



Sunday November 9th, 2025 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

God of the living,
Gather us in as one people,
seeing and seeking signs of you
in us and amongst us.

Send your Spirit to bless this time together
so that we might be strengthened in faith
and turn again to you,
following in the way of Jesus,
the way of life and love.

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 - All creatures of our God and King **TiS 100**

OR: *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty* TiS 132

Prayer



Prayer of Praise

- a version of Psalm 145, 1-5, 17-21

God of the living, Source of all that is,
my life will sing your praises
and I will bless you forever.

Every sunrise I will greet you with gratitude
and sing praise to your name

Every day I live, I will bless you
and endlessly celebrate your love

You are magnificent and splendiferous.
Your greatness is beyond words

When we were children
we heard wonderful stories of you.
Now we will tell them to our children,
Grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

These stories tell of your marvelous reign
and I recall them again and again.

You are always fair and true,
constantly pouring out loving-kindness.

You are always near
when we call on you
with open, honest hearts.

When we approach you in humble awe,
you satisfy our deep longings.
You hear our cry and save us.

Your presence is constant
when we live in your love.
When we turn away, we are lost.

ALL: I will speak
constant words of blessing to you,
and sing in harmony with all living things,
celebrating your outrageous love.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

(hold a time of quiet)

Prayer of confession

God of the living,
our words of praise
come from the deepest places.
Deep calls to deep.
We are one with each other and with you.

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Friends of the Fig Tree, Uniting Church in Australia
with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*



Sunday November 9th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

But sometimes
our words and our ways
do not reflect your justice
and loving-kindness.

In the quiet be bring to you
the words and ways within us
that have harmed others or ourselves,
and caused hurt and pain.
We are asking for forgiveness.

(hold a generous time of quiet)

Siblings in Christ,
We are assured, that God is love,
and that this love will not let us down,
and can welcome us back,
even when we have turned away.

Hear then these words of faith;
those damaging words and ways
are forgiven.
We are restored, renewed, made whole,
set free to live in love.
Thank you God, Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Haggai 1:15b- 2:9
Luke 20:27-38

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

Reflecting - Rev'd. Ian Brown

"reforming Jesus"

It happens in most areas of our lives.
Some welcome change and do it well and others
do not. There are some who like the idea of
reforming who we understand Jesus to be and

how we are reformed in Jesus. And others who
want no change ever. No small debate!

Then our readings have the odd question
about marriage in the afterlife in Luke. Jesus
replies that death isn't such an issue for God. And
the grand words from Haggai,

*"In the second year of King Darius, the word of
the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying:
"Speak now to Zerubbabel"*

and then a message to get on with their work and
be encouraged by God's presence. Both of them
are addressing a situation of change.

Some reforms just happen; the world gets
COVID and MRNA vaccines blossom, seemingly
out of nowhere. A child abuse scandal rocks the
family daycare sector and reforms are suddenly all
the priority. Reforms do need to keep happening!

As with any proposed change, we need to
know the questions before we launch out looking
for answers. People often questioned Jesus.
Classics like "who is my neighbour?" and "is it
lawful to pay taxes", and then today's gospel;
"who will be married to this woman who had
seven husbands when they get to heaven?"

We all need to ask questions, it's a part of
how we learn and how we communicate; "what
have you been up to? How are you? We would be
lost without the ability to ask questions. The
religious leaders of Jesus day had a great privilege.
We've gained from their questions and Jesus'
answers.

The Sadducees asked Jesus the question
about heaven because, as faithful traditional Jews,
they didn't believe in an afterlife and wanted to
show Jesus up. They were hiding behind their
question. Lots of us still do that today, we ask,
"what about this tragedy, doesn't that show God
not caring? What about injustice, does it matter
to God what we do?"

On the big question of life after death, I'd
want to say don't be put off by today's distant
cousins of the cynical Sadducees, who want to



Sunday November 9th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

make fun of eternal life. God's love is faithful-love; the Hebrew is; *HESED* - dependable for ever! Jesus answers, 'They cannot die any more, but are like the angels and are children of God, having become children of resurrection.'

We are always on risky ground trying to picture the nature of this eternal life that Jesus speaks so enticingly about. The Sadducees look ridiculous with the nonsense about one bride and seven husbands. The idea is odious of a woman being treated as a family heirloom, passed being on. Any picture we try to draw about eternity depends on images from the life we know. Projecting that onto eternity is just silly. The "life abundant, eternal life" that Jesus spoke of was evocatively promised, alluded to, but never defined. What we believe about it will not alter reality one bit. Jesus' discussion here is part of a movement of reformation. Ideas, beliefs and convictions were in a process of change in Jesus' time, as much as ours and Jesus is not afraid to push in a new direction.

Greek philosophers believed that humans are, by nature, immortal souls; the body and life on earth, a crude prison. For them, immortality was our right; death could restore us, as we escape to our true element. These ideas have worked their way into many philosophies over the ages. But this is not faith in Christ, not part of Christian belief. The modern, self-centred approach says the world, God, the afterlife must all be as each of us imagines them. No! Jesus' reforming opens hopeful possibility and promotes fullness of life, not a promise to fulfil everyone's fantasies.

Back in the prophet Haggai's day, life was hard. The Israelites had returned from exile, the crops were poor and they were asking, "is God really still with us?" The answer is a promise to us too, as we ask questions and talk about the reform needed now in us and in the church. *"All you people, take courage, work, for I am with you, says the Lord, my Spirit lives among you."* Questions or not – that's God's bottom line answer to the Israelites who were so anxious, and I believe it's

God's answer to us still. Take courage, get on with the most important things first and be assured that God's Spirit is amongst us.

The Good News is, as Jesus says, "God is the God of the living," - the God of abundant life! God wants to bless all with the fullness of this abundant life. Reforming us and then perhaps, through us, to many more by God's grace. Amen.

Singing - The Church's one foundation ***TiS 457***

OR: *What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590*

OR: *Inspired by love and anger TiS 674*

OR: *We limit not the truth of God TiS 453*

Offering

God of the living, we bring these gifts. Not because we have too, or because we think we might be buying your favour, but as a grateful expression of our life-commitment to following and serving in your love.

Bless these gifts, and use all we have and all we are, to spread your justice and peace.

And all the people say: **Amen.**

Notices

November 11th is Armistice (Remembrance) Day

Prayers for World & Community

NOTE: This prayer is responsive, with the communal singing or speaking of the song by John Bell: Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665 - verse 1

We pray for the lonely, the lost and forgotten; missing persons, in one way or another. Help us to join you, Jesus, befriending in the loneliness....

(hold a time of quiet)



Sunday November 9th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665 - verse 2

We pray for all victims of injustice,
where hope is absent and life has lost meaning.
Help us to join you, Jesus,
raging in the injustice...

(hold a time of quiet)

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665 - verse 3

We pray for those who suffer,
in body, mind or spirit,
longing for a healing, holding hand.
Help us to join you, Jesus,
touching in the pain...

(hold a time of quiet)

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665 - verse 4

We pray for those caught in violence and hatred,
perpetrators and persecuted,
trapped by brutality and fear.
Help us to join you, Jesus,
love-dancing over evil...

(hold a time of quiet)

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665 - verse 5

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 - Joyful, joyful we adore you ***TiS 152***

OR: God sends us the Spirit, TiS 412

Blessing

God of the living,
send us out as one people,
seeing and seeking signs of you
in us and amongst us.

**Send your Spirit to lead us on,
so that we might be strengthened in faith
and turn again to you,
following in the way of Jesus,
the way of life and love. Amen.**

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown
Warragul Uniting Church

Liturgy & Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon
Retried Minister - Cape Paterson
revjenniegordon@gmail.com

