



## ***Sunday February 4th, 2024***

### ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

#### ***Call to worship & Lighting the Candle***

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Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary.

He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.

*(from Isaiah 40)*

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

#### ***Acknowledging***

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*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress*

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

#### ***Singing - Come O God of all the earth*** ***TiS 181***

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OR: O Christ the healer we have come, TiS 638



#### ***Prayer***

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Praise the Lord!

How good to sing praises to our God.

For God heals the brokenhearted and binds up  
their wounds and lifts the downtrodden.

So let us pray and sing  
as we find hope  
in the steadfast love of God.

*(based on Psalm 147)*

God of our songs and praise,  
we offer thanks for your grace and care;  
we find hope in your steadfast love,  
but we also know we struggle to  
be steady in you.

Often we boast of our own success,  
because we need  
affirmation and rewards  
of others ...

Or we compare ourselves  
to the success of others,  
and feel intimidated or less  
than you call us to be ...

Or we blend in,  
not to speak in the language of others  
and share your love,  
but to disappear into the shadows ...

As we struggle to be steadfast,  
forgive us, **forgive us loving God.**

As we struggle through making ourselves big,  
forgive us, **forgive us loving God.**

As we struggle through being too small,  
forgive us, **forgive us loving God.**

In Christ,  
through Christ,  
because of Christ  
we are made new  
and restored in the love of God.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

#### ***Passing the peace***

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May the Peace of God dwell with you:  
**and also with you.**

#### ***Listening***

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Read: Mark 1: 29-39

For these words of faith  
and for Jesus the Word  
**Thanks be to God.**



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#### ***Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon***

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According to the gospel writers, the disciples never fully understand Jesus' ministry and mission. Neither do we. This season of Epiphany is about God revealing God's self to us, through Jesus Christ. We are invited to draw closer in faith to the One who reaches for us in the baby at Bethlehem. It's a constant journey full of puzzle and paradox and so we wait with the disciples to find out what Jesus will reveal to us, each night and each morning.

In this week's reading from Mark, Jesus and the disciples have just left the synagogue where Jesus has rebuked and released an unclean spirit from someone. Word spreads quickly and here they are at Simon and Andrew's house, where Simon's mother-in-law is laid low with a fever. It's interesting that this is the only reference to this unnamed woman, and strange that we never hear about Simon/Peter's wife, ever. This woman, and the women around her are used as props in the main story. I wonder what her story might have been. As Jesus took her by the hand and lifted her up, the fever left her, and she began to serve them. Was she simply lifted in order to serve obediently? Or was she so overcome with gratitude and blessing that she laid the table as an expression of the outpouring of the healing and abundant grace she had experienced in the touch of Jesus? I choose the latter. We will never know.

Word travelled fast, and as soon as the Sabbath had ended, at sundown, 'the whole city' was gathered around the door. Jesus went to work quietly, silencing the demons who knew him, as before. You can imagine the excitement of the disciples to see how quickly their teacher had become popular. So recently called away from their day jobs, they must have been overwhelmed with the pace and power of this prophet's rise to prominence. Of course, he will keep doing this until everyone is healed and whole. Success builds success. But from curing crowds around the door, to creeping out on that same night alone to pray, Jesus has another plan.

When we look for Jesus in those populated places of 'fame and fortune', we find that he has already left, and is on his way somewhere else to proclaim the message. When we think we have caught up with him, we find that he has already moved on. Jesus continues to put distance between our obsession with power, certainty and success, and his mission in the world.

Jesus remains apart, alone in prayer. In Isaiah 40:31 we read, 'those that wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.' Jesus knows the Scriptures. He finds a waiting place, a praying space, a lacuna where he can be renewed and restored. He is hunted down by eager disciples, 'Everyone is searching for you'. Yes, we are.

I sense a hunger in our world right now for deep connection with the Holy Other, for making meaning in the world's meaningless soup of abusive power, greed, destruction, warfare, hatred, racism... the list goes on. We've been impacted by so many physical, social, emotional and spiritual wounds through recent years and Covid, that it's hard to remember what life was like before. There's a sense that more than ever, people are searching for meaning. Maybe they are looking for Jesus, the one acquainted with the powers of darkness, the revelation of God, Divine Mystery. They may or may not be looking in the places that they might have looked before. I wonder what this means for the church.

As followers of Jesus, we pause, and pray to be renewed so we can rise up and serve. We serve with kindness, gratitude and blessing, because the world needs that, and because Jesus taught us how to do it, and yes, he's already ahead of us, waiting for us to follow.

May it be so, Amen.

#### ***Singing - O Christ the healer TiS 638***

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OR: Jesus' hands were kind hands TiS 236



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#### **Offering**

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God of steadfast love,  
bless these offerings that they  
may proclaim your message of  
life, love and healing.

In all that we are and do,  
may it be for the sake of the gospel  
that the world may know blessings  
of life in you. Amen.

#### **Prayers for World & Community**

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Gracious and healing God,  
we pray for a world brokenhearted and  
wounded.

We pray for places that find it hard to sing  
or wonder at the beauty of the stars...

*(name quietly or aloud places in our world where  
people are struggling to find hope)*

Gracious and healing God,  
we pray for our country that is brokenhearted  
and wounded in many ways.

We pray for places that find it hard to sing  
or wonder at the beauty of the stars...

*(name quietly or aloud places in our country  
where people are struggling to find hope)*

Gracious and healing God,  
we pray for churches and communities of faith  
that find themselves brokenhearted and  
wounded in many ways.

We pray for places that find it hard to sing  
or wonder at the beauty of the stars...

*(name quietly or aloud places of faith where  
people are struggling to find hope)*

In our longings for healing and hope,  
again we remember that life is found in you.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

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Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

#### **Singing - Make me a channel of your peace** **TiS 607**

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OR: You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, TiS 48

#### **Sending & Blessing**

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Siblings in Christ,  
we are called into Christ  
and sent in his name  
to offer hope and healing.

Make time to wait and to pray  
and you will be renewed.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

#### **Benediction - O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr** **TiS 253**

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