



## ***Sunday December 29th, 2024*** ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

*Today is a great opportunity to sing all those Christmas carols you love and haven't been able to sing yet. Or the ones that you've sung already but can't get enough of. Put lots of carols through the service and enjoy the celebration.*

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

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After all this waiting,  
all this wondering,  
all this watching,  
Love has broken into the world anew.

Our world breathes a sigh of relief  
as the parties are over  
and we tuck into leftovers.

The pace of things changes  
as some sleep on the couch  
while watching cricket or yachts racing.

Many are travelling,  
lighting barbecues,  
or sunning and swimming.

Do we remember that  
love has broken into the world?

We light a candle, the Christ candle,  
to recall that in Jesus  
the most radical, inbreaking,  
presence of God lights our way.

*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 these unceded lands and waters. We pay respect to Elders past and present. 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 - The North Wind is tossing the leaves TiS 322***

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### ***Prayer***

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*From Psalm 148*

Praise the LORD!  
**Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!**

Praise him,  
**all his angels; praise him, all his host!**

Praise him,  
**sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!**

Praise him,  
**you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
**for he commanded and they were created.**

God with us, Emmanuel,  
We wonder at your love for us.

If today has us slowing down a little,  
then perhaps it calls us to remember again,  
to renew our wonder in the birth of Jesus.

How can it be that you, creator of all,  
comes to us in such a tiny and vulnerable way?

We pause again to wonder...

In our wonder we remember that  
we are God's chosen ones,  
clothed with compassion, kindness, humility,  
meekness and patience.

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Friends of the Fig Tree, Uniting Church in Australia  
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## ***Sunday December 29th, 2024***

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

But we struggle to walk this way  
even in basic and simple things.

Christmas brings its stresses and strains -  
expectations, demands, difficult relationships.  
We know we fall short of compassion, kindness,  
humility, meekness and patience and  
this time of year tests us like no other.

Hear our struggles as we pause again...

And we wonder at love that comes to us  
through a boy born to Mary and Joseph,  
one who changes us,  
one who changes our world,  
one who changes the cosmos.

In him we are chosen by God,  
we are loved, we are restored.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

#### ***Singing - Infant lowly, infant holy TiS 292***

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#### ***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: Luke 2:41-52

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

#### ***Singing - Unto us a boy is born TiS 293***

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#### ***Reflecting - Rev. Fee Morrison***

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Imagine being Mary – I've been entrusted to care  
for God's son and I've lost him!!!

What do I do?  
What do I say?

Have we lost Jesus in the celebration of  
Christmas, parties, family gatherings, presents  
and life stresses over this season? How do we  
find Jesus again, God incarnate, the one who  
comes to us?

This is a story of Jesus being fully human, learning  
and growing. In that society at that time it was a  
transition from being a boy to an adult. I invite  
you to think and discuss what are the transitions/  
rituals we do as we transition from childhood to  
being an adult?

I remember getting my P plates on the car was a  
major event for independence and a statement of  
being an adult, having to be responsible for my  
bills etc, having a big 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party? What  
are some of these events in your family, culture?

Jesus is growing in wisdom in this reading,  
learning the skills he will need for his ministry  
ahead. This is the only time we hear of a young  
Jesus in this story of God's grace for all. Jesus says  
to his mother-Mary, it is necessary for me to be in  
God's house/presence. Jesus is reflecting and  
showing the heart of God. These are Jesus' first  
words in Luke and the next time he speaks is to  
the devil in the wilderness and then in the temple  
again.

As Jesus grows in wisdom, he responds to the call  
of God in ways each of us can do. As God became  
flesh incarnate, God seeks to become real,  
incarnate within each of us.

Jesus was not a superhero from another planet,  
he was a human being just like me, who grew in  
love and increasingly gave of himself to the call  
he heard.

My own experience was similar, I heard the call of  
God quite young, not as young as Jesus but when  
I was 19, that I just couldn't shake, even when  
other things caught my attention.

John Cobb writes in *Christ in a Pluralistic Age*,  
that Jesus surrendered himself to the Divine Lure



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to the extent that his own ego became one with it. He was one with God.

For me and you the call of God is drawing us forward to live out the incarnation of God, to share the love, compassion and grace in all our being. To celebrate the good news that Jesus the Christ is with us! Let us celebrate this good news beyond just the day of Christmas the 25<sup>th</sup> December, when Christmas disappears from our culture. Let us remember that as Christians we celebrate Christmas for 12 days commencing from Christmas day, and we are called to celebrate in all our lives and all we do and are.

Even in the midst of our despair and grief, the incarnate One is with us being fully human and fully divine with us, never abandoning us. The heart and love of God is with us.

Merry Christmas.

### ***Singing - Joy to the world TiS 268***

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#### ***Offering***

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God with us,  
may these gifts we offer in your name  
be part of revealing your inbreaking love  
to our world.  
May these offerings be sign that we  
offer the whole of who we are  
as followers of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ***Singing - The virgin Mary had a baby boy TiS 307***

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

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God of wonder, God of love,  
we are aware of the things we enjoy  
and often take for granted -  
gathering as family and community,

feasting at tables of abundance,  
the capacity to enjoy a holiday.

We give thanks for those who have offered food,  
connection and shelter over the Christmas period  
- those who have invited strangers to the  
Christmas dinner; those who have offered a bed  
to those without one; for those who have sought  
ways to ease housing shortages in many places.

We pray for safety for all those on the roads  
and on our beaches and for those who have  
worked through this season; emergency services,  
hospitality workers, those in shops and  
supermarkets.

We pray for all who struggle to find basic  
necessities like food, shelter and community.  
May we who have plenty find ways to share.

We pray for people in places of war, where one  
day is just like the next, filled with fear and grief.  
May there be peace and release.

We pray for the earth as sea levels and water  
temperatures rise, impacting all aspects of life.  
May we learn to live lightly and heal the harm.

We offer prayers for people and situations upon  
our hearts ...

In and through all places of challenge, may the  
light of Christ continue to shine in our world.

As 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.



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### ***Singing - Once in royal David's city TiS 312***

#### ***Blessing***

Go knowing that God has come close,  
as close as our own flesh  
to name and claim us as God's children.

Go clothed with compassion, kindness, humility,  
meekness and patience.

And may the peace that passes all understanding  
guard your hearts and minds  
and direct your steps  
this day and always,

and all the people say: **Amen!**

### ***Singing - Born in the night TiS 323***

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