



Sunday January 26th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory"

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

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 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 - Let all creation dance TiS 187

OR: Morning has broken TiS 156

OR: Praise with joy the world's creator TiS 179

Prayer



Lord, creator of all, we thank and praise you for all we have, all you have given us.

Loving Lord, we come before you in wonder, thankful that we have been called into relationship with you, grateful for all we have, for our communities, family and friends

Time of quiet

We know we are imperfect, we ask your forgiveness for the times we do not recognise the stranger and show love, for times when we disregard creation through selfishness, for times when we do not recognise the miracles around us everyday.

Help us to be the people we can be through your love and grace. Amen

We are loved and forgiven in the name of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31 &
Luke 4:14 – 21

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown

In Nazareth, where they knew who Jesus was, it was harder for them to accept the reality of this Word that offered so much. They knew the preacher and the familiar words from Isaiah. Jesus claims these words as a reality; creative words, words that form the shape of God's new reign. The problem with these words was that they were coming to life!

In a profound way this is the definition of the Christian church - a place where the Word come to life, a word that brings life, words that are not just good news on paper or good ideas, but good news coming to life.

In the next generation of that good news being brought into life, Paul grapples with what it means for Christian community. As we find so often in scripture, the exploration is done with a metaphor.

Paul states that the body is one despite having many parts. He declares, not that this is an illustration of the church, but simply: "so also is Christ". Christ is a body with many members. We are more familiar with the use of the image in Colossians and Ephesians, where Christ is the head. The church is the rest of the body. That is not what Paul is saying here. Here Christ is the body.



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Think for a moment about your body to feel your way into the metaphor. We all know that experience where something goes wrong with a part of us and we get a whole new perspective on the importance of that part of our anatomy. Whether it's just a cut on a finger or tendonitis in an elbow or a toothache, or inflamed appendix.

Sometimes all goes well, the part gets better and other times we have to make adjustments. It reminds us that each part of us, we so easily take for granted, is vitally important!

We take things about ourselves for granted and it's not normally a problem. Then Paul tells us that we are the body of Christ. Christ has 'many members' and each of us has an important part to play, so no-one, not the least attending, youngest or oldest should be undervalued or forgotten! Like parts of a body we need to work well together instead.

Why do good things for others, why help out? Why care about poverty and injustice, scraped knees and broken hearts? Why use our abilities for others?

Why not just look after ourselves?

Why Christian values and not greed?

"I'm glad you asked!" Because Paul has some good hints for us.

Paul pleads with his friends to remember that each and every person is given particular talents by God. Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul calls them. And, all together they make up the body of Christ – each one having a special part to play, every member with their own vital function.

So the reality of Christian faith and the nature of Christian community – the church, is not to do with concepts or stained glass – but it's really to do with how we work together. We, the body of Christ – any group of Jesus followers anywhere can only be about Jesus' work when the parts of the body work together, when there is cooperation and sharing and connectedness.

How can we learn to do these things? It's a tall order isn't it, "to be the body of Christ."

A story:

There was once a poor lame beggar who miraculously received an invitation to the Sultan's ball. After his initial joy his face became sad as he read the gold edged scroll. "How can I get there?" he moaned, "I am crippled." Near his spot at the inn's door, another man had also received an invitation, but he moaned to the innkeeper, who had to read the invitation to him, "how can I go to the Sultan's, I am blind and cannot see the way."

"Well," said the wise innkeeper, "if the little fellow gets on the blind man's back, between you, there's two good eyes and two good legs, so off you go."

We don't need to have parts that don't work to share our talents! We recognise that everyone is valued; given abilities by God, are needed by God. Old or young, outgoing, shy, qualified or not, we play our own unique part in being the church together.

This ought to be Good News – for us, for the rest of the body that needs us to work properly and for those who need to be ministered to by Christ.

May God's grace enable and empower us to be that body here, for the Word to come to life in and around us. Amen

Singing - Lord Jesus we belong to you

TiS 686

OR: Bring many names TiS 182

OR: Made in God's likeness TiS 671

OR: Where the Spirit is there's freedom TiS 421

Offering

As people of God

We bring ourselves,

all that we have and who we are.

Bless our offerings

Use us and them as you will. Amen

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Notices

Australia Day has a varied history, including being celebrated on at least 5 different days over our relatively short history. Given that January 26 relates to the colonial settlement, many people including First Nations people consider the date 'Survival Day'.

Prayers for World & Community

Loving Lord,
we come to you with our prayers,
we come as your people,
trusting that you are in control of our world,
that you hear our prayers
and understand our needs.

As we look at the world, we know that wrong decisions have been made, and we pray -
for those who lead with violence and
do not see a way of love,
for those who seek selfish power rather than
the good they could do,
for those who do not see the unconsidered
results of war, of greed, of injustice,
for ourselves when we sometimes unthinkingly
support or vote for these people.

We ask your comfort and care
for those who suffer and grieve,
who worry about all that is wrong in the world -
the peacemakers, the healers, the carers,
the ordinary people who try to make the world a
better place.

We pray for our the people of our church -
for those who make decisions,
those who teach,
those who are carers,
those who do the jobs that go unnoticed;
all who have heard your call and follow your
journey.

We pray for our community -
the healthy and the sick, tired and energetic, old
and young, may they find you where they need
you.
We pray particularly for *(name those in your
community)*

We pray for ourselves, the needs deep in our
hearts that we dare not say aloud.

We pray together then as Jesus 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 - God sends us the Spirit TiS 412

OR: Christ from whom all blessings flow TiS 440
OR: Your words to me are life and health TiS 430
OR: There's a Spirit in the air TiS 414

Blessing

We are your people
May we live our lives showing your love and
peace to everyone, whether fishing or knitting.

May God, creator, redeemer and sustainer be
with you every step of the way. Amen.

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown
Wattlebird Ministry Team

Liturgy: Rev. Moira Dodsworth
Wattlebird Ministry Team

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
Kookaburra Ministry Team



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