



## ***Easter 6 - Sunday May 25th, 2025***

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

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

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As we gather this Autumn morning, the cold mornings, sunny days and beauty of nature, we ask God's blessing:

May God be gracious unto us and make his face to shine upon us.

*Psalm 67*

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

#### ***Acknowledging***

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*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress*

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land and her peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the *(please name the people on whose land you gather)* People, the Traditional Custodians, have blessed this place through their law and customs, their care and life. We pay respects to their Elders and leaders past and present, and pray for the future of their communities. May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

#### ***Singing - Now thank we all our God TiS 106***

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OR: Come down O Love divine TiS 398

OR: Our God be gracious unto us TiS 37

#### ***Prayer***

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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 choose our own way rather than yours. We have so much, yet we want more. We have amazing resources and are not satisfied. We have warm homes, comfort, food.

Forgive us for being discontented.

So often, we walk blindly, not noticing those we could help. Not only the poor, but the unhappy, the sad, the sick. Forgive us and open our eyes, and open our eyes again. 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***

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

#### ***Listening***

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Read: Acts 16:9-15 &  
John 14:23-29

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

#### ***Reflecting - Rev. Heather den Houting***

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We remain in the time of Easter, where we continue to unpack together the consequences of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The readings for this week ask us to be prepared for the journey and to trust that even in times of an unknown future, we have what we need and surprisingly this is available to us when we need it, not necessarily when we want it.

I recently walked on the inaugural Gippsland Camino, a joint initiative of the Anglican, Uniting and Catholic churches between Traralgon and Stratford. Preparing for the journey was quite an experience, wondering what was needed, how my body would hold up with the physical exertion and whether I would be open to the spiritual insights that come with pilgrimage.



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However, getting the logistics right, did not prepare me for the unexpected and wonderful encounters I had along the way. This is the richness of the experience of moving yourself out of the habitual and being prepared to set aside plans to be open to the new. I have found that being open to experiences and trusting that every moment is a holy moment, builds something that is greater than self and exposes you to the abundance of grace and compassion in the world.

I wonder whether this is the kind of thing that is reflected in the reading from Acts. Paul was accustomed to travelling as a teacher and as a result had a strength and purpose to his journey. What then was the foundation of his trust in his vision which meant he dropped everything and headed to Macedonia instead? Here he meets Lydia, in an unplanned and unexpected encounter. To follow this vision reflects a deep and abiding trust that God will always be with you, ahead of you and behind you. The encounter with Lydia, wealthy, independent and a believer in God, changes the world. Remember that the followers of Christ at this time were not the majority religion, but a small messianic sect. What would it have taken for Lydia to align herself with this movement? Her conversion to the Jesus way brought a whole new community along. She was seeking and she was found, Paul was sent and he too was found. This was beyond all that had been planned by either of them.

The reading from John reassures us that this is the way it will always be if we trust the Jesus way. Jesus, in a farewell discourse reassures his followers that you (and we) will be OK because the Spirit of the Lord is amongst us. He reminds us to stop trying to look for the worldly signs of success and instead look for those who act in his name. Then peace will be with us he assures us, knowing that our path, our way, our Camino into the unknown is part of the great promises that have been made to you by God. Your job is to keep on the track of being a disciple – to act in his name too. Together those we encounter we will forge a new way together with us based on the gospel. The resources of the Creator are available to those communities who follow.

In the journey of your community, sometimes planned, sometimes spontaneous, in the habitual but more importantly in openness to the unexpected, we might find that our encounters can change the world. Let us have the eyes to see and the hearts to trust that this can be so.

### ***Singing - Lord let me see TiS 681***

OR: When I needed a neighbor were you there TiS 629  
OR: Help us accept each other TiS 648

### ***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.

### ***Notices***

*May 26 is National Sorry Day and May 27 marks the start of National Reconciliation Week.*

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

Loving Lord, we come to you in a spirit of peace.  
May we not let our hearts be troubled or afraid  
and live not like the world but following the one  
who showed us the way.

We pray for our world, may there be  
peacemakers wherever there is conflict:  
among the powerful leaders of countries and  
those who feel powerless;  
among those who direct wars and those who  
fight them and innocent bystanders;  
among the rich who have too much and those  
who have so little;  
in families and communities where there is  
misunderstanding and conflict.

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 the people of our church:

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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***

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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 - Made in God's Likeness TiS 671***

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OR: God sends us the Spirit TiS 412  
OR: Filled with the Spirit's power TiS 411  
OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer TiS 569

#### ***Blessing***

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As Lydia welcomed Paul into her home, let us welcome all, whatever their difference.

In Christ's words: *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.*

May God:

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

#### ***Blessing Song -***

***We are marching in the light of God TiS 666***

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