



# A SPECIAL SERVICE OF HEALING AND HOPE

Prepared by PCANZ White Ribbon Ambassador Rev Hana Popea  
**White Ribbon 2024**

This liturgical resource was created by Rev Hana Popea, White Ribbon Ambassador for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ). It was developed as part of the 2024 White Ribbon Campaign to address abuse and violence within our communities and churches. For further information about the White Ribbon Campaign, please contact: Rev Hana Popea, PCANZ White Ribbon Ambassador, email [hanapd.pcanzwrnza@gmail.com](mailto:hanapd.pcanzwrnza@gmail.com)

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<https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/pcanz-white-ribbon>

## KARAKIA/PRAYER

Kia inoi tatou –

**Let us pray.**

He hōnore, he korōria ki te Atua –

**honour and glory to God.**

He maungārongo ki te whenua –

He whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa –

**peace on earth and goodwill to all people.**

Hangā e te Atua he ngākau hou,

Ki roto, ki tēnā, ki tēnā o mātou –

**Lord, develop a new heart inside all of us.**

Whakatōngia to wairua tapu –

**instill in us your sacred spirit.**

Hei awhina, hei tohutohu i a mātou –

Hei ako hoki i ngā mahi mō tēnei rā –

**help us and guide us in all the things we need to  
learn today.**

**Amine.**





## An Introduction

This year, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions in New Zealand has shown us the need to critically examine our responsibilities in preventing and responding to abuse within our communities. The findings have highlighted the urgent need for churches to acknowledge past failures and to take decisive action to protect those in our care from all forms of abuse.

This Special Service of Healing and Hope is my PCANZ White Ribbon response to this call. It aligns with the White Ribbon Campaign's mission to eliminate violence against women, while acknowledging that abuse also affects men and children in our care.

We gather to:

- acknowledge the harm caused to victims and survivors of all forms of abuse who trusted in our care in churches, homes and communities;
- say sorry for past failures to protect the vulnerable in our communities;
- commit ourselves to preventing everyone from future abuse and violence;
- begin a journey of healing with those who have been hurt;
- stand in solidarity with victims & survivors and their whanau of all forms of abuse.

This service is a significant step to truth-telling, healing, and transformation. We recognise that words alone are not enough; they must be accompanied by meaningful action and lasting change in how we eliminate violence, and care with respect for each other.

As we proceed with this service, respect the integrity and purpose of the service, maintain the core elements of healing and reconciliation, we do so with humility, seeking forgiveness, and with a firm commitment to ensure our communities and churches become true sanctuaries of safety and hope for all.

The Golden Rule (Mathew 7:12) is, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, ..."

[We reflect in silence]

## Song: *When Human Voices Cannot Sing*

W: Shirley Murray M: Irish Tune S: NZP202 & AA151

see more [https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw1051\\_75.aspx](https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw1051_75.aspx)





## A Prayer Ritual

**Voice 1:** We pour out our grief, our anger, our shame and our pain.  
[pause for sound of water...]

**Voice 2:** For the families, the children in our communities, in our care, now and in the past, in schools, in parishes and in homes,  
who were subject to all forms of abuse including domestic, physical, sexual abuse.  
[pause for sound of water]

**Voice 3:** For women, men, young people and children  
whose abuse in home and community we did not see nor look to see the signs,  
for those whose trust in those charged with their pastoral care was betrayed.  
[pause for sound of water]

**Voice 4:** For women, men, young people and children  
whose vulnerability was exploited  
in what should be places of trust.  
[Water is poured ... and we pause]

**Voice 5:** For faith broken, for the ability to trust  
and to be able 'to give yourself in love' taken away.  
[Water is poured ... and we pause]

**Voice 6:** For our culture of denial.  
[Water is poured ... and we pause]

### Leader

God of eternity, God of grace, at this time in the life of our country, as the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care report is in our minds, and as we stand together with the White Ribbon Campaign which seeks to prevent abuse, we feel the heaviness of what has happened in the past, and we see how this has had ripple effects that have permeated our society.

Damage, woundedness, pain, confusion, distrust, anger, brokenness have misshapen the lives of individuals and in turn misshapen the communities in which we live.

Although it is very difficult and challenging to hear all of what has happened, we are grateful that this work has been done, so that there is acknowledgement of past wrongs, and actions taken to prevent such things happening again. We acknowledge the abuse in homes, communities and workplaces that continues to remain hidden.

We know that it takes a huge toll on people to come forward and share their stories of what had happened to them. Abuse and traumatic happenings that have left their marks – and we give thanks for their courage and trust.

We find it so hard and difficult to bear that churches have been part of this dark stain on our country as it goes against all that Jesus modelled and taught about all people having worth and dignity.

As we wear these white ribbons and make our pledge against violence, help us to be active participants in creating a safer future for all. May these ribbons be more than symbols – let them be our commitment to stand against all forms of abuse and violence in our homes, churches, communities and in this land of Aotearoa NZ.

God, help us in our churches to face the past with honesty, to dwell in the present with humility, and to work for a future that has integrity and promise. Let there be justice, healing and hope we pray, as we stand together against violence and abuse. In Jesus' name. Amen.





## The Lord's Prayer: A WHAKATAUKĪ

Kia hora te marino, kia whakapapa pounamu te moana,  
kia tere te kārohirohi i mua i tō huarahi ...

**May the calm be widespread,  
may the ocean glisten like a gemstone,  
may the shimmer of light dance across your path.**

## Scripture

[Select Bible readings that are appropriate for your message and relevant to the context of healing, and hope, and addressing the White Ribbon campaign theme – prevention and response to violence and abuse in the whenua – home, work, church. Consider passages that speak to the themes of forgiveness, restoration, justice, compassion, and God's love for the vulnerable. Your chosen readings should support and enhance the overall message of the service.]

## The Message

### The PCANZ Acknowledgement & Apology

[At this point in the service comes our response: it may be appropriate to include an act of apology or forgiveness suitable to your own context. For example, in Samoan culture, this could be represented by the 'ifoga' ceremony: a worship leader, representing the church, kneels in front of the communion table. They are covered with a fine mat (or tapa) while the recent pastoral letter from the Moderator and response statement from the Council of Assembly (specifically the Acknowledgement and Apology section, and note this is not the apology that will come from the Church delivered by our Moderator) could be read aloud by an individual with strong reading skills (both these documents in response to the Abuse in Care report can be downloaded from the PCANZ website: <https://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/contact-us/historic-abuse> ).

After the reading, (reader steps down) the representatives (on behalf of those who have been abused) approach the communion table. They gently remove the covering and lay the fine mat (or tapa) onto the communion table. In a gesture of acceptance, they then reach down to help the kneeling person rise to their feet. They may embrace or shake hands, symbolising the acceptance of the apology and marking the beginning of healing and restoration between the parties. This powerful act represents both the acknowledgment of past wounds and the commitment to move forward in hope.

The two representatives then light a candle of hope together and stand together in front of the congregation. During the following prayer, the congregation members are invited to open their arms wide, symbolising their embrace of this act of healing and unity. A prayer of reconciliation and healing is then offered by the same person who reads the letter of apology, with the congregational responses in bold.]





## Prayer of Reconciliation & Healing

Gracious and Merciful God, today we stand before you with heavy hearts and troubled spirits. We acknowledge the deep wounds inflicted within our churches, homes, workplaces and communities.

**Where there should have been protection, there was harm.**

**Where there should have been love, there was abuse.**

**Where there should have been safety, there was fear.**

We honour the courage of those who have shared their stories of pain, their voices breaking the silence that protected the powerful and exposed the darkness that lives among us.

We hear their testimony with profound grief and humility.

**Lord, we confess our failures,  
our silence, when we should have spoken,  
our blindness, when we should have seen,  
our inaction, when we should have protected.**

**The weight of these failures' rests heavily upon us.**

[a moment of Silent Reflection]

Divine Healer, we seek your light of truth and justice. Guide us from shame towards authentic repentance, from words towards meaningful action, from broken trust towards true reconciliation.

**May your Spirit lead us to create spaces  
where the vulnerable are truly safe,  
communities where victims become survivors,  
and churches where justice and healing flourish together.**

Transform our brokenness into pathways of healing, our guilt into commitment for change, and our sorrow into active care for those who suffer.

**Grant us wisdom to protect,  
courage to speak truth,  
strength to support healing,  
and grace to walk humbly in your light.**

In Christ's name,  
who brings healing to the broken and hope to the wounded,  
**Amen.**

## The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you,  
**and also be with you.**

[Share the Peace of Christ with each other]

[After the prayer, the worship leader presents the fine mat (or tapa cloth) used in the ceremony to the representative of those who have been harmed. This presentation symbolises the sincerity of our apology and represents our commitment to justice, healing and reconciliation. [A brief speech when presenting this gift]

[This ceremonial act is just one example of how we might make our apology tangible and meaningful. (You can use it). However, there may be other culturally appropriate and significant ways to support victims and their whānau (families) as they journey towards healing. We remain open to understanding and implementing additional meaningful gestures and practical steps that assist in the healing process.]





## SOLO SONG: A Place At The Table

*W: Shirley Murray M: David Dell*

[Soloist sings the first parts – if they wish, people can join from the parts in bold]  
see more [https://www.hopecublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw9008\\_37.aspx](https://www.hopecublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw9008_37.aspx)

## Tying White Ribbons

### Creating Our Community Pledge Against Violence

During this time, each person will receive a 50cm white ribbon, a powerful symbol of our commitment to non-violence. Together, we will join these ribbons to create a continuous chain of hope and solidarity.

- We will connect our individual ribbons to a main cord, creating a powerful visual representation of our united stance against violence.
- This ribbon chain will be displayed in a suitable location, serving as a visible reminder of our collective commitment. Throughout White Ribbon month, we invite any members of your community to tie a white ribbon on your [designated area/tree/fence] as a visible symbol of your commitment to ending violence and supporting survivors. Each ribbon represents our collective hope and pledge for a future free from abuse.
- Each ribbon represents our personal pledge to prevent violence and to support those affected.
- While we attach our ribbons, and as music plays, we'll reflect on our commitment. Each ribbon that is added strengthens our collective voice against violence and abuse in all its forms.
- Remember: This is not just a one-time gesture, but the beginning of our ongoing commitment to creating safer communities for everyone.

### Additional Ways to Amplify your Message

- Share photos of your ribbon display on community social media platforms.
- Organise monthly awareness walks in your community.
- Host educational workshops about healthy relationships.
- Partner with your local domestic violence support services.
- Establish a regular support group for survivors in your area.
- Organise men-led awareness campaigns with other parishes.
- Organise youth-led awareness campaigns in your area.





## WHAKATAUKI

He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai  
**If kindness is sown, then kindness you shall receive.**

## SONG: Gentle God

W: Shirley Murray M: David Dell S: NZP192  
see more [https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw1051\\_25.aspx](https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw1051_25.aspx)

## Blessing

The God who heals all wounds walk beside you in your pain,  
stand with you in your healing and lead you towards hope.  
Go forth knowing you are not alone.

The blessings of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be with you always. Amen.

[have a shared lunch or morning tea together after the service]

## Things to organise for the service

- White ribbons
- A long cord/string
- Candle and lighter
- Water, Jug and Big bowl
- Worship team
- Musician and music
- Shared lunch or morning tea
- Big tapa or fine mat

