



Sunday October 5th, 2025 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

from Lamentations 3:22 -26:

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
God's mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

...

*It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.*

(light the candle)

**As we gather, we wait quietly,
recalling the constant river of God's love
flowing through our lives from the Source,
carrying us along, together and alone,
in the smooth, wide waters,
over rocky rapids,
through dark and narrow gorges
into billabongs of peace**

(time of quiet)

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 - Morning has broken TiS 156

OR: Lord your almighty word TiS 447

Prayer



*The words of the response in the confession
prayer are from TiS 729 ... you can sing them.*

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he writes:
*I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that
lived first in your grandmother Lois and your
mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.*

Let us pray:

Today, God of our ancestors, we give thanks for
the faith that has been passed on to us through
blood, or choice, or chance, from your faithful
people in generations past.

(pause for thanksgiving)

The steadfastness of your love is not a recent
discovery. We give thanks that it has been known
and held in ancient ways in this land long before
the stories of Jesus arrived.

(pause for thanksgiving)

On World Communion Sunday, we give thanks
that the abundant and unceasing flow of your
love has been known through generations upon
generations in all lands and cultures through all of
time.

(pause for thanksgiving)

Paul reminds Timothy to "Guard the good
treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the
Holy Spirit living in us."

God of endless grace, we confess that we forget
to guard that good treasure of faith entrusted to
us, and leave it languishing in a forgotten corner
while we struggle to hold on to hope and go
about trying to sort things out on our own.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.
Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

God of steadfast mercy, we confess that as a
church we sometimes confuse the good treasure



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with cherished tradition. We use holy words to colonise and condemn and miss the surprising gift of the Spirit in the fresh newness of the morning.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.
Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

God of abundant love, we confess that we often do not draw from the store of good treasure in our daily living, thinking our faith is too small or too shaky. Anger, despair, apathy and pain point us in different directions. We live in ways that harm the earth and her creatures. We lash out at others and ourselves. We behave in ways that hurt and diminish people.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.
Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

Siblings in Christ, know this: that our sins, failings or forgettings are not held against us, we are led into new life, as new as the morning. We are loved and set free to live as children of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Lamentations 3:19-26,
Luke 17:5-10

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

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

St. Augustine said that *hope* has two lovely daughters, *anger* and *courage*. *Hope*, according to this father of the Church, is the greatest among the three theological virtues which are faith,

hope, and love. Whereas, in the famous statement from St. Paul, love is the greatest of the virtues. But St. Augustine praises hope for she tells us that God will do God's will.

Personally, I would not want to have to make a choice between the virtues, for I believe we need all three for our lives to flourish and grow. But having said that, I have a lot of time for St. Augustine's words as it seems to me that if hope is lost, then little else seems to matter.

We are told that suicide frequently is a response to a lack of hope. For if there is no hope, how can there be a worthwhile future? If we have no hope, we may despair, or alternatively, slide into that form of resignation that immobilises and disempowers.

Hope helps us endure the trials and difficulties of life. Hope helps us believe that one day our trials will be over, even when this seems unlikely. For Christians, hope reminds us that we are God's beloved children, and in Paul's words, nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Roman 8:39b.

Consequently, I believe that hope is vital, so I am most interested in St. Augustine's pronouncement that *hope* has two lovely daughters, *anger* and *courage*; for I believe that his statement helps us to make sense of today's Bible readings from Lamentations. It may also be useful in helping us face difficulties and crises in our own lives.

For as we read the Book of Lamentations we see both anger and courage in the wake of a terrible atrocity. In 589 -587 BCE, the Babylonian armies of Nebuchadnezzar had besieged, and then, after two years, had destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Only ruins remained. The city was utterly vanquished. Furthermore, her leading citizens had been taken into captivity in Babylon.

Those who survived the onslaught and subsequent deportation were left to carry on their lives amongst the ruins. Starvation and disease were rife. Those who were left did not



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remain silent in their sadness. As a community they grieved, protested and expressed their pain and anger out loud. They cried, shouted, and sobbed their lamentations. It was a very public show of grief and anger.

Out of the expression of the hurt and anger, eventually came the rebuilding of community as they protested together. Eventually, there was a point of mobilisation where the anger pushed the people towards action, and they started to rebuild their homes and their lives.

Anger says, "How dare they ruin our city! How dare they try to ruin our lives! For we are the people of God, and God is with us even in this awful mess. We are not going to resign ourselves to living in the ruins. We are not going to let our enemy triumph over us forever. We are not going to let them have the last say."

And that is where courage becomes so important, for courage, especially when it is strengthened by faith, mobilises the anger and hurt into a positive move forward. Courage says, "There must be a future." Courage helps harness the energy of the anger into action making possible the rebuilding of lives and homes. Courage helps bring the people out of a place where they could have sunk into apathy and despair. Faith is obviously very closely tied up in this as well, for hope and courage are often dependant on faith in the living God. Most especially on the teachings and promises of God which give expression to reasons for hope. Faith enables those who are suffering to lay claim to a greater power and source of strength than their own.

Suffering is all too real, and being faithful will not lead to a life free of suffering. But God's eternal love is real, too. There are times to be angry and sad, but we can have hope knowing that God will bring us through these times if we have the courage to trust in God's love and power. Amen.

Singing - All my hope on God is founded ***TiS 560***

OR: Have faith in God, my heart TiS 619*
OR: Beauty For Brokenness TiS 690

* for more inclusive language in TiS 619:

verse 1 line 4:

each promise *God* has made

verse 3: Have faith in God, my soul,

the cross for ever stands;

and neither life nor death can pluck

God's children from *their* hands.

Offering

Self-giving God, bless these gifts we bring,
however small or grand, and bless the hands that
bring them. Through these gifts, and through us may
your steadfast love be known and may we keep on
offering seeds of hope into the life around us, in Jesus'
name. Amen.

Notices

Today is *World Communion Sunday*.

October 2 was Gandhi's birthday and the
International day of Non-Violence.

October 6 is *World Habitat Day*.

Prayers for World & Community

On World Communion Sunday we pray for all our
siblings in Christ across the world. May we be
bound together in common bonds of love,
stronger than our disputes, broader than our
alliances, deeper than our divisions.

We pray that all may be one.

A few days ago, the International Day of
Non-Violence was observed. We give thanks for
the life and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi.

In our world, where there is hatred and harm:

We pray for peace.

In our world, where there is oppression,
exploitation and cruelty:

**We pray for tolerance, understanding
and non-violence.**

As we look to World Habitat Day tomorrow, we
see the growing inequalities and vulnerabilities
that have been made worse by pandemic,
Climate change and conflict through war.



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We pray for people who live in places that are unsafe, dangerous and far from what they know as home.

Recent conflicts and changing political powers have reversed years of progress made in the fight against poverty, resulting in the emergence of newly poor people—especially in places of war and the rejection of asylum seekers and migrants.

We pray for an end to war, for a ceasing of reliance on fossil fuels and for access to adequate shelter and health care for all people.

Cities and local governments play a front-line role in responding to crises and emergencies as well as in planning for an inclusive, resilient, and green future.

We pray for leaders, guiding their people through unimaginable horrors caused by war, disease and climate change and all leaders of our cities and nations.

God of all, help us, who hold maybe just a mustard seed of faith, to find ways of making a small and persistent contribution so that together we may move mountains in these great struggles of our time and let us never lose hope. As we pray together the words that Jesus taught us, with one voice that joins around the earth in so many different languages:

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 - Now the green blade rises TiS 382

OR: God gives us a future TiS 687

OR: Inspired by love and anger TiS 674

Blessing

**We take our mustard seeds of faith
and go, assured that we have what we need
to be bearers of hope and healing.**

And may the Spirit energise and surprise you,
may Christ be your constant companion
and the great Source of love keep flowing
within, around and through you
this day and always,
Amen.

Reflection: Rev. Sandra Houghton
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