



## Epiphany 2 - Sunday January 19th, 2025

### The Fig Tree Worship Resource

*The Uniting Church invites congregations to mark the Sunday before January 26 as a Day of Mourning. This comes in response to a request from First Nations people within our church.*

*For the full resource and more information see: <https://uniting.church/day-of-mourning-2025/>*

*Items marked with \* are from the Day of Mourning resource.*

#### **\*Call to worship**

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Our Lord is alive amongst all things of creation.  
*(Lift your hand to your ears)*

The sounds of the rivers in motion,  
the waves of the seas.  
*(Make a motion of the waves with your hands)*

The scents of the gum trees  
and native flowers on the winds.  
*(You may choose to stand; take some deep breaths, stretch up both arms and sway like a tree in the breezes.)*

You made the earth to give us life and daily sustenance and it is on Country that we find a place to retreat and walk alongside you in whispering conversation.  
*(Rub hands together to make the sound of a whispering conversation)*

Today we come together, and we bring our full voices, to lift them in praise of our triune God.  
*(Lift arms wide to praise God together)*

We ask for forgiveness for not always being the givers of love and hospitality.  
*(Bring hands together in prayerful pose)*

And, we look to have our hearts made clean.  
*(Use your right hand to catch the love of Christ and rub it onto your chest over your heart)*

**ALL:**

Lord our father of unconditional love,  
we come in repentance and hope  
Jesus, son of guiding and teaching love,  
we come to listen, learn and act with courage.

Holy Spirit of multiplying love,  
we come with humble awe and wonder of what you might move within our hearts and the hearts of those with whom we share life.

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

#### **\*Acknowledging**

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Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

Today, as we gather to worship, we acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ peoples, as the first-born peoples of these lands, and we acknowledge that through their continuing care of God's creation, God and God's Holy Spirit has been a source of spiritual sustenance and strength for First Peoples of this Country. We pay our respects to the knowledge holders and sharers of story, for through their custom and ceremony God's reconciling love and purpose is revealed.

We acknowledge First Peoples Elders present today and in doing so, acknowledge their suffering. We commit ourselves to an ongoing Covenantal journey.

#### **Singing - Come as you are Tis 693**

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OR: Come O God of all the earth Tis 181

#### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

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God of rivers and seas,  
of gum trees and native flowers,  
we offer our thanks and praise  
for all you have given us:



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for life and daily sustenance,  
a gift of this land and all of creation;  
for diverse peoples across all nations,  
each with gifts to enrich a shared life.

#### ***\*Prayer of Confession***

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Merciful God, we, the Second Peoples of this land, acknowledge with sorrow the injustice and abuse that has so often marked the treatment of the First Peoples of this land.

We acknowledge with sorrow the way in which their land was taken from them and their language, culture and spirituality despised and suppressed.

We acknowledge with sorrow the way in which the Christian church was so often not only complicit in this process but actively involved in it. We acknowledge with sorrow that in our own time the injustice and abuse has continued.

We have been indifferent when we should have been outraged, we have been apathetic when we should have been active, we have been silent when we should have spoken out.

Gracious God, forgive us for our failures, past and present. By your Spirit transform our minds and hearts so that we may boldly speak your truth and courageously do your will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### ***\*Declaration of forgiveness***

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Water for First Peoples is always a sign of God's peace and fulfillment in everything that is good. The promise of food, of harmony with ourselves, and the creation around us.

At the very beginning Creator God blessed the waters, God's great gift to us and renewed in this water here today.

God who hovered over the waters, invites us to 'come to the water' to drop our heavy burdens of lament and confession.

Hear then the words of Christ's forgiveness to us all: Your sins are forgiven, and you are cleansed and made new again.

Go now and live as my reconciled people.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

So then, let us bring the heavy stones that we are carrying and drop them into the water of healing and life.

#### ***\*Prayerful response***

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*(While music is playing, invite people to bring stones forward to place in a bowl of water, symbolising the waters of baptism and cleansing of forgiveness and life.)*

#### ***\*Response from First Peoples***

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*(An opportunity to hear stories from First Peoples about how they make their way in the world with God, culture and faith.)*

*If possible, invite a First Nations person to share, otherwise see:*

<https://www.youtube.com/@VoicesofourCovenant>

#### ***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 from:

John 2:1-11, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Cor 12:1-11 & Isaiah 62:1-5

*Choose one or many from the readings this week*

For these words of faith  
and for Jesus the Word

**Thanks be to God.**

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

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Wedding receptions / banquets / breakfasts are occasions for celebration of love and life, they hopefully are filled with laughter, music, dance, feasting and maybe good wine. The life and ministry of Jesus reflected a wedding banquet. Jesus said later in John 10, I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance. Table



## Epiphany 2 - Sunday January 19th, 2025

### The Fig Tree Worship Resource

fellowship were signs of Jesus' life and mission. It was a sign of God's kingdom on earth.

Jesus turning water into wine is pointing to God revealing God self in Jesus. Revealing God's whole self, full God-ness into humanity. Who is Jesus, who is God, God's activities and what God is about.

At this miracle there are themes of surprise, abundance and delight. Many times when God is revealed in the scriptures there is fear and terror but sometimes there is laughter, joy and astonishment.

We think we know the full glory of God, but God is still surprising us, as we are reminded during this Epiphany season, in these moments of grace.

In Isaiah 62, we hear again of the abundance of God, what it sounds like and tastes like.

In 1 Corinthians 12, we are encouraged to be reflectors of God's light, joy and abundance to the world. To share our gifts for the common good, to bring together community and to make the whole community better.

I am reminded of us as a Uniting Church having an open table for communion, where everyone is welcome and accepted to participate. In my family, growing up we always had an open table for friends to come for meals. When you were invited, you can accept and come in, and we would share a meal with you and get to know each other better, so that we could all grow and know each other and build each other up. The question for each of us and us as a church community is: *How do we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and transform our lives to be an open banquet?*

Where the gathering is filled with laughter, music, dance, feasting, support and love. It should not be a one-time event, but an ongoing process throughout our lives.

*Editor's note: As you consider Rev. Fee's reflection, you may wish to think about what an 'open table' means regarding attitudes or understandings of journeying together as First and Second peoples.*

### **Singing - When I needed a neighbour** **TiS 629**

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OR: Filled with the Spirit's power TiS 411

OR: Kneels at the feet of his friends TiS 640

OR: Come to be our hope TiS 688

### **Offering**

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Creator God, revealed in the majesty of lands and waters, bless what we offer in gratitude to you. May they remind us that we offer all to you in thanks, especially the gift to journey together as First and Second peoples in your name.

### **Notices**

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January 24 is the International Day of Education. January 26 is Australia Day which honours the establishment of the first European settlement. This is why many also mark this as 'survival day'.

### **\*Prayers of the people**

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Loving God, on this day of celebration we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia. We turn to you in prayer as we commit ourselves to journeying together in the spirit of Faith.

Father, you are good.

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

We pray for all leaders in this Great Southern Land, that they may respect and accept the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provide truth, justice, peace, unity and equity for all.

Father, you are good.

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

We ask for your guidance for the youth on their life's journey, that they come to seek and know you and trust in your love and compassion.

Father, you are good.



## Epiphany 2 - Sunday January 19th, 2025

### The Fig Tree Worship Resource

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

We pray for all Elders, those who are sick, the dying, the imprisoned, those who are lost and suffering – we ask for your protection, healing and mercy for all.

Father, you are good.

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

Lord thankyou for your Mercy which covers all our Sins and for the love which you wash over us. Please help us to be strong in Faith and to love everyone as you taught us.

Father, you are good.

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

Let us all take a moment's silence as we pray for our personal intentions to our God.

Father, you are good.

**Lord, fill our hearts with love and compassion.**

God, our loving Father, you reveal your care and compassion to us through the life, words and deeds of your son Jesus. Grant us the gift of your compassion so that all peoples may enjoy your promise of peace. With humble hearts we make our prayer through Christ our Lord, and we pray together then as he taught us:

### ***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: There's a spirit in the air TiS 414

OR: God of freedom, God of justice TiS 657

### ***\*Sending out***

People of God, go from here to live out the covenant into which we, the First and Second Peoples of this land, have entered with one another.

Confront and challenge injustice wherever you see it. Act justly yourselves and insist that others do the same. Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures and learn from them.

Celebrate and demonstrate the unity we share in Jesus our Lord. Commit to worship, witness and serve as one people under God.

### ***Blessing***

May the God of creation,  
the God of the Great South Land  
the God of First and Second Peoples:  
bless you, encourage you and equip you  
in the name of the  
Creator,  
Redeemer, and  
Sustainer, amen.

### ***Blessing song - O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr TiS 253***

Reflection: Rev. Fee Morrison  
Chairperson, Presbytery of Gippsland

Liturgy: items marked \* from the Uniting  
Church in Australia Day of mourning 2025.

Other items and editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga  
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