



Sunday June 22nd , 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

As the deer pants for flowing streams,
so we long for God.

**In our gathering we come to quench our thirst,
and to find our hope.**

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



*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 - O Christ the healer TiS 638

OR: Jesus put this song into our hearts TiS 670
OR: Lord of earth and all creation

Prayer



Prayer of Confession

Deep calls to deep,
at the thunder of the cataracts,
the billowing waves roll over us.

Sometimes it feels as though we are alone.
Yet we know
that the steadfast love of God is with us;
at night the song of God is a prayer to us.

When we struggle to find you,
when we are cast down and disquieted,
speak your word to us
and help us back to joyful belonging.

Be our refuge when we feel powerless
and lonely and discarded by life.

When we are oppressed
remind us of your presence with us,
when we do the oppressing
help us to note our privilege and use it well,
to stand in solidarity with your vulnerable ones.

Sometimes we are not truthful
and seek our comfort through other means.
Send out your life and truth and let them lead us.
Remind us whose we are,
and let us approach with exceeding joy.

When we cannot find you
in the loud volume of all around us,
forgive us and whisper your peace
into our hearts.

Be our still point, the calm place of quiet
from where we draw our strength
and from which we share grace.

In joy we can know our sins are forgiven,
thanks be to God.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: 1 Kings 19:1-15
Luke 8:26-39

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



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Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon

Go home

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?*
Ps 43 & 44

There's plenty of chaos and wild confusion in the readings today, personal, public, otherworldly and in the elements. Then there's the intervention of God, by a voice, by the visitation of angels, by being wrapped in sheer silence, by Jesus daring to converse with demons. Thirdly, there is the fact of being sent home having encountered the healing, having been relieved of the distress and disorder: of being sent back home to bring hope and wholeness to others.

*As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God. Ps 43*

All of us find our souls thirsting for the living God. All of us find ourselves in situations of struggle at some time or another, either, in Elijah's case, by what we have done, or, in the man from the city with demons, we might be bound and shackled by others and excluded from life, left amongst the dead.

We might try to hide our inner turmoil or leave it out on the margins where we hope no one will notice. We certainly try not to bring it to church! But Jesus is not afraid of all this mess.

As theologian Will Willimon puts it; "Jesus dares to wade in to a disruptive world in order to heal and to restore." Theologian and poet, John Shea suggests that the man is possessed by the demons of the whole city. "This inner spirit of destruction is tied to the brutal occupation of this territory by Roman soldiers." This man is a symptom- bearer for the whole city,

the city who is suffering and can only respond by inflicting that pain and exclusion on this man, hoping he will carry it for them all. How often are the most vulnerable in our society burdened with the consequences of greed and abuse of power, and then hidden from view, bound by poverty and apathy, left for dead?

Elijah walks alone, a day into the wilderness and sits down under a tree to die. The man of Gerasa is naked, chained, imprisoned amongst the tombs.

Both these stories are narratives of a personal encounter with God, who works in the most surprising ways. The 'word of the Lord' draws Elijah back to life and to purpose. The voice of Jesus has power over the torment of the soul, restoring the man to himself. I've never liked what happened to the pigs, but there it is, more discomfort and distress. The Jewish Annotated New Testament notes that the presence of pigs is a reminder that they are in Gentile territory, on the other side to Galilee. Do the demons think that Jesus the Jew will not go near them if they're in the pigs? Maybe.

Elijah has a mission and so does this man. Go home and bring healing. For Elijah it was the anointing of a king. For the Gerasene man it was in telling the story of how much God has done, even though he wanted to go with Jesus, to leave and become a disciple. His ministry was to a people who had excluded him, a people who were so afraid of what had transpired that they sent Jesus away. So he got in the boat and returned.

Jesus is not afraid of all this mess.
Bring it on.
Then go home and tell your story.

³⁹ "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:39



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Singing - Be still my soul TiS 123

OR: Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665

Offering

These gifts represent us giving into your Kingdom. Take our time and our talents, our intentions and our desires and make them a delicious offering to others. They also represent our gratitude for the abundant gifts you share with us. These gifts are part of our thanks.

Notices

It's the Uniting Church's 48th birthday! What does that mean for you and your community? How will you celebrate?

Prayers for World & Community

Liberating God,
For those surrounded by the tornado of pain,
of addiction, of loneliness,
Whisper your Peace.

For those in the earthquake of trauma
and mental distress,
Whisper your Peace.

For those in the fire of natural disaster,
war zones, hunger and poverty,
Whisper your Peace.

For those in the heartache of grief,
those who have lost hope,
or are consumed by fear,
Whisper your Peace.

For those who are experiencing
the struggles of legalism, of complying
and struggling to rise to the requirements
of others.
For those whose mental struggles
feel overwhelming.

Whisper your grace

and remind them that they are sufficient.

For those in our own community
who are in tough situations this week,

Whisper your Peace.

Whisper your Peace.

Whisper your Peace.

For those whose encounter with the church
has not been a good one.

For the church itself,
remind us that we are all equal in your eyes
and we can trust you in all things.

When we are caught up in our own opinions
and distracted from grace-passing,
bring us into our right mind
and unbind us from the chains of self importance.
Remind us that we are your people of the Way,
Whisper your liberation.

Rock of Ages,
when we are overwhelmed
ground us in your quietude
and speak gently to our hearts.
Beloved One, whisper to us your peace.

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 of freedom TiS 657

OR: Community of Christ TiS 473



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Blessing

As Jesus told the man in Luke 8:

“Return to your home
and declare what God has done for you.”

Like him,
go about your lives proclaiming the way of Jesus.
You are loved and healed,
liberated and set free.
So go in peace to love and to serve,
in the name of Christ. Amen

Blessing Song: Lord Jesus Christ TiS 737
(x3)

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