



Sunday April 12th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Note: If you are using the Blessing Song - 'You are holy' TiS 753, and it's not familiar, you might want to teach it as a lively call to worship.

Or you could use Halle, halle, halle, TiS 720

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Risen One who calls us;
along the wilderness of Lent,
at the table of the twelve,
in the relinquishment at Gethsemane,
through the violence of the cross,

keeping vigil through the vacant holy hours,

to the dewy morning of the empty tomb
and your surprising rising;
We have followed you.

And now we take our place,
gathered behind closed doors,
and wait for you to show yourself to Thomas,
because he is all of us,
unable to stay away and longing to believe.
Bless our unbelief.
Be present to us.
Breathe your peace.

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 - Be thou my vision TiS 547

OR: The great love of God TiS 164



Prayer

Psalm 16 from the N.R.S.V. *(responsive)*
Song of Trust and Security in God
A Miktam of David.

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

*I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."*

As for the holy ones in the land,
they are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.

*Those who choose another god
multiply their sorrows;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.*

The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

*The boundary lines have fallen for me
in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.*

I bless the LORD, who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

*I keep the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand,
I shall not be moved.*

Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.

*For you do not give me up to Sheol
or let your faithful one see the Pit.*



Sunday April 12th, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

**ALL: You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Risen Christ,
present to us through the gift of the Spirit,
We come confessing our unbelief,
knowing that your love will never leave us,
growing into who we are, through you,
woven together as one.

For the times when, as people of the Way,
and as a community of faith
we have failed to believe:

Failed to believe we can make a difference,
failed to believe in the power of kindness,
failed to believe that our voice will be heard,
failed to believe in your abiding presence.

Forgive us, wounded One,
forgive us and give us what we need
to be your people
for the sake of this world you love.

time of quiet

Siblings in Christ, be assured,
We are loved, forgiven and blessed.
And all the people say: **Amen.**

From John 20: 26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Passing the peace

May the Peace of the risen Christ dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

John 20:19-31

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown

"The stuff of believing"

We live in an age of questioning. Sometimes it's like the two-year-olds have never grown up. 'Do we have to? Why should I? 'What does it really mean? Some feel guilty about questioning, some do it with their breathing!

Thomas gets a hard time because of his questions and doubting. But the subject, from John's gospel, is firmly about belief. Thomas' story is a process of coming to belief from questioning doubt. So, the Sunday after Easter, it's good to reflect on what we believe and Jesus' question, 'Have you believed because you have seen me?'

We don't need to go back two thousand years to find a subject where beliefs differ. The old Yiddish joke goes that if you want three opposing ideas about God, just ask two rabbis. It's not just a religious phenomenon. Russian leadership believes a special operation in Ukraine is valid, most Western leadership believes it's expansionist aggression. There is only one event there. Our news is coloured in one direction and Russians in the other. Beliefs are conflicting. Oil and the Middle East, goodness don't go there!

Carbon pollution and climate change are closer to home. It's a contested field. Some engage as though if enough articles and speeches are made, reality will adjust accordingly. There's facts, complex reality and then there is understanding and interpretation. Belief is tough, but don't give up.

We are asked to believe or not believe in many things. John is dealing with the same sort of issues about Jesus and what to believe after Easter.

Thomas wasn't there with the other disciples. He's a wonderful reminder of the importance of asking questions until you get an answer!



Sunday April 12th, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

He needed help with his believing, and that's fine! He was fortunate to get his answer in just a week. Some of our questions can take a lifetime's work.

Sometimes believing comes easily and sometimes not. Trust has a lot to do with who and what we believe. We might trust our own eyes or our sense of touch, like Thomas. But that's not always reliable either. Our beliefs change and develop; sometimes with the years, sometimes with events, sometimes they evolve and grow, sometimes they wither and die.

I believe that belief in Jesus occupies a different territory than belief in characters like E. Bunny, S. Claus and P. Pan. Jesus lived and was known by many. His friends told this heart wrenching tale of their own desertion and Jesus' awful death.

In the gospel, Thomas doesn't believe in the risen Christ because his friends told him to or because of a campaign. He believes when he encounters Jesus' presence. Coming to believe is the very heart of faith. And Jesus asks Thomas, not to believe in abstracts or homes in the clouds, but to believe in him, in Jesus, in a known and trusted friend.

The ancient creeds of the church echo the same reality about belief. The creeds may not answer the questions we have today, but their focus is squarely on belief in Jesus. The Apostles Creed and the later Nicene Creed both have three sections that each begin, "I believe...". And they are mostly about Jesus. The first has one line about God, one about the Holy Spirit, the church, the communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting; but there are nine points about belief in Jesus. 'God's only son, conceived, born of, suffered under, crucified, died and buried, rose, ascended, seated with, and will come again to judge.' Belief in Jesus is the focus.

Sometimes we are hungry for evidence. Jesus knows that faith is both a blessing and a miracle. He says that while it was one thing for Thomas to believe with Jesus in front of him, it would one day

be quite another thing to believe without proof in the same room.

Thomas bridges the space between first hand witness and those who can only hear or read the story. The gospel writer is confident that he has given us enough for faith to be born. He follows Jesus with his own commentary; "Now listen, friends: I have left out a ton. Jesus said and did lots of things I just have not gotten around to. But what I have given you is enough. Read it and believe!"

Easter reminds us again that the courage to live and hope is often extinguished. Our believing is tested and sometimes fails us. But the miracle of new life and the finding of new hope keep happening. Christ comes even through locked doors bringing his peace to them, despite their fears and uncertainties.

I believe he comes to us too, a living hope that's reborn, even when he isn't expected, even when our defences are up. Jesus comes, (did you notice in the story), not to tell them off for their desertion, lack of faith and fear? No, Jesus comes to this frightened little group of believers and doubters, to give them his peace. He breathes his spirit on them and calls them to continue his ministry. So, of all the things that it's possible to believe in, this I believe, has been the most positive force for good, renewal, for hope and wholeness of life.

The resurrected one breathes his spirit into you and me too. So we might share this life that gets up again after the worst darkness and begins again, with even brighter hope.

May the peace of God, which passes all our understanding and our doubting, keep us in Jesus Christ our risen Lord, Amen.

Singing - Faith will not grow from words alone, TiS 691

OR: These things did Thomas TiS 649



Sunday April 12th, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Offering

Bless these gifts we bring, God of welcome and wonder, and use them as you would use us, to see and bind the wounds of the world and bring your love and joy. Amen.

Notices

Did you show the Easter Message from the President and/or the Moderator on Easter Day? If you didn't show or read these messages, you can still access them here...

<https://uniting.church/presidents-easter-message-2026/>

Prayers for World & Community

“He stood among his disciples
— not performing, not demanding
— simply present.

And he breathed on them and said:

“Receive the Holy Spirit.

This is how his peace comes alive in them.

Not by pretending everything is fine,
but in the middle of real life.”

Rev. Charissa Suli,
President - Uniting Church in Australia.

God amongst us, above and below,
Breath of life, Risen Christ,
you bring your woundedness amongst us,
not hidden, but touchable,
not pretending, but real,
in the midst of our fear and turmoil.

As we pray, we see these wounds
your wounds in the world,
and we bring them to you ...

For those wounded in war,
and through violence of strangers and family.
For the wounds of disaster and poverty.
For the wounds of the earth and her creatures.

Invite people to bring their prayers

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 - Filled with the Spirit's power

TiS 411

OR: Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613

Blessing

The Church does not live by anxiety.

We live by resurrection.

Not anxious about survival,
but faithful in witness.

We are here to represent Jesus Christ.

And that peace does not stay
behind locked doors.

It moves outward. It sends us.

So, this *Sunday, as for all days,**

— Receive his peace.

Stand firm in resurrection hope.

And live as people of resurrection,
because death and fear

do not have the final word.

Because the tomb is empty.

Love has not ended. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Rev. Charissa Suli,
President - Uniting Church in Australia.

**adapted*

Blessing Song - You are holy TiS 753

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown

Warragul Uniting Church

Liturgy & Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon

revjenniegordon@gmail.com



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.