



## ***Sunday November 2nd, 2025*** ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

**Note:** Some places of worship will celebrate 'All Saints/Souls' today. You may choose to remember members who have died in the previous year, or invite people to bring photos of loved ones and place them on a table, with flowers and/or candles.

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

Jesus calls us over the noise, the tumult of our busy lives. Come like Zaccheus in our reading today, to see Jesus as he passes through (name your town/s).

Today you are not being asked to climb the sycamore tree, but perhaps to rise above the ebbs and flows of your daily life, to stand tall and be alert to the presence and invitation of God in your life. Jesus is coming to share tea with us, and all are welcome.

*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 - Jesus calls us TiS 589**

OR: God whose almighty word, TiS 447

OR: Look who gathers at Christ's table, a great song for All Saints and for the gospel reading this week, especially if you are celebrating Communion - sung to many familiar tunes - <https://digitalsongsandhymns.com/songs/look-who-gathers-at-christs-table>



### **Prayer**

#### **Prayer of confession (Psalm 119: 137-144)**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**You are righteous,**

**O Lord, and your judgments are right.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**You have appointed your decrees**

**in righteousness and in all faithfulness.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**My zeal consumes me**

**because my foes forget your words.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Your promise is well tried,**

**and your servant loves it.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**I am small and despised,**

**yet I do not forget your precepts.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Your righteousness**

**is an everlasting righteousness,**

**and your law is the truth.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Trouble and anguish have come upon me,**

**but your commandments are my delight.**

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

**Your decrees are righteous forever;**

**give me understanding that I may live.**

Help us to truly repent of the mistakes we have made, and to find ways to make recompense, to be generous and kind in our hospitality, and to follow Jesus to seek and save the lost.

**IN YOUR MERCY HEAR OUR PRAYER.**

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### ***Prayer of thanksgiving***

The word from 2 Thessalonians today is this: We must always give thanks to God for each other.

In the growth of steadfast faith and understanding, we are thankful for the gift of one another. We pray for the flourishing of our communities and for wisdom and courage in standing for the way of Jesus.

We give thanks for encouragement from those around us who hold us together when we are at risk of falling apart. And when it is our turn to do the holding, we give thanks for the privilege it is to be there for each other. We give thanks for the solidarity in knowing we stand together, and particularly for the vulnerable ones, those who remain unseen in the crowd and stand less tall than the others.

We pray that God will use us in every good resolve and work of faith, that the love of God will be expressed in and through us in all we do, all we say, and all we are.

For the companionship of each other and of the Holy Spirit, we give thanks.

**AMEN**

### ***Passing the peace***

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

### ***Listening***

Read: 2 Thess 1: 1-4, 11-12  
Luke 19: 1-10

For these words of faith  
and for Jesus the Word

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton***

As we drove through Jericho in our tour bus, our guide pointed to a large tree in a park, and said, "That's the sycamore tree that Zacchaeus climbed!"

I'm quite sure that it wasn't the tree that Zacchaeus climbed, as sycamores, although known for their longevity, don't survive for 2,000 years. But I found it fascinating that in this lively and busy city, which has a history stretching back to 9000 BCE, that the episode described in today's gospel reading is remembered and celebrated.

Jericho lies on the crossroads of several major routes. It is on the west bank of the Jordan River and is surrounded by desert, but it is like an oasis as it is watered by many springs. It has long been a place where groves of fruit trees and date palms are grown; and it was a winter resort for the aristocracy of Jerusalem in the Roman era. All this meant that Jericho was a wealthy city, where enterprising and well-connected people could make good money. And Zacchaeus was wealthy, indeed very wealthy; but his wealth had come from exploiting his fellow citizens and by complicity with the hated Roman rulers.

We can rightly conclude that Zacchaeus was despised by the general populace. The intriguing part of this story is the question of why Zacchaeus was so determined to see Jesus, but there is nothing surprising about why the crowd wanted to block Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus. They might not be able to stop him exploiting them, but they could do what they could to make life difficult for him. This included blocking his view, helped by the fact that he was short.

But Zacchaeus clearly was determined to see Jesus. So, he climbed up into the branches of a tree so he could see Jesus coming. Now that was unexpected. After all, this was a society where appearances, position and dignity were very important. It would have been unheard of for a wealthy, important man to climb up a tree. It was so undignified. Imagine the catcalls and



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the ridicule from the gathered crowd as this short man clambered up the tree.

This is a crazy, strange story. And it gets crazier! Because when Jesus appears, he summons Zacchaeus down from his perch in the tree, and invites himself to Zacchaeus' home. The crowd is incredulous and horrified. Has Jesus lost the plot? Doesn't he know what kind of man Zacchaeus is?

But when Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus' house something extraordinary happens. Without Jesus challenging him about his behaviour or his morals, Zacchaeus repents. Furthermore, Zacchaeus promises to give away half his possessions to the poor and return any money that he has extorted fourfold. Somehow, just being in the presence of Jesus who embodies God's love and acceptance is enough to turn around a dissolute life. It is like a deep well of longing and self-loathing has been turned into a fountain of joy and generosity, and all because Jesus invited himself to his house. The one who had been hated and shunned came face to face with one who could see deep into the human heart and see his need to be freed from the greed that had consumed his life.

Previously, Jesus had encountered a Rich Ruler (Luke 18:18-25) who wanted to be Jesus' disciple. Jesus asked him to repent and renounce his possessions. This he was unable to do, and the encounter ended sadly. But Zacchaeus repented and offered to give away much of what he owned without even being asked. The difference would seem to be that, unlike the Rich Ruler, Zacchaeus knew that he was lost, and saw in Jesus that he had been found, and he responded with joy, gratitude, and generosity.

Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." Jesus is the Shepherd who never gives up on seeking out the lost. Zacchaeus is like the lost sheep in the parable (Luke 15) that the shepherd left the ninety-nine (the crowd) and went looking for and found.

What does this story say to us? Do we acknowledge that we are often lost, and need to be found? Are we open to reaching out with a genuine welcome to everyone who comes seeking? Are we judgmental like the crowd who probably could not see that they, too, were lost?

Lostness is part of the human condition. We all need to hear Jesus calling our name. For when we hear him calling our name, we are reminded that despite our lostness, we are loved and forgiven. Thanks be to God.

### ***Singing - I, the Lord of sea and sky, TiS 658***

*Or: Amazing Grace - TiS 129*

*Or: The Lord is my shepherd TiS 659*

*Or: Look who gathers at Christ's table, A great song for All Saints and for the gospel reading this week, especially if you are celebrating Communion. Singable to many familiar tunes - <https://digitalsongsandhymns.com/songs/look-who-gathers-at-christs-table>*

### ***Offering***

These symbols we bring as tokens of our love for God and for each other. Bless them and bless us to your service. May we be generous in our love and in the grace given to us by Jesus who comes to us as guest when we are yet unworthy.

### ***Notices***

November 5th is World Tsunami Awareness Day.

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

To seek out and to save the lost, resisting the temptation to grumble and judge, recognising where Christ is calling us to the work of co-creating and bringing to wholeness.

May we be like Zaccheus, straining to see where God is at work in our world, the places Jesus inhabits, the corners where the presence of God draws us to minister.

"For I am coming to your house for tea, for tea". May we take the actions we need to take in order to rise to the occasion, to encounter Jesus and to be generous in our invitation to the intimacy of



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true relationship to which all are called. May the warmth of our hospitality bring others to the table.

In this moment our warm hearts are holding many things, God of Grace.

Our world feels at times like nobody cares anymore and grumbling is our national, and international past time. Help us stand with you in the work of seeking out and offering love, grace and mercy.

We bring the people of the Middle East (and other conflict areas), the vulnerable ones who always bear the brunt when power and greed are the playthings of the rich and mighty. We pray for the leaders of all our nations, at all levels, that they will not forget that politics is about weaving a fabric of justice and compassion to wrap around everyone, especially the cold, the homeless and the hungry.

We think of our elderly, particularly those who are struggling with infirmity or with physical or mental difficulty.

We pray for those who are addicted, incarcerated, prisoners for whatever reason.

We think of our homeless, our refugees, here and across the world. Those in the upheaval of moving or of seeking a home. For our migrants and those who may have lost what home has been to them.

We think of those who are physically or mentally struggling, those who are victimised for any reason, and those in danger.

We pray for our schools, our teachers and admin staff, our kids and their families. We pray for those in our health services and urgent responders. We pray for our carers, and those for whom they are caring.

We pray for those in our own community who are struggling.

We pray that as we raise ourselves to get a better view of Jesus and of the ministry to which we are called, that we will take seriously the call to seek out the lost and to offer them saving grace and love.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

As we pray together with words 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 - Rejoice in God's saints Tis 470***

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OR: *Help us, O Lord, to learn, Tis 428 - (sing it to St Thomas Tis 271)*

OR: *The Summons, or Sing hey for the Carpenter - both in the All Together OK songbook.*

#### ***Blessing***

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To this end we will always pray for one another,  
that our God will make us worthy of our call and  
will fulfill by God's power, every good resolve and  
work of faith.

Live your life according to the grace of our God  
and the Lord Jesus Christ, and go in Peace.

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