



Christmas 1 - Sunday December 28th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

The liturgy is written for a café church or picnic setting, but feel free to adapt to your worship context. My aim is to offer a worship that does not need a power point or printed order of service. If you are blessed with portable instruments, make some noise!

- Rev. Karen Eller

Wisdom has called us to gather in this place today.

Faith has propelled us to be present together,
alive to the Divine within and around us.

Hope takes up residence.

Joy enters the hearts of all who dare let her.

Love fills our lives, spilling over to share with the world.

Peace invites us to pause and be still.

(pause)

Let us worship the Eternal Three-in-One, Author of life and love.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overtake it.

** A battery operated candle may be preferable if outdoors*

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 O God of all the earth

TiS 181

OR: Joy to the world The Lord is come TiS 268

OR: Everything that has breath TiS 715



Prayer

Spirit of Wisdom,
you have chosen us to be messengers of your love. You have equipped us to be your heralds of hope. You are the One who can turn mourning into dancing, demoralisation into joy.
In you we find the path to peace.

Saving God,
You give shelter to peoples persecuted,
You give courage to the faint-hearted,
Your heart is for the freedom to flourish,
Your endeavours are for the liberation of your children from all that imprisons.

Bless our bumbling efforts!
Forgive us our hesitation to live boldly for your kin-dom. Stir our hearts to love large.
In the name of the Incarnate One, the Divine Enfleshed, Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Isaiah 63:7-9 &
Matthew 2: 13-23

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Discussion

This could be done as table groups or as appropriate to your context.

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A. Many of us have been faced with situation(s) when flight was the safest option. Share your stories giving prominence to how God helped you and through whom.

B. Sometimes we are witness to people trapped in situations beyond their capacity to escape. In what ways does your church pay attention to systemic injustice locally and further afield? What can you do differently to be agents of God's liberating love?

Singing - O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr TiS 253

OR: Child in the manger infant of Mary TiS 319

OR: Jesus calls us here to meet him TiS 477

The Psalm

Read: Psalm 148

You might want to have copies of the psalm printed in front of you.

Reflecting - Rev. Nigel Hanscamp

This reflection was written with an informal setting in mind - such as a bush chapel, by a river, under a tree out the front or back of the worship centre, in a café church.

*Parts marked * are optional activities in these settings.*

"The Colour Green" is a song of creation's praise written by Rich Mullins.

(You can listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yp-C-nw-Ws>)

*"And the moon is a sliver of silver
Like a shaving that fell on the floor of a
carpenter's shop*

*And every house must have its builder
And I awoke in the house of God
Where the windows are mornings and evenings"*

Today our psalm traverses the heavens, the earth, and the human heart.

Earlier this week we have gazed in wonder at the baby in the manger and looked into the faces of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. Now we look up, look beyond the very earthy and very local to the whole of creation. Heavens, angels, sun, moon, stars, all called to praise the composer of all, to praise the redeemer!

**If you can, trace the progression of praise from the highest heavens in v1 through to the common folk in v 12. Name them all, or turn them into actions with your hands, or use a texta to highlight each thing that is summoned to praise God.*

We can imagine creation as an orchestra or big band. The praise starts with a deep rumbling sound in the distance, and with each phrase another part of creation joins in, closer and closer. Each one brings their best voice. Trees lift their arms in worship, winds rush in excitement, animals and birds join the chorus with human voices in many languages and dialects.

*"Be praised for all Your tenderness by these works
of Your hands
Suns that rise and rains that fall to bless and bring
to life Your land
Look down upon this winter wheat and be glad
that You have made
Blue for the sky and the colour green that fills
these fields with praise."*

Can you hear the sounds of animals and birds finding their voice - Wah the Crow, Warin the Wombat, Ngayuk the Cockatoo. All are called to join in praise for the One who gives life and salvation. And so they call and crow and rustle and splash as they have done for many generations on this land.

As day ends, their voices quiet. And then another sunrise said, "Let's do it all again".



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I imagine the raucous laughter of angels and the giggle of the galah as the wonder seeps in ...
They get to play, explore and praise AGAIN! We draw breath, listen in wonder, and join in praise for the Composer of everything.

Sometimes we can't or won't hear this song around us. Like Herod, we can focus too much on ourselves and our status. Any time we want to be the centre of the story, feel that our power or importance is threatened, and lose curiosity for what the Divine may be offering us – these are the times we put up defences and expect other people to do things our way. These are the moments we lose a sense of wonder and forget to listen for the song of praise from the saints and creation.

**Open hands and closed fists might describe the difference between these responses of praise and distrust. What images or stories might you use?*

This is an intergenerational song of praise that joins us with millions of years of creation's praise and the songs of hundreds of generations of saints and faithful people. For them creator and redeemer, giver of life and new life, the Thrill of Hope and the Joy to the World are the beginning and end of praise.

*"And I'm amazed when I remember
Who it was that built this house
And with the rocks I cry out
Be praised for all Your tenderness by these works
of Your hands."*

Singing - Let all creation dance TiS 187

OR: Joyful joyful we adore you TiS 152

Offering

Bless the gifts of our lives and our resources
for the furthering of your kin-dom.
May these gifts transform lives
in Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayers for World & Community

Eternal Mystery,
when sin wreaks havoc in ordinary lives:
may there be people to protest;
may there be peaceful resistance;
may your justice find a way.

God of grace, **your kin-dom come.**

Author of Life,
when violence and hatred pollute our
communities:
may your wisdom speak truth to power;
may your compassion save the innocent;
may your peace take up residence.

God of grace, **your kin-dom come.**

Well-Spring of Hope,
when hearts are broken and communities
shattered:
may you send angels to mend the fabric of
society;
may you make space for stories to be shared and
listened to;
may your agents of grace be empowered to share
your love.

God of grace, **your kin-dom come.**

Liberating God,
free us of all that diminishes our response to you:
protect us from all that would seek to harm us;
shelter us from menace and mischief;
liberate your church to be bold in your name.

God of grace, **your kin-dom come.**

We pray for...
(add prayers to your particular context)

Uphold and bless all in need of your saving grace
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:



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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 - You shall go out with joy TiS 755

OR: Love came down at Christmas TiS 317

OR: As the old year passes (Tune TiS 665)

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1. As the old year passes
we look back, reflect:
times of joy and promise,
times we'd best forget.
God of the ages
help us walk your way.
Help us greet your future,
seize tomorrow's day
2. As the old year passes
sorrow wells within:
loved ones no more 'round us,
all that could have been.
God of compassion
heal each ailing heart.
Guide us to your future
where new life may start
3. As the old year passes
we cry for our struggling world.
Climate ever-changing,
fighting too-often heard.
Jesus, you call us
to cherish all you give.
Call us to your future
where all in peace, might live
4. As the new year dawns now
we would give you praise.
Faithful God, come lead us
onward in new ways.
We'll love and serve you
in the faith of Christ,
in your Spirit's future;
people of new life.

Sending & Blessing

Go from here as agents of God's grace,
bold enough to share stories of hope and
courage, wise enough to know when to stay and
when to run, compassionate enough to open our
hearts to friends and strangers, patient enough to
dwell in the Holy for guidance and strength.

And the blessing of God the Creator, Christ the
Redeemer and the Holy Spirit of Peace, Truth and
Justice be with you and remain with you always.
Amen.

*Reflection: Rev. Nigel Hanscamp
Director - Discipleship and Advocacy - eLM,
Synod of Victoria & Tasmania*

*Liturgy: Rev. Karen Eller
Bellarine Linked Congregations*

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga



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