION by Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki, Chair of the National Council of the ACC

Reader 1:

Three things stand out:

1. The three churches saw themselves as being part of a church movement that was not 'its own denomination' but part of the fellowship of the whole Church Catholic, witnessing to that unity which is both Christ's gift and will for the Church.
2. The three churches 'prayed' that this act may be to the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
3. The three churches 'declared' their readiness to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ the living head of the Church.

Reader 2:

As the Uniting Church seeks to move forward together in fellowship with the whole Church Catholic, in the light of the radical proposal by the Assembly Standing Committee to redefine marriage in July, we are reminded of our historical and ecumenical commitment to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ. That is, the UCA cannot go off on a tangent apart from its commitment to live and work within the faith and unity of the Only Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. To do so will be a departure from our Basis of Union and our Constitution. The aim of Assembly, therefore, is NOT to try maintain a 'diversity of views' on this matter as if 'diversity' of theologies is in itself the highest good and goal of the Church, but, to help the Church to move forward together in 'sole loyalty' to Christ.

Reader 3:

Contrary to the significant flaw in the ASC report, the Assembly of Confessing Congregations 'declares' that Marriage enters into the substance of the faith and therefore not a matter that allows for a diversity of opinion.

The issue before us is not human sexuality as such, but the authority of Scripture. When we speak of the authority of Scripture (BOU para.5) we are speaking about the lordship of Christ as the 'living head of the Church'. And the lordship of Christ is the essence of the gospel itself. To deny this reality, is to promote a totally different gospel to the one outlined in the UCA's Basis of Union.

PRAYER

Leader:

Our Father, we pray that Assembly will be bold in helping the Uniting Church to move forward together with the whole Church Catholic in sole loyalty to your Son, our Lord, Jesus the Christ, the living head of your Church. Amen!

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

CONFESSION FROM BASIS OF UNION

Leader:

Within this fellowship of the Uniting Church in Australia, and as part of the Christian church around the world, let us confess Christ in the following words from the Basis of Union.

Reader 1:

Today we 'confess Jesus as Lord over (our) own life' and 'Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity'.

Leader:

Let us reaffirm our desire 'to live and work within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

Reader 2:

We joyously 'acknowledge that Christ alone is supreme in his Church' and declare our 'readiness to go forward together in sole loyalty to Christ the living Head of the Church'.

Amen.

*Nb. The words in quotation marks are direct quotes from the Basis of Union
Prepared by Rev Rod James.*

FINAL PRAYER