



## Sunday July 20th, 2025

### The Fig Tree Worship Resource

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

Let us come to our gathering today with notions of justice and righteousness in our hearts and minds. We join with the Psalmist as we say:

The righteous will see and fear  
and will laugh at the evildoer, saying,  
**"See the one who would not take  
refuge in God  
but trusted in abundant riches  
and sought refuge in wealth!"**

But I am like a green olive tree  
in the house of God.  
**I trust in the steadfast love of God  
forever and ever.**

I will thank you forever  
because of what you have done.  
**In the presence of the faithful  
I will proclaim your name, for it is good.**

*(from Psalm 52)*

*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 - Come as you are TiS 693**

OR: From heaven you came (Servant King) TIS 256



#### **Prayer**

O God of meaningful life, we are so thankful that when we gather together, we know that you call us to be people of consequence in the world. We remind ourselves that we are participants in your plan and purpose of redeeming human life from purposelessness, alienation and death, through the exercise of love.

We thank you that we are free: free to choose our own manner of participation which honours our strengths and dedication to you. However gracious God, we acknowledge that sometimes that freedom means that we wander from your will. We do not act in ways that honour you and your creation. We get caught in the belief that we can do it alone, that our responses are distracted and diverted by the things that are not deeply essential to your relationship with us. We fail to flourish in the deep springs of your redemptive plans for us.

Forgive us. Capture our imaginations and commitment so we are no longer too busy and too timid, but are able to pour out the love we receive from you so that we can be part of your restoration of the world.

We ask these things in Jesus' name Amen.

Hear then the words of reassurance.  
In Christ and through Christ your sins are forgiven. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

#### **Passing the peace**

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



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#### ***Listening***

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Read: Colossians 1:15-28 &  
Luke 10:38-42

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

#### ***Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown***

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"At Jesus feet - and our priorities."

I think Mary and Martha are wonderful proof of the honesty of the gospels. The snapshot we see of them here is just so true to life! A slice of family history might be fascinating to the family it belongs to, but this one has at its centre Jesus talking about what's most important in life. And that's important for us all!

Rowan Williams, the former Anglican archbishop suggested a few years ago, that our world's crisis has its roots in a shared "cultural and spiritual crisis" whose nature could be summed up by saying that we've lost our sense of being-in-relation to the larger web of life. I want to explore the gospel picture for what's most important at a very human level.

This little gem of the gospel opens a window into an ordinary everyday family. In a 'certain village', Luke writes, a woman invites Jesus into her home. There's an important visitor and they should be on their best behaviour, but the family roles still shine through. Martha, the host, is in the kitchen doing what she knows has to be done. That's important – food and hospitality. We hear Martha getting frustrated and looking for some support from Jesus, who is plainly her friend too. You can just hear those "I always" and you never" accusations, lurking between the lines, oozing with feeling born of shared but not harmonious experience.

To our eyes it may seem that nothing remarkable happened in this story, but the whole event was revolutionary in Jesus day. Women did not invite

men in the first place. And no teacher or Rabbi taught women in those days. Jesus came and allowed a woman to sit at his feet; early readers were aghast! Then he invites another woman out of her traditional role of preparing the food to come and sit at his feet in the role of disciple where only men sat. Jesus is smashing gender barriers.

When Jesus says to the stressed and over-dutiful Martha that only one thing is necessary, he is talking in a way about himself and about the big picture of what is really important. Listening is the best first response. "Doing is good Martha, there's nothing wrong with that. But there is a lot to be said for sitting and listening too."

What, above all else, do you see as most important to do? How do you set priorities? Not just what issue do you think is most important, what would you put at the top of the list for an opinion poll. No, it's what would you spend your life doing, be most committed to, or spend your last dollar to support?

Martha thought she was doing the right thing. Busy Martha discovered that to invite Jesus in was to invite more than she had perhaps bargained for. That's a reality to pause on, to turn over, hold and get a feeling for.

Inviting Jesus in is not just about fixing up a good meal for the preacher who is soon to be on his way. Inviting Jesus is not just about what is hopefully an inspiring hour on Sunday, or about giving our society a 'good moral base'. It's about taking God, the author of life, somehow into our very lives. It's about being open to listening and to learning. This is a place where we recognise that we don't know all the answers, where there is serious listening and learning to be done. The most important thing, the aligning of our lives with God, is something we need to continue to be open to and to the many surprises along the way.

Open your door to God, but remember that this is a real God; not a make-believe image of ourselves who we can use to justify what we wanted to do ourselves anyway. This God is not a tame deity



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that we can just have over for tea, scones and a chat to make us feel good. When we invite in this living God, we don't know how we will be surprised.

Can you see that this 'way of Jesus' is less about keeping traditions than it is about being open to God changing the way we see ourselves and our world? It is about being open to having our minds changed about what is most important. Listening to the voices calling for justice in the way we treat each other; calling us to listen to creation, so we and our grandchildren might all have a healthy planet to call home.

In the house with Jesus, we think about what is the most important thing? Again the call is to listen first, then to action. Engagement with Jesus is in knowing that Jesus can still be invited into our lives, invited in not to do what we want, but to have our eyes opened, to be changed, to be challenged. Jesus wants to give us a new menu: food to really satisfy, and to free us, so that we can be free indeed and share the liberation of the gospel with others and the whole creation. Amen.

#### ***Singing - Seek ye first the kingdom of God*** ***TiS 745***

OR: Inspired by love and anger TiS 674

#### ***Offering***

We bring these gifts as a representation of all that we have to give to you gracious God. May they remind us that the offering of ourselves might find places of promise in your world. Let this be but the beginning, the sign of hope that we are with you as your children and bearers of hope in our community. **Amen**

#### ***Notices***

**July 25** is *National Tree Day* (schools). **July 27** is *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*.

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

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Loving God, we are thankful for the gift of communion through you, and for the growing understanding that to pray is to open ourselves to your Spirit working in us and through us. We pray for each other, asking that together we may continue to discern the calling of your Spirit to us.

We pray for our communities, longing for unity with each other and restoration in the quality of their lives.

We pray for those who are suffering at this time. Twisted by grief, anguish, pain and fear. May they encounter you through the healing and opening of doors. May they find seeds of new hope in love.

May those who feel bereft and barren, find the springs of deep water so that they may grow like an olive tree.

May those who are too busy and too distracted by their lives, find places of rest and restoration.

Unite us in your purpose Lord, that we might see and know the places where we can be your prophets in this community.

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 - Have faith in God my heart*** ***TiS 619***

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OR: Come Down O Love Divine TiS 398

OR: God of freedom God of justice TiS 657



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***Blessing***

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Stripped of the burdens of trash and trivia that impede us, let us now go forth to live our faith in ways that honour you gracious God.

Let the blessings of the triune God encourage and renew us in our conviction that through you we will find a new confidence and new vision. Let us choose the better part. Amen

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown  
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Liturgy: Rev. Heather den Houting  
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