**From being “them and us”, to being “us together”**

Welcome, Nau mai, Haere mai, Bula

This year Te Pouhere Sunday and Disability Awareness Sunday are celebrated on the same Sunday, June 19. *From being “them and us” to being “us together”* weaves together Te Pouhere and Disability Awareness through becoming united in our diversity. Our differences can strengthen our communities.

Differences can divide and separate us people causing misunderstanding and hurt. How then do we stop differences separating us and start to celebrate diversity as a strength?

At the heart of both events is the celebration of our unity in Christ and diversity in being human.

We celebrate these both by acknowledging the new position of the Disability Ministry Educator in our Anglican church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

“Disability Ministry Educators set out”

[Anglican Taonga : New Zealand's Anglican News Leader](https://anglicantaonga.org.nz/news/common_life/dismineds)

**How to use this resource**

This resource package is designed to be used throughout the church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Our theme is being inclusive and celebrating our differences. No two communities are the same, we are all different and we celebrate this!

There is a wide variety of material in this package. We invite you to take what “speaks” to your community. Hopefully there is something that connects with your community and you are encouraged you to take what fits your situation.

Maybe some take one of two of the ideas from the background and/or images create a sermon, have a korero (discussion) or another activity around them. It maybe you use some of the prayers and the readings or focus on the article from Anglican Taonga. Maybe you have local knowledge of the three tikanga church and/or disability responsiveness, we invite to weave this into this celebration.

**Thoughts on the theme**

At the heart of Te Pouhere and Disability Awareness is living with diversity. Diversity enhances our life in the body of Christ, we become more the body of Christ as we empower each other to live out our calling as ministers of the Good News. In embracing diversity there are challenges. Challenges to go beyond what we know and the way we are used to doing things.

Being in relationship, being at home with Christ in such a way that we honour and are not threatened by our differences. To honour and celebrate diversity we need to be open to different ways of looking and being in the world and in the church.

**Thoughts on the readings**

A strong theme in the readings today is going beyond our comfort zone, seeing in a new way, and learning to love each other through the differences. Here are some brief reflections on the readings that connect to the theme.

***Isaiah 42:10-20***

Have courage to sing a new song in the midst of exile when we do not know where we are going. Trust God to lead us. Isaiah 42:16-20 challenges the way we look at disability/impairment. God’s servants and messengers may be blind and deaf.

***2 Corinthians 5:14-19***

Seeing people in a different way, being a new creation in Christ. We are entrusted with reconciliation. Transformation, healing of relationship between God and people, and healing of relationship between God, people and creation. The cry of reconciliation after the mosque shootings in 2019 “They are us” called us to recognise our common humanity in our diversity. For some of us this may have felt like we were stepping outside out our comfort zone to embrace others.

***John 15:9-17***

Jesus speaks about no greater love than laying down one’s life for one’s friends. Jesus commands us to love. We are to love each other by loving each other in a way that goes beyond our own interests and seek to put ourselves in another’s shoes.

Seeing things in a new way, loving others and reconciliation is not easy, however this is fundamental to our faith in Christ that we live by.

**Background Material**

**Te Pouhere**

The constitution of the Province of the Church of New Zealand was signed in 1857. The General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui adopted a revised constitution in 1992, which provides an opportunity for each of the three partners, tikanga (= way, style, or cultural model) Maori, tikanga Pakeha (European), tikanga Pasefika, to express its mind as an equal partner in the decision-making process of the General Synod and to exercise mission and ministry to God's people within the culture of each partner.  With the adoption of this constitution, the Church of the Province of New Zealand became The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia/ Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Niu Tireni, ki Nga Moutere o te Moana Nui a Kiwa.

Te Pouhere means constitution, also it means a hitching post for a waka.  In our context as Anglicans in Aotearoa/ New Zealand and Polynesia the hitching post is Christ to which our three waka or tikanga is tied to.

*Source: www.anglican.org.nz/About/History*

***The Woven flax Cross: Te Ripeka Whiringa Harakeke***

The artist, Ross Hemara, was asked by the Anglican Church to design an indigenous cross, picking up strands from all three Tikanga of the church in these islands. The woven flax cross, Te ripeka whiringa harakeke, was chosen as the first work of art in our prayer book and has become a sign of being Anglican in these islands. At the centre of the woven cross pattern is the koru, a sign of life. The koru is presented in red, a sign of life blood, of the life-giving love which flows through the heart of the Christian message and Christian mission. The design presents the flax strands moving outwards, symbolising the life patterns of the Gospel being formed in a new creation.

*(source:* [*The Woven Flax Cross - Te Ripeka Whiringa Harakeke / About / Home - Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia*](https://www.anglican.org.nz/About/The-Woven-Flax-Cross-Te-Ripeka-Whiringa-Harakeke)*)*

**Disability Responsiveness**

In 2018 General Synod there was a motion on Disability Responsiveness and resourcing this ministry. In the preamble to the motion, it was recognised that disabled people are called to be fully members of the body of Christ, partners in God’s mission. We need to create inclusive communities where all God’s people in all their uniqueness are welcomed, celebrated and empowered to be the people God calls them to be.

In May this year the new positions of Disability Ministry Educators: Engagement Facilitator and Resource, Development Facilitator were established to enable the church to become more accessible and inclusive of disabled people.

**Weaving together Te Pouhere and Disability Awareness**

The images are designed to help you explore the theme of From being “us and them” To being us together.

Image 1: The Woven Flax cross

Image 2-3: From being “Them and us” to becoming “us together”

Image 4: links Trinity Sunday into our theme of diversity today.

*Source: Revd Leo Te Kira*

Image 5: Accessible attitudes

Image 6: Sharing relationships

Image 7-8: Respectful relationships are interdependent

Image 9: A welcoming environment

Images 10-13: Inspirations for inclusivity

(The Inspirations for inclusivity originated as a reflection on the three tikanga church however they are equally relevant to be accessible and inclusive of people living with disability, because both focus on building relationships, seeing common humanity in “the other” not being afraid to engage and listen.)

We are loving and “lying down our lives” to strengthen the body of Christ. We see “the other” as our brothers and sisters in Christ, new creation in Christ.

**Prayers**

**Te Rātapu o Te Pouhere**

E Te Kai-raranga, ko koe te kai-whatu, ko mātou te muka i mahia ai e koe a Te Pouhere, te whāriki whakakotahi i ō mātau tikanga i Aotearoa puta noa i Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa. Nā tō ringa matau i whiriwhiri, e kitea ai te paruhi o te hoahoa, me te tauira i roto i ngā rerekētanga o tēnā o tēnā o mātau. Mā tōna kaha me te whakaaro kotahi te kaupapa e manaaki, tae rawa ki tōna puāwaitanga. Whakamaharatia mātau, nāu mātau i raranga, ā, mā tā mātau noho kotahi hei whāriki, e kitea ai tāu hoahoa i roto i te kotahitanga e kīa nei ko Te Pouhere.

 Master weaver, you are the creator and we are the flax with which you have plaited Te Pouhere, a whāriki which unites our tikanga in Aotearoa and across Te Moananui a Kiwa. Your hand has woven us so that each tikanga is revealed in the perfection of its design, its pattern in the texture of our differences, and its strength in the unity of its purpose to shelter and support your promise. Remind us you have woven us so that no strand by itself reveals your design but together we are the whāriki, Te Pouhere

**Disability Awareness Sunday**

May we who are made in your image, O God, mirror your compassion, creativity and imagination as we work to reshape our society, our buildings, our programmes and our worship so that all may participate. In you we are no longer alone, but united in one body. Trusting in your wisdom and grace, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

 *(Source: “A Church of All and for All, An interim statement: World Council of Churches: 2003)*

**Feedback:**

**This resource has been created by**

**Revd Vicki Terrell** **disabilityresource@anglicanchurch.org.nz**

 **and**

**Mrs Cherryl Thompson** **disabilityengagement@anglicanchurch.org.nz**

**if you have any feedback or need any assistance in creating this liturgy please let us know.**