



## ***Sunday January 18th, 2026***

### ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

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

*based on Isaiah 49:1-7*

Listen to me, O coastlands;  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
**The Lord called me before I was born;**  
**while I was in my mother's womb he named**  
**me.**

And now the Lord says,  
**who formed me in the womb to be his**  
**servant,**  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
**and that Israel might be gathered to him,**  
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord,  
**and my God has become my strength—**  
“It is too light a thing that you should be my  
servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
**I will give you as a light to the nations,**  
**that my salvation may reach to the end of the**  
**earth.”**

Thus says the Lord,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
the slave of rulers,  
**“Kings shall see and stand up;**  
**princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,**  
**because of the Lord, who is faithful,**  
**the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”**

*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 - O for a thousand tongues to sing** **Tis 210**

OR: Praise with Joy the World's Creator (TIS 179)



#### **Prayer**

O God, we seek the gift of genuine connection as  
we gather today with those who long to be your  
faithful people. We pray that today we find this  
through your love which holds us, your grace  
which nurtures us, and the hope that we have  
that we are part of your redemptive love in the  
world.

Forgive us for those times when we have treated  
these gifts of grace, love and hope as though they  
our own possessions to be hoarded and kept  
within these walls. Let us know that these are  
from your power and that we are called to  
generously channel these gifts to the whole of  
the world.

Forgive us when our clarity of vision is dulled by  
the confusion and busyness of the world. Let us  
remember that you have known us through and  
through and that we are strengthened in this  
world through your love for us. Let us be the  
people who can show your graciousness in the  
world. Amen.

Hear then the continuing word of grace to us,  
through Christ our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Passing the peace**

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

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### ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

#### ***Listening***

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Read: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42

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

#### ***Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon***

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"Listen to me, O coastlands" says the passage from Isaiah and suddenly I'm listening in a different way. Images of the inter-tidal zone of transition and transformation drift into my mind, the liminal space of the shoreline, sometimes ocean, sometimes soft sandy land. The coastlands, shifting border between the place that's safe to stand and the dragons of the deep. This is an edge-place of life and death and possibility, always changing.

The writer of this part of Isaiah is speaking into the situation in Jerusalem, Zion, after the first wave of exiles have returned from Babylon around 538 BCE. They've returned to a wretched reality, not at all what they had expected. They are on the borderline between hope and despair and are called into remembering the presence and promise of their God, the one God, who formed them: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." To the end of the earth! Much of this part of the book of Isaiah uses words from older manuscripts and shapes them with beauty, resonance and alliteration, using masculine and feminine images for God, bringing the poetry of ancient hope into the harsh and present reality for a community in the borderland of anguish and suffering.

There's an echo of this proclamation to a suffering people longing for restoration in John the Baptist's declaration about Jesus, in the reading from the gospel of John; "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" One translation uses the word 'cosmos'

instead of 'world', spanning space, breaking the boundary between earth and heaven, drawing us all into a cosmic collective of divine life and light. Here, in John's gospel, we are in a liminal space, an edge place of possibility, a transition zone, as the Baptiser points to Jesus and says to his followers, 'that's him, he's the one'.

In this story of the call of the disciples, they leave their teacher not their nets, and move from John to Jesus. This is orchestrated and directed by John, deliberate and decisive, a message for the first community of listeners. Jesus asks what they are looking for and they answer with a question, "Where are you staying?". Where do you abide? The inference from the disciple's question is this; we want to be with you. In this time of transition Jesus sees them for who they are, and who they will become. You are Simon. You will be changed and renewed. You will be Peter.

And here we are. The end of the earth has never seemed more real, creatures and habitats are on the verge of desolation, people suffer and struggle in the inter-tidal zone of life and death as the wheels of greed and power grind on. The church as we know it, is a refuge for some and a disappointment for others. As followers of Jesus, how can we inhabit this borderland space with hope? Can we imagine that Jesus sees us for who we are, and can we believe in the promise of who we might become? Will we abide with the Spirit of light and life on the edges of unknowing?

You pull us out of the boggy bed of the dead and set us on solid ground.

You put a new song in our mouth and give us an open ear. (alt Ps 40)

Listen to me, O coastlands,  
and all who inhabit the  
hard spaces of changing times,  
on the edge of despair,  
disappointment or danger.  
You are not alone, but known and loved  
and are being renewed, reclaimed and  
renamed.



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#### ***Singing - Coastlands***

*tune: AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE 65.65D (TIS 236)*

Listen to me, coastlands,  
where the waters roar  
and the land, contested,  
shrinking from the shore,  
you are not alone,  
but seen and loved and known,  
treasured in this space:  
the exhale of God's grace.

Listen to me, nations,  
banished from the land,  
words and ways demolished  
by colonial hand,  
you are not alone,  
but seen and loved and known,  
treasured in this space:  
the exhale of God's grace.

Listen to me, creatures,  
fighting to endure  
habitat destruction,  
future insecure,  
you are not alone,  
but seen and loved and known,  
treasured in this space:  
the exhale of God's grace.

Listen to me, churches,  
living in the past,  
clinging to convention,  
holding on so fast,  
you are not alone,  
but seen and loved and known,  
treasured in this space:  
the exhale of God's grace.

Listen to me, people,  
all who long for light,  
struggling in the darkness,  
waiting through the night,  
you are not alone,  
but seen and loved and known,  
treasured in this space:  
the exhale of God's grace.

OR: Loving Spirit, Loving Spirit TIS 417

OR: Like the murmur of the dove's song TIS 419

#### ***Offering***

Accept these gifts Gracious God, as a sign and symbol of our lives rededicated to you again. Let them show our intention to be in community in your world, to be connected to each other and to the community we serve. In the name of Christ,  
**Amen.**

#### ***Notices***

Since 2019 the Uniting Church has marked a Day of Mourning on the Sunday before 26 January to reflect on the dispossession and ongoing injustices faced by Australia's First Peoples, acknowledge our shared history and renew our commitment to justice and healing.

Resources for January 25th are available at:

[https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Day-of-Mourning-2026\\_final.pdf](https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Day-of-Mourning-2026_final.pdf)

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

Living God we come to you in the hope that our prayers may be held by you in your grace. We take our time this day to reflect on the world around us and to hold your creation in our hearts and minds.

We pray for the world. We know you are present in all moments, but Lord, we see pain, injustice, dispossession and sorrow. Lord let us know how we might be peacemakers.

Faithful God – **hear our Prayer**

We pray for our country. We know you are present in all moments; Lord let your light and grace shine in the lives of those who make decisions that impact on others. Let this new year be infused with times of connection and hope in our walk together in Reconciliation.

Faithful God – **hear our Prayer**

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We pray for our community. We know you are present in all moments; in particular we remember those who are doing it tough, those organisations and churches who serve and care for others, those workers who give up their time and holidays to keep us safe and protected. May they know a spark of your joyous grace at this time.

Faithful God – **hear our Prayer**

We pray for those who hold a special place in our hearts. We know you are present in all moments; today we name those who are on our hearts and mind. (A time of silence). May they know our deepest love and hope for them at this time.

Faithful God – **hear our Prayer**

We pray for each other. We know you are present in all moments; we live in the hope and joy of your presence with the knowledge that when we are gathered, you are with us. Jesus, Lamb of God, grant us your peace.

Faithful God – **hear our Prayer.**

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

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OR: Filled with the Spirit's Power TiS 411

OR: Shout for joy! The Lord has let us feast TiS 545

### ***Blessing***

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Let us go now, knowing that we are blessed again and again with the presence of the living God, in our going out as much as our coming in; let us live our lives making decisions in the knowledge of our connection with the whole of creation through the Lamb of God; and may our hope be sustained with the joy and power of the Spirit.  
Amen

Reflection: Rev. Jennie Gordon

Liturgy: Rev. Heather den Houting  
Traralgon

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