

## Inclusive Language

- Knox Church expects leaders of worship to use language that reflects these statements from the Directory for Worship (1995) of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand:

### 1.2.5 Authentic and Appropriate Language

The Church in every culture through the ages has used and adapted biblical symbols, images, stories, and words in worship. The historical and cultural use of language is authentic when it reflects the biblical witness to God in Jesus Christ. Language is appropriate when a worshipping community can claim it as its own when offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Appropriate language by its nature

- a. is more expressive than rationalistic,
- b. builds up and persuades as well as informs and describes,
- c. creates ardour as well as order,
- d. is the utterance of the whole community of faith as well as the devotion of individuals.

The Church is free to be innovative in seeking appropriate language for worship.

#### i. Inclusive Language

Since the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is a family of peoples united in Jesus Christ, appropriate language for its worship should display the rich variety of these peoples. In worship that is faithful to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the forms, actions, languages, and settings of worship will include the expression of diverse cultures represented in the worshipping communities in the Church and affirm emerging needs and identities of believers.

#### ii. Diverse Language

The Church shall strive in its worship to use language about God which is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and our theological traditions. The Church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognise themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. Seeking to bear witness to the whole world, the Church shall use language which is faithful to biblical truth and which does not exclude people because of gender, colour, or other circumstance in life.

- This means, among other things:
  - Bible translations will be used that are sensitive to these convictions e.g. the New Revised Standard Version.
  - Exclusively male or female imagery for humankind is to be avoided if at all possible, particularly in prayers.
  - Wording of hymns and music may be altered if the alteration does not call attention to itself and is faithful to the spirit and original intent of the music.
  - Best endeavours are to be made to ensure a diversity of images for God is used in each service, if reasonably achievable, or otherwise over each month, and certainly through each Christian season.
- A resource of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is at <http://knoxcentre.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Inclusive-Language-Study-Resource.pdf>
- A resource of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is at: [http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/trinityfinal.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/trinityfinal.pdf)

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**15 April 2015.**