



## Lent 4 - Sunday March 15th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

### Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

(based on Psalm 23)

We stop  
We breathe  
We listen

**We come to a quiet place**

We bring hope  
We bring thirst  
We bring hunger

**We trust in your eternal presence**

An abundance is set before us

**The blessing cup overflows**

**Let us worship the Shepherd God**

*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 - The Lord's my Shepherd TiS 10

OR: Lord your almighty word TiS 447

OR: Lord the light of your love is shining TiS 675



### Prayer

Eternal Mystery,

You are the light who transforms shadows into opportunities.

You are the wisdom who gives us pause to reflect

You are the rock who shelters us from the storm

You are the living water who quenches our thirst

Light of the world,

**we offer our thanks and praise**

Ancient of Days,

You are the bread which feeds our every hunger

You are the gate which keeps out the robbers

You are the compass of life which points the way of justice

You are the guardian of truth who shines a light on corruption

Light of the world,

**we offer our thanks and praise**

There are times O Architect of Grace, when the shadow of death is all too real,

*(pause)*

Forgive us any flashes of rage which left uncontained can hurt and cause damage.

Forgive us any bouts of selfishness which leave people distanced from your love.

Forgive us any fears which prevent us from sharing the light of your love.

*(pause)*

We trust in your grace to transform our failures into gifts.

Bless us in our stumbling

Guide us in our grumbling

Sustain us in our discipleship

We pray in the name of the I Am who declares that we are God's beloved, forgiven and restored.

**Amen.**

*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.*



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#### **Words of Grace**

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*(from Uniting in Worship 2)*

Those who are in Christ are a new creation  
everything old has passed away;  
see, the new has come!  
All this is from God,  
who reconciled us to Godself through Christ.  
Be at peace, you are beloved and forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Passing the peace**

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

#### **Listening**

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Read: Psalm 23 &  
John 9:1-41

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Reflecting - Rev. Heather den Houting**

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When we have such a well known passage in the lectionary such as Psalm 23, we have such a feast of imagery that it is difficult to explain how it impacts on us. It has to be acknowledged that this is a favourite psalm for funerals, but more than that it can offer us a window into explaining our own sense of calling into discipleship. So, before we continue with the reflection, let us meditate with the words and imagine ourselves sitting next to Jesus and using this Psalm as a conversation with him.

*(Read Psalm 23 again as if saying it to Jesus).*

What happens to you when you contemplate this passage in this way? Did Jesus respond to you as you spoke the words to him? Has anything changed for you about how you understand the Psalm, or your relationship with God?

*(You may wish to speak to someone near you about your thoughts).*

The story of the healing of the blind man at the pool of Siloam is a wonderful narrative of how this man's life changed after he encountered Jesus. He did not ask to be part of this story, but nevertheless Jesus chose him. He was not a religious leader, clever or powerful, but rather a person afflicted, and socially and economically desperate.

He experiences the earthiness of the offer of healing from Jesus: mud is created from dirt and spit and spread on his eyes and then he visits the water to bathe. These points are deliberate. The healing is not part of a refined ritual: it is real, raw and immediate.

And after the healing he is put to the test. He is asked to tell his story again and again, and as he does, he comes to the deeper recognition of what has happened to him. He encounters religious rulers, theological conversation, doubt, cynicism and offence with his own deep truth of transformation. It is in the telling of the story that he becomes an evangelist to others about the prophetic ministry of Christ.

"I met Jesus, he smeared me with mud, then told me to go to the pool to bathe. I did what he told me and now I can see." He stops trying to justify the reality of the transformation and instead repeats the fact: "I was blind and now I can see".

That is how simple it can be to explain why you are a disciple of Christ. Before Jesus I was like this... after Jesus I am like this. The power of this evangelism is in the simpleness of the story. Your story may not be accepted by all you tell, but the power of your transformation will echo beyond you in ways that you may never see or comprehend.

With this understanding, what words, images or stories do you use to explain how your life might have changed after you encountered Jesus? Read Psalm 23 again now and sit with the comfort and reassurance that this gift of grace is not just a promise, it is really truly available to all people. Amen.



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#### **Singing - Lord let me see TiS 681**

OR: Amazing grace how sweet the sound TiS 129

OR: O Christ the healer we have come TiS 648

#### **Offering**

God of Jesus the healer, we offer these things for the sake of your healing of the world. Open our eyes to see how we can be agents of sight and healing for your sake. Amen.

#### **Notices**

**March 17-23** is *Harmony Week*.

**March 21** is the *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*.

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

Fountain of Life,

We pray for people whose lives are overshadowed by the spotlights on others:  
For workers who toil without recognition of their skills or their dependability  
For carers who labour day and night in the support of loved ones.  
For students and writers who sit behind keyboards giving birth to new ideas and concepts and for people who work or volunteer in support of our communities.

Light of Life, **help us to be your love at work**

Whisperer of Wisdom

we pray for people who resist the light of your love (and prefer to lurk in darkness)  
for world leaders, quick to deflect scrutiny, who prefer to sow chaos than grow orchards to feed hungry children  
for state officials, elected for their acquiescence and lacking any competence  
for the uber-rich who have lost touch with their own humanity

Light of Life, **help us to be your love at work**

Author of Being

We pray for your children impacted by

seduction's selfishness,  
for people kidnapped and forced to work in labour camps or placed in detention  
for children left exposed to deadly diseases for which there are vaccinations  
for elders abandoned to live in inadequate housing

Light of Life, **help us to be your love at work**

Catalyst of Creation

We pray for our planet Earth, degraded by greed's excesses

We pray for climate scientists who have tried to shine a light for over a hundred years

We pray for fragile ecosystems and food production systems

We pray for communities impacted by drought, fire, storm and floods.

Light of Life, **help us to be your love at work.**

Maker of Love

Hold us in your light, that we may continue to love generously and seek cups overflowing for all.  
Equip your church for such mission in the world

We pray for...*(local prayer needs)*

Guide us in your ways,

Teach us your grace,

Fill us with your peace,

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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.



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#### **Singing - Be thou my vision TiS 547**

OR: Amazing grace how sweet the sound TiS 129

#### **Blessing**

We are sent to be agents of God's love.  
May our meditations bring clarity and insight  
May our words and actions bring light and life  
May our living reflect God's loving  
And be beacons of hope for a hurting world.

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

#### **Sending song - Send me Jesus Tis 749**

Reflection: Rev. Heather den Houting  
Traralgon

Liturgy: Rev. Karen Eller  
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