

Liturgical resources for use when the Tsunami is remembered

Sunday January 16th has been named as a National Day of Mourning. The following materials have been gathered by members of the Liturgy Commission of General Synod as *resources* for this day, and also in the months to come.

This work has been done quickly, and is in 'semi-draft' mode, but the Commission believes that the resources offered are consistent with the Constitution.

NB: though these resources are issued by the Commission, authority for their use rests with the diocesan bishop.

General notes

On Sunday January 16th there will be opportunity to remember the tsunami in the regular main service, and also the possibility of a special service with other churches. Resources for both are offered, but careful work is important to plan what is appropriate for each situation.

Liturgy and pastoral care

Good liturgy of whatever style assists pastoral care, including grieving processes, but its primary focus is the worship of God. In this context we can safely acknowledge our bewilderment and fears, and also offer our prayers and thanksgivings, knowing that we do so in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Prayers or songs whose main function is to express our feelings or 'say the right things' to one another are most unlikely to offer 'solid joys and lasting treasure'.

Inter-faith events

There may be requests for an 'Inter-faith service'. At such a time it is important to be positive about this, but several issues arise, not least what those who follow a non-Christian faith may want, and perceptions of 'syncretism' on the part of some Christians.

The policy recommended by the Australian Consultation on Liturgy in their 'Guidelines' is twofold:

- a) The name of such an event is not to include terms such as 'service' or 'worship', because these have particular meanings for each faith and cause confusion: terms such as inter-faith 'event', 'gathering', 'vigil' or the like are helpful. NB: use of 'ecumenical' here is not helpful.
- b) The content of such an event should not require any faith to compromise: the most practical and principled pattern is a succession of prayers / songs / readings led by a recognised leader of each faith, offered separately for acceptance by those who can do so, other remaining as empathetic observers. Participation by leaders should ensure that what is said and done is representative, has integrity and is acceptable to members of the faith community concerned.

More detailed guidelines are available from the Victorian Council of Churches.

Further resources from Anglican sources may be found in the General Synod website, and a wider range on the *National Council of Churches in Australia* website. These are being update daily, and the addresses are

www.anglican.org.au www.ncca.org.au

A Suggestions for use during a main Sunday service on January 16th, 2005

The primary focus of any main Sunday service remains the celebration of God in Christ. The overall shape and contents of this service on January 16th should therefore be that for Epiphany 2, trusting the 'givens' of the day to be God's ways of ministering to and in the congregation.

Visitors will probably be present, however, so the structure should be direct and clear – one or two sheets of paper with all that a worshipper needs may be more helpful than one or more books.

Hymns / songs

This is not occasion for a full 'Christmas dinner' of song - a spare diet which allows us to sing of our sorrows (without becoming maudlin), and humbly offer prayer and praise, will be helpful.

A number of 'tsumani' hymn/songs set to well-known tunes are available on the NCCA website (www.ncca.org.au), but many will want familiar words and familiar tunes.

NB: visitors are unlikely to know any tune written in the past 50 years.

Some possible choices (from Together in Song) include:

Psalm based:

- 47 Our God, our help in ages past
- 59 All people that on earth do dwell
- 708 By the waters of Babylon

Songs of struggle

- 682 When human voices cannot sing
- 677 Christ's is the world in which we move

Songs affirming faith

- 134 Praise, my soul, the king of heaven
- 179 Praise with joy the world's creator
- 349 In the cross of Christ I glory
- 447 Lord, your almighty Word
- 459 In Christ there is no East nor West
- 494 In water we grow

Songs of assurance

- 123 Be still, my soul
- 590 What a friend we have in Jesus
- 647 Comfort, comfort O my people
- 725 In our darkness

Sentences:

The sentence for Year A Epiphany is appropriate, but one or more from section 7 of The Funeral Service (APBA page 712ff) may be helpful:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3.22–23

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46.1

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

Psalm 130.1

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived,
God has prepared for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2.9

I am convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.38–39

Readings:

The readings for the day are from Isaiah 49, Psalm 40, 1 Corinthians and John 1.

The OT reading and Gospel should not be changed: Isaiah 49 continues the ‘suffering servant’ songs, and John 1 picks up the Epiphany motif that the Lamb of God came to take away the sins of the whole world, and in varied circumstances.

The NT reading, however, commences a series from that epistle, and could be replaced by Romans 8:18-27 – a considered reading using two voices may be helpful.

The following ‘laments’ may be appropriate instead of Psalm 40, but need to be used with care:

Psalm 69:1-3, 31-38 (strong flood-imagery, and evoking Christ’s suffering)

Psalm 88 (very strong, and the only lament with no praise)

Psalm 90 (familiar from funeral rites, and printed for alternate reading in the full service)

Intercessions:

- The Ministry of Prayer in the full service is recommended for use in place of the intercessions.
- The following adaptation of Sunday Form 2 and APBA 703 adapted, is an alternative. The suggested response is:

God of this earth and all its peoples,
hear and have mercy

Significant pauses should be left after each bidding for silent, corporate prayer.

Let us give thanks for this earth in which God has set us,
and pray for the healing of lands riven by the tsunami. **R**

Let us give thanks for the Church in every land,
and pray for the people of God in lands bordering the Indian Ocean. **R**

Let us give thanks for leaders who have responded to this dire challenge,
and pray for those in authority in tsunami-affected regions. **R**

Let us give thanks for the generous response of many Australians to this crisis,
and pray that the monies raised may be shared with justice and compassion. **R**

Let us give thanks for the building of bridges across war-zones,
and pray that all peoples may live with one another in trust and goodwill. **R**

Let us pray for the bereaved and the traumatised,
for children left as orphans,
for the aged, the sick and the suffering,
for those who have lost livelihood, homes and culture,
and especially for those who have lost hope. **R**

Let us give thanks for each other,
and pray that we may be able to live in faith, love and hope. **R**

Gracious God,
nothing in death or life,
nothing in the world as it is,
nothing in the world as it shall be,
nothing in all creation
can separate us from your love.
Jesus commended his spirit into your hands at his last hour.
In your hands we leave all who have died suddenly and unprepared.

We join our prayers in the words which he gave us:

Our Father in heaven ...

- Many find it helpful to have opportunity to light a taper and place it in silence in a sand-bowl placed in a central place, with a large candle nearby (e.g. last years' Paschal candle). This could take place during or after the prayers, or be a possibility for people to take up immediately following their receipt of the holy communion.
- Given the significance of water in this disaster, the (filled) font could be placed in a position where people can wet their hands and /or faces, or sprinkle themselves, in association with the prayers, or the holy communion, as a tangible reminder of their being baptised into Christ's saving death and resurrection, so drinking of the Spirit. Parts of the Thanksgiving over the water from APBA may be used as appropriate.

Other suitable prayers from *APBA* include

Prayers for Various Occasions 12 and 24 (*APBA* pages 205, 209)
Blessing 3 (*APBA* page 222)

From Funeral services:

For those who mourn (*APBA* pages 720 and 761),
Committal words (*APBA* page 731)
Prayers 9a, 9b (*APBA* page 745)
Additional Prayers 8-10 (*APBA* 767).

Preparation, Peace, Great Thanksgiving, Communion

The Confession introduction for Epiphany is 'standard', but that for Saints is also appropriate.

This is an occasion where the Prayer of Approach will either be totally appropriate or the opposite –the decision about its inclusion needs to be made beforehand.

The alternative introduction to the Peace, 'Christ has reconciled us ...' is appropriate, or the words of the Peace may be omitted and a greeting shared in silence.

The Great Thanksgiving with Epiphany preface is both 'standard' and appropriate, pointing up as it does 'the nations' in Christ.

As with the Peace, the Breaking of the Bread may best be done in silence.

Where visitors are present, those who are baptised from other Christian traditions should be welcomes, and ushers and administrators prepared to be gentle in any guidance needed. Non-communicants (including children) should be encouraged to come forward for prayer and blessing.

As noted above, opportunities could well exist for the availability of symbolic actions such as lighting a candle or using water in association with the holy communion.

B A Service of Prayer and Reflection

This is a complete service, which keeps in mind both church members and the general public who may wish to take part. It follows the familiar structure of Gathering – Word – Prayer – Sending Out but is not eucharistic.

The prayers have been adapted by Elizabeth Smith from resources prepared by the Liturgy Commission for use following disclosure of abuse in a church community.

The selection of hymns comes from the first use of this service at St John's, Bentleigh (Melbourne) on Sunday afternoon, January 2nd 2005. They may be changed as necessary.

The service is likely to run for some 35-45 minutes, with more time possibly being needed if longer silences are kept, or significant time is used as people place candles.

Whatever you do, the Commission prays its blessing on all the prayers and praises of God's people.

The Liturgy Commission

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