

Modern Australian Liturgies

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Introduction

This book emerged from a discussion at the Australian Academy of Liturgy conference in 2022. A question was asked about funeral services or outlines that would be suitable for secular uses in an Australian context. This led to a broader discussion about the accessibility of liturgies that meet the needs of our contemporary Australian society, for those who belong to a faith tradition, and also for those who do not.

Many of the liturgies contained in this book emerged from personal experiences. Many were written in response to a need that traditional liturgies did not meet. Many developed because these were the words that the person needed to hear at a threshold moment.

The words 'liturgy' and 'ritual' are sometimes used interchangeably. Liturgy – often referred to as the 'work of the people' – describes standard forms of public worship. Liturgies are most often connected to a religious tradition, and the ones included in this book arise out of predominantly Christian spaces. In contrast, a ritual is a series of actions or procedures which may or may not have a connection to a worship context. Liturgies often contain rituals, but rituals are not always liturgical.

In the context of this book, rituals and liturgies may be thought of as
a group of words and actions
performed together
to give meaning to an important event.

Part of the meaning-making is contained in the words that give voice to our feelings, thoughts and experiences. Sometimes the meaning-making is rooted in the actions which accompany the words. The meaning can

also be found in those who perform the ritual alongside us, those who are physically with us and those who are not.

Ecclesiastes chapter three reminds us that there is a time for everything under heaven. There is a range of activities mentioned that span the breadth of human experience. In this book, we have not included a liturgy for everything, and not even for each of the 'times' mentioned in Ecclesiastes. However, the liturgies here do range from celebrations of new beginnings through to exercises of grief and mourning. For each section of the book there is a sub-heading and a poem to help connect the liturgies with these times found in Ecclesiastes – 'A time to embrace', 'A time to heal', 'A time to build up', 'A time to mourn', 'A time for peace and a time to dance', and 'A time to plant'. These themes were chosen in response to the liturgies and rituals that were offered by the authors. They perhaps say something about the needs of individuals and communities that today live in these lands now called Australia.

Some of the liturgies and rituals in this book are designed to be practiced in community. Some are for private or more intimate celebrations. Some of these liturgies deal with difficult life challenges. It is important to consider ways to make the space for their use safe for all participants.

You are invited to customise these liturgies and rituals for your own moments and meaning. The last section contains a guide to a do-it-yourself liturgy, setting out the shape you might like to follow if you are developing a liturgy of your own.

During the COVID pandemic people became familiar with attending communal events online. Some of the liturgies within this book may be adapted to this format. Although the preferred mode would be in-person, we acknowledge that this is not always possible. If you are providing an online option, it would be advisable to have a designated person to look after the technology who is not the person leading the liturgy. This allows the leader to be solely focused on holding the space for those present.

If symbols are to be used throughout the liturgy, ensure that those attending online have received instructions prior to the gathering to enable them to participate fully. This may also include sending an order of service. If the gathering is being held in hybrid form, some in the room and some online, be sure to allow those online to share and contribute. This will include ensuring that participants are able to hear those online when they speak, inviting people online to raise symbols to the camera so those in the room are able to see, and appointing a person to be attentive to the people online when indicating that they wish to speak. Be sure to ask those online to adhere to now generally accepted online

etiquette, and mute their microphones while not contributing in order to avoid background noises. Discussions around sensitive topics may also be accompanied by a content warning, and relevant support hotlines or contacts should be provided (e.g. 1800RESPECT, Lifeline or Beyond Blue).

Each liturgy in this book was written from the authors' perspectives. This means that some liturgies contain rituals connected to specific denominations. The editors of this book are committed to inclusive practices. It is for this reason that there are liturgies included that may not be welcomed in some Christian spaces. If any of the liturgies and rituals may cause discomfort, you are invited to skip them.

A commitment to inclusive practices means that we have intentionally avoided gendered language for God, including in the prayer traditionally known as the Lord's Prayer. Alternative versions of this prayer which use non-gendered language are included in the list of included prayer options following the general instructions, and may be used as you see fit. We hope that this book will be helpful for you as you navigate the important moments of your life.

All scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.

Editor Biographies

Dr Michelle Eastwood has been thinking about liturgies and liturgical forms since she was a child. After church on Sunday, over a bowl of tomato soup with cubes of cheese at the bottom, discussions about what worked, what didn't, how people responded, and ideas about upcoming services were regular lunchtime fodder. Michelle comes from a long line of Australian-German Lutheran traditions, which included both her father and maternal grandfather as ministers in the Lutheran Church of Australia.

Michelle is co-editor of the recently released book *Reading the Bible in Australia*, and writes a substack at (Not) Rescuing the Text (<https://michellejeastwood.substack.com/>) and contributes to the Women in Theology blog (womenintheology.org). Michelle lives, works and plays on the unceded lands of the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation. She dreams of a day when reconciliation between First and Second Nations people is a respectful and lived reality.

Rev Dr Catherine (Cathie) Lambert has a particular love for the use of ritual in worship, in community and in the home. As a Uniting Church minister she has had the privilege of walking alongside people in the joys and struggles of life. Creating ways to mark significant moments in life has been a welcome challenge. As a spiritual director, Cathie has also witnessed the transformative power of simple ritual actions at turning points, and forks in the road, in people's spiritual journeys. Cathie has studied in the areas of education, theology and spirituality. She is privileged to live on the unceded lands of the Whadjuk People of the Noongar Nation. She is thankful for their enduring culture and care for Country, and ritual.

Dr Tracy McEwan is a feminist theologian and sociologist of religion and gender. Through her research and activist work, she seeks to empower women. Her writing and research interests include women in Catholicism; gender-based violence; and church participation, generations, and life stage. Tracy's major projects include the podcast 'Australian Women Preach', which celebrates the diverse talents of woman preachers in Australia, and the International Survey of Catholic Women, a survey of more than 17,000 Catholic women from 104 countries. She is a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and an Honorary Fellow at the Australian Catholic University.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Allen, Barbara

Barbara Allen was a nurse, then a teacher, before studying to become an ordained minister in the Uniting Church in Australia. She is passionate about animals and about stewardship of all creation. Her previous books include *I Was There, Pigeon, Animals in Religion, Pelican, and Broken Heart, Shared Heart, Healing Heart*, a book about pet loss. Allen's ministry placements have included parishes, schools, aged care chaplaincy, and a Synod placement. She helped develop Australia's first animal chaplaincy program at Lort Smith Animal Hospital, with the CEO at the time, Rev Ric Holland. Recently widowed, she combines supply ministry with her writing ministry. In a voluntary capacity she is the grief support person for the charity Story Dogs. She shares the house with her animal family: Harry, a blind dog, Leaf, an elderly cat, several white doves and a fish.

Elia, Ellie

Ellie Elia lives with her family on Darug and Gundungurra Country in the Blue Mountains. She is an ordained Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia and is currently in placement at Glenbrook Uniting Church. With a background in Dramatic Arts, Ellie is particularly interested in how creativity shapes the spiritual imagination of community.

Fraser, Talitha

A Ngāi Tahu/Pākehā settler on the lands of the peoples of the Kulin Nation, Talitha Fraser is the Curator of the Recollective – a playground for reflection, culture and feminist theologies. She is also the Administrator of the Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies and Conversations at the Crossroads networks and is currently studying decolonising business practices at the Matriarchal Business University.

Her creative practice is one of contemplative listening for what space has to say at the nexus of context, time and place asking: What can we make, here? She wishes to draw attention to taiao which, as well as vocational calling to radical discipleship and theopoetics, seeks to explore what responsibilities, privileges, inspirations and possibilities exist within place.

Gilbert, Christine

Christine Gilbert is a Uniting Church minister, spiritual director and professional supervisor who enjoys having a play with other creatives.

Habel-Orrell, Anjali

Anjali Habel-Orrell juggles teaching performing arts and, with her spouse, weaving a beautiful and supportive partnership to raise their five children. She loves performing in and watching musical theatre and contributing her voice to making music for Christian worship.

Humphries, John

Jon Humphries is currently in placement as Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church at St Matthew's Uniting Church Baulkham Hills. Jon has a passion for writing prayer, especially in the tradition of the Psalms. These he regularly posts on social media. Jon seeks to engage people in the mission of God, which is our deepest liturgy (work of the people) through employing his gifts of creativity to help shape innovative Church services. Jon has recently been the Advocate (chair) of the Uniting Church National Assembly Circle of Interest for Transforming Worship and continues to be a member of the steering panel. He is also passionate about active discipleship and is a member of the National Assembly Circle of Interest for Growing in Faith.

Hutton, Erin Martine

Erin Martine Hutton is an award-winning poet and scholar who researches, writes and teaches across the fields of history, literature and theology. She has recently completed a PhD on how the Song of Songs contributes to the primary prevention of gendered violence. She also intends her puns, and fashions books and furniture into trees. Erin bends time and space to make Shakespearing.

Inkpin, Josephine McDonnell

Born on the roof of England, Josephine has lived in Australia since 2001. She has worked in theological education, interfaith, First Nations solidarity, and peace and justice ministries, and was one of Deloitte's Outstanding 50 LGBT+ Leaders 2020, as well as a former General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council. The first out trans priest in Australia, she is co-chair of Equal Voices (a national network of LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies), and a member of Equality Australia's Trans Council. With Penny Jones, her wife of 40 years, she created the first Queer Theology unit in an Australian university and is engaged in spiritual resourcing.

Lee, Elizabeth

Elizabeth lives on the land of the Bidjigal, on the northern shore of Kamay (Botany Bay), Sydney. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of Divinity, Melbourne. Her research explores trauma-sensitive theologies of hospitality in faith communities in a Post-Royal Commission Era. She brings a contemplative, participatory, feminist approach to this theological work.

Elizabeth is interested in being a listening presence among the fringes and fostering human connection through deep listening. She has been formed, informed, and transformed through offering pastoral care to those living with homelessness and working as a Prison Chaplain. Elizabeth is a Spiritual Director, Retreat Facilitator, and Professional/Pastoral Supervisor with previous experience in adult and high-school education and community development. She has been married for more than 40 years, and has three children and four grandchildren.

Lindsay, Rebecca

Rebecca Lindsay lives with her family on Gadigal and Bidjigal land. She is a biblical scholar and an ordained Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia. Rebecca teaches Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at United Theological College. Her research explores the entanglements of settler colonialism and biblical interpretation in the lands now called Australia.

Lizares, Sophia

Sophia Lizares is an ordained minister in the Uniting Church in Australia and Interim Co-chair of the UCA Filipino National Conference. She lived and worked as a journalist and social development professional in the Philippines and Germany prior to moving to Perth/Boorloo in Whadjuk Noongar boodja where she currently serves in congregational ministry.

She, along with Becky Asedillo, Berlin Guerrero, Charlie Ocampo, Noel Suministrado and Mario Trinidad make up Scattered Seeds, an informal ecumenical circle of Filipinos seeking to do theology and ministry in diaspora. These ordained and lay leaders have extensive experience in ecumenical and missionary work in the Philippines, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East and currently meet online from Australia, the United States and Canada.

Loughrey, Glenn

Glenn is a Wiradjuri man, Archdeacon for Reconciliation, Indigenous Recognition and Treaty for the Anglican Province of Victoria; First Indigenous Canon of St Paul's Cathedral; Member of National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Council (NATSIC); Honorary Professor at the Australian National University, Crawford School of Public Policy; member of the ANU Water Justice Hub Board; member of the Community Advisory Committee of the Australasian College of Pathology and of its Māori and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Working Group; advisor to the Boroondara Council on First People matters; initiator of the EmpowerToTeach website; founder and Elder of the Murnong Indigenous Gathering Place in Melbourne's Inner East, and a member of the Clean Water Alliance.

He is a practising artist who has been a finalist in 5 major art prizes and has work in the ANU gallery (2), St Paul's Cathedral (3) and was responsible for the design of the glass panels in the Narthex screen at St Paul's Melbourne. He is an author and co-author of 3 books and contributor to several others. He is married to Gaye with whom he shares a daughter Katrina, and a Springer Spaniel called Jemma.

Luscombe, Andrea

Andrea Luscombe lives and works on Wurundjeri Land and is a secondary school teacher specialising in Religious Education. Over nearly 30 years, she has also been school Faith Leader in many guises and at different schools and settings and written and facilitated many liturgies and rituals. She believes that rituals should be inclusive, relevant and positive. Her favourite Gospel is Luke.

Marquis, Angela

Angela Marquis is the Pastoral Associate with the Passionists at St Joseph's Hobart Parish and (at time of writing) the administrative assistant for WATAC (Women and the Australian Church). She is a founding member of the Australian Women Preach organising team. Angela has a Master of Theology and a Master of Primary teaching, a Grad Cert in RE, and a BA with Honours. She has completed two units of Biblical Hebrew with the Israel Institute and is currently discerning a potential PhD while attempting to regain the fitness to climb literal mountains once again, yet usually only managing to juggle life and snuggle on the couch with her husband and four-legged daughter. Angela writes regular gospel reflections and is published in academic journals and anthologies.

Nicholas, Amanda

Coming from her own lived experiences for creating a genuinely educated and meaningful faith encounter, Amanda is passionate about educating and resourcing individuals and communities of faith in accessible and inclusive liturgies and practices within the dynamics of the Body of Christ seeking to be known as inclusive communities across the expanse of culture, gender, sexuality, neurodiversity and more. Rev Amanda Nicholas is a Specialist Educator, Theological Connector & Resource Minister in LGBTQIA+ & Neurodiversity Inclusion for faith communities with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Oh, Benjamin

Benjamin works in areas of interfaith dialogue, cross-cultural development and human rights in his various capacities and organisations that he leads and serves with his beloved community.

With roots in the Catholic Christian tradition, the multifaith global south of Southeast Asia, Benjamin sees how faith and culture is an inextricable part of one's personhood and flourishing.

Having trained in liturgy and composed them for people and community, Benjamin continues to immerse himself in the transformative power of liturgies and ceremonies that can help persons, families and communities better live, love, mourn, celebrate, bless and evoke the heart and spirit of that which are sacredly human and divine to each of us. Benjamin is a community celebrant. He and his life-partner Nam have two children.

Pope, Mick

Mick Pope has a PhD in Meteorology from Monash University in tropical climate, and a M Phil in Theology from the University of Divinity. His master's thesis looked at the priestly tradition as a basis for an ethic for the Anthropocene and has been published as *From Creation to Canaan: Biblical Hermeneutics for the Anthropocene* (Pickwick, 2024). He is currently working on a PhD in the area of panentheism and a theology of mass extinction and ecocide. Mick has written three other books, and several book chapters and articles on ecotheology.

Pryde, Naomi

Naomi Pryde is a spiritual director, yoga teacher, movement practitioner, retreat facilitator, and Pastoral Care Practitioner and manager with a deep commitment to embodied spirituality. With over 10 years of experience living in Asia (North India and Northern Thailand) within community, Naomi has led Christ-centred Devotional spaces of contemplation and spiritual practice. She is interested in accompanying individuals through life's transitions, spiritual shifts, those at the end of life and those navigating grief and loss. Naomi creates spaces where people can explore their spiritual journeys through mindfulness, movement and contemplation both as individuals and as a group, cultivating presence, self-awareness, and a deeper connection to the sacred in everyday life.

Shorter, Rosie Clare

Rosie Clare Shorter is a feminist researcher interested in gender, sexuality and religion. She teaches gender studies and sociology at the University of Melbourne, and is currently a Research Fellow at Deakin University. She is an avid reader of Sara Ahmed, a persistent reader of Rosi Braidotti, and is particularly interested in feminist trauma theologies and critical menstruation studies. Rosie Clare enjoys Jane Austen adaptations and show tunes.

Sunter, Greg

Greg Sunter has been an educator, in one way or another, throughout his life. He worked as both a Campus Minister then teacher in Catholic schools, then worked in advisory and consulting roles with teachers and leaders of schools. In the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, Greg was a leading voice in ministry with young people. In more recent years, he has been a facilitator of retreats, spiritual formation experiences and guiding the development and transformation of organisational culture. Greg's reflections on the Sunday gospels have been published in parish communities throughout Australia, NZ, the UK and USA. He brings his experience in education and theological study to the development of prayers, rituals and liturgies for varied communities and purposes. Greg lives and works on Quandamooka lands in Southern Moreton Bay on the outskirts of Brisbane.

Tichenor, Liz

The Rev. Liz Tichenor is an Episcopal priest serving near San Francisco, California. Her contributions to church leadership include collaboration in congregational development, building rich community through fellowship and good humour, flexing towards shared vulnerability, and wrestling with our sacred texts in preaching. Liz is also the author of *The Night Lake: A Young Priest Maps the Topography of Grief*.

Whalley, Melanie

The Reverend Melanie Whalley is mum to Amelia, Gabriel (dec) and Joseph, wife to Angus, writer, spiritual leader and advocate for social justice. She is a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia ministering in both parish and chaplaincy ministry in the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle in New South Wales and has a Bachelor of Theology through the University of Divinity. Melanie especially wishes to reach out to the broken-hearted and oppressed, with a deep commitment to inclusivity, fostering spiritual growth and offering compassionate presence in the darkest times of people's lives. Her writing and liturgies reflect her commitment to offering compassionate Spiritual Care, and provide an insightful perspective from a combination of lived and ministry experience for a modern society.

Wittwer, Tanya

Tanya Wittwer lives on the lands of the Peramangk people. Her focus in recent years has been the struggle towards the ordination of women in her denomination. This is now possible, so her direction has become one of supporting the pioneer women who will enter this space, and the cultural change needed. Previously she has held pastoral, management and academic roles across a breadth of disciplines.

Young, Beaux

In 2021, Beaux Young (They/He) completed their MTh thesis, 'Thanks for Watching Joining: Religious Digital Creatives and a Theology of Presence at Hillsong Church Online'. This thesis project explored the digital aspects of contemporary religious practices or 'digital church experience'. In 2022, Beaux began their transition with the love and support of his family and friends, and alongside the New City Church community in Glebe, Sydney. Beaux now lives on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, the Attawandaron/Chonnonton, and the Haudenosaunee peoples, and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit in Ontario, Canada.

