



Lent 5 - Sunday March 22nd, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

*I wait for the LORD;
my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.*
(from Psalm 130)

We wait on the Lord,
this day,
this year,
this century.

Let us worship and remember God's faithfulness.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



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 TiS 210

OR: Come O God of all the earth TiS 181

OR: Praise and thanksgiving TiS 627

Prayer



*To set the mind on the flesh is death,
But to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace*
(Romans 8:6)

Loving Lord, we come to you in prayer,
We set our minds to worship,
praising you for all we have.
We thank you that we live in a peaceful country,
We thank you for the joy of waking each morning
to the sound of birds, and serenity.
We praise you for all we have, and sit quietly,
amazed in your gifts and love. *(time of quiet)*

As we think of your greatness and goodness,
We acknowledge our failings,
Our lack of appreciation for all we have.
Our irritation at the increase in the price of fuel,
Without a thought for the reason.
Our focus on little worries in a world of turmoil.
Our lack of awareness of others who need our
attention here:
the hungry, homeless,
sufferers from family violence,
the invisible people around us.

Forgive us and help us to care with our minds,
resources and gifts.
In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

We are loved and forgiven in the name of Christ.
Thanks be to God

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Romans 8:6-11 &
John 11:1-45

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



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Reflecting - Rev. Karen Eller

We have read in the preceding weeks Jesus' self-descriptions leaning strongly into his self-understanding as the bringer of life. 'Living Water' and 'Light of the World' and now, "I am the resurrection and the life."

But Jesus is not the sole agent at work in today's Gospel reading. When Jesus calls out, "Lazarus, come out!" Not only does Lazarus have to respond and come out, but also Jesus calls upon the people present at the graveside to, "Unbind him, and let him go." Thus, it is also the work of the community to release those in captivity to death's clothing, and expedite liberation, however that is presented.

What graves or tombs or closets do we find ourselves or our loved ones or strangers in? What courage does it take to step out of death's shadows? And who are our companions when Jesus invites us to 'come out'? Who needs our help right now to make a safe transition from death's clutches toward life? Are we paying attention and will we offer compassion, or contempt?

Bishop Marianne Budde recently commented on the failure of the leadership in her country to show mercy. She speaks of how everyone loses when people treat each other with contempt. Her reasoning is that contempt for human lives leaves a very short step to inflicting violence on human lives. And we are seeing that in many aspects of life in the United States, but we also see it spilling out into our own communities in Australia.

When people are confused or frightened, they/we need compassion, not condemnation; when people are hurting, they/we need mercy, not contempt; when people are broken, they/we need forgiveness, not exclusion. Jesus shows us God's ways of bringing people into life with God, eternal life as John calls it. There is no end to the creative ways our churches and us as individuals

can participate in Christ's life-giving/life-saving mission.

I feel for LGBTIQ+ folk in the United States at present. In states such as Florida and Texas, rainbow crosswalks have been removed and banned. Any sense of inclusion or acceptance of queer folk is being heavily suppressed. There is a death-cult at work in the guise of Christian nationalism that is trying to erase the humanity of the rainbow family. As John's gospel tells in the raising of Lazarus, and in the resurrection of Jesus, death does not have the last say. I feel a spark of new life every time I see a creative response to the rainbow crosswalk prohibition. In some cities, rainbow lights are beamed across public buildings, in others, footpaths, bollards and other fixed items are plastered in rainbow colours. The black and white or grayscale of Trump's America cannot diminish the brave people who simply want to live their lives in the full spectrum of God's light.

It might be dangerous, as it was for Jesus and his followers to be so close to Jerusalem at that time. We live our lives in bodies, and sometimes we are called upon to put our bodies on the line in order to shine God's light on structures that oppress and diminish God's people. One thing we can be assured of is that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

May we all have the courage to trust Jesus when he says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Singing - God when human bonds are broken TiS 683

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

OR: Jesus the Lord said TiS 239



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Offering

As people of God
We bring ourselves,
Our talents, abilities and gifts
In the offerings of our resources.
Bless them
Use us and them as you will.
In Jesus' name. Amen

Notices

Harmony week ends tomorrow.
Next Sunday is Palm Sunday.

Prayers for World & Community

Loving Lord, we come to you with our prayers, we come as your people, trusting that you hear our prayers and understand our needs.

We offer prayers for the world, especially in places of war and violence. We take some time to offer our prayers for troubled places...

We pray for our country and our church, when we feel helpless, guide us to what we can do, give us courage and the right words when people see things differently.
May we see the world beyond ourselves and ask your guidance in our words and actions.

We pray for our church and communities:
May we and our leaders respond appropriately in crises, give what and where we can.
We pray for those sick and in care, grieving, sad and lacking hope and all those who care for them.

We pray for ourselves, the needs deep in our hearts that we dare not say aloud.
We join in the prayer 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 - Community of Christ TiS 483

OR: O Breath of life come sweeping through us TiS 409
OR: Now the green blade rises TiS 382

Blessing

Go out into a world
where God is present:
healing, refreshing, loving, giving hope,
reminded by the restoration of Lazarus.

We are God's people
Created;
Redeemed;
Sustained.

Today, yesterday and tomorrow.
Amen.

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