



Trinity Sunday May 26th, 2024

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

For God
so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but
may have eternal
life.

John 3:16

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress*

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and 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 - Praise with joy the world's creator TiS 179

OR: Come as you are TiS 693

OR: Holy holy holy, Lord God Almighty TiS 132

Prayer



Awesome God,
we hear of your voice
thundering over the waters
in power, glory and holy splendour.

The Psalm (29)
teaches us of your
power that shakes wilderness
that breaks trees and rattles the earth.

Dare we say "glory" as we name:
flood
flame
tempest?

Grant us strength;
grant us peace;
grant us courage
to walk your ways,
to align our spirit with yours
to find home in and within
your creative presence
and your reconciling love
for all creation.

As we yearn for home in you
we are aware of our struggle to do so.

(take some time for quiet reflection)

We hear from the prophet the struggle
of one lost, one of unclean lips.
Touch our lips and cleanse our ways
until we can respond to your call
and say, "Here am I; send me!"

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Romans 8:12-17 &
John 3:1-17

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

Reflecting - Rev. Amanda Nicholas

Robert McAfee Brown is famously quoted for saying "Where we stand determines what we see" however, this quote only comes into its fullest understanding when read within the context of the whole thought McAfee Brown offered.



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“Who we listen to determines what we hear.
Where we stand determines what we see.
What we do determines who we are.”

There couldn't be a simpler expression for us today as we wrestle with what it is to celebrate the God we love as Trinitarian. Holy One, Holy Three. The temptation is great to become distracted in trying to understand how three beings can truly be one, all equal in their standing, yet each one unique and dynamic in their interrelationality. I'm certainly not suggesting that we don't do the work (each and everyone of us) of trying to dive into the mystery of God, however what we miss when we get stuck and can't see beyond this complex mystery is indeed the very thing God desires for us to see. The Divine Nurturer continuing to make ways for the love they have for all humanity to be made known. The expression of the Godhead in relationship with thine own self and with us. The full communion between God and humanity restored in right relationship.

Who we listen to determines what we hear. There is so much noise in our world nowadays that it is challenging to focus our thoughts. News reports, social media, advertising, well-meaning friends, historical understandings, political lobbyists, unions, song lyrics and more all bombard us, dividing our attention and distracting us from listening deeply to what God is speaking into the world. At the outset of the gospel passage, Nicodemus approaches Jesus under the cover of darkness, some would say symbolic of his spiritual blindness and limited understanding. However, I wonder whether we might consider this afresh. What if Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness not because of fear, but rather because it was a moment of quietness offering the opportunity to engage deeply with one another in meaningful conversation. Being able to put aside all of the “noise” influencing his thinking as Nicodemus wrestles with shifting his hearing and creating new understandings of what their relationship with God is. A relationship founded in love.

Where we stand determines what we see. Today is National Sorry Day, or rather National Day of Healing and it would be remiss not to acknowledge the depth and gravity of all that means.

As a Uniting Church we are continually being confronted with the noise of society, whether that is the overwhelming wrestle we have with recognition for our first nations brothers and sisters, or the vast and ever evolving membership of the LGBTIQ+ people in our midst, those who have come to our shores seeking refuge or the many others we encounter each and every day as we seek to be co-workers with God in the reconciliation of the whole creation through Christ, we must first stop to listen deeply to hear what God is speaking into the world. We say all are made in the image of God. We say the table is long and the table is wide and yet we find ourselves being confronted with our own challenges to hear above the noise and respond from a place of love. What if our first thinking, our first point is to remember the love God has for the whole of God's creation and the deep desire God has to be reconciled and in right relationship with all humanity. How might we then pray for one another and plead for one another as God's children and heirs with one another, for surely the table is long and the table is wide.

What we do determines who we are. It seems to me that if we continue to trace the cycle of McAfee Brown's words, we find ourselves inevitably returning to the darkness of night and with Nicodemus in the quiet of the moment engaging deeply with Jesus as we try to make sense of what it is to be so beloved by the Holy Trinity. For isn't that just the way of things?

Singing - Bring many names TiS 182

OR: Loving Spirit TiS 417

OR: I danced in the morning TiS 242



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Offering

"Here I am Lord, send me!"

As we wonder at this vision from Isaiah, help us see your desire for restoration of the world. May our offerings and our everyday lives be part of that vision.

In the name of
Father,
Son and
Holy Spirit
we pray. Amen.

Notices

Today is **National Sorry Day**. This week is **National Reconciliation Week** with the theme *Now more than ever*. Resources can be found at: <https://justact.org.au/resources/>

Prayers for World & Community

Creator, Redeemer and Mover of our very being, we bring to you our prayers for the world and community.

We pray for places where hatred and violence threaten nations, towns, families and those who cannot defend themselves. We pray for those directly involved in medical and food aid in warzones, for those who work for change through lobbying and diplomacy, for those who pray and act that your kingdom come.

We pray for those who experience gender-based violence, for children who witness things that are difficult to understand or bear. We pray for those who offer love and support, shelter, and practical assistance despite the risk and challenge. We think of those who pray and act that your kingdom come.

We pray for those who are excluded from family, community, love. We pray for those who find themselves without a home or safe place to sleep at night. We pray for vulnerable adults and children alike. We think of those who show your

love in this challenging space and wonder how we might act and pray that your kingdom come.

We pray for our churches, for those that were able to come together to celebrate Pentecost and for those who struggle to overcome barriers - of doctrine, culture, faith, theology, or fractures that have long histories. We pray that your love might touch us and equip us to be bigger than thinking our way or our story is right, assuming others as wrong. Remind us of your greater story:

For God
so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but
may have eternal
life.

We pray your kingdom come, your will be done:

The Lord's Prayer

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 - I the Lord of sea and sky TiS 658

OR: Inspired by love and anger TiS 674

OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer



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Blessing

The wind blows where it chooses;
the Spirit always challenges the limits
to our understanding that
the great love of God is
revealed in the Son.

Go knowing
the Spirit moving you in love,
the Son is extraordinary sign of that love,
God who is revealed as the origin of love.

Go to bless and be blessed
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

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