



## ***Easter 5 - Sunday May 3rd, 2026*** ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

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

Come, people of God.  
Here we build on the foundation,  
our cornerstone.

Come, people of God.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

*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 - Yours be the glory TIS 380**

OR: God has spoken to his people Alleluia TIS 636

### **Prayer**



God of all things good,  
we give thanks for the many blessings  
and promises you offer.

For a place of belonging in you,  
a place to call home,  
a place founded beyond time and place  
beyond the decay and destruction of the world..

You have shown us  
the way,  
the truth,  
and the life.

You encourage us:  
'Do not let your hearts be troubled.'

And yet we struggle with troubles.  
Our world is troubled.  
We are troubled.  
Even in faith we are often troubled...

Forgive our failure to see and remember,  
to hear and to believe  
that you are our cornerstone,  
our rock,  
our life.

So we lay our troubles down,  
or at least we try to,  
even if just for a moment  
to let them loose...

... to find our footing again on the rock,  
the cornerstone, the place we call home...

For Christ  
who shows us the way to the Father  
we say, **thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **Passing the peace**

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

### **Listening**

Read: 1 Peter 2:2-10 &  
John 14:1-14

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

### **Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton**

Travelling by overnight ferry from Shetland, north of Scotland, I experienced a wild storm. I was glad to be on a sturdy sea worthy vessel with modern navigational equipment, so that even though the voyage was rough, we safely reached our destination.

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This was not a given in the past. Many ships were wrecked and many thousands of lives were lost at sea.

Just south of our ferry destination of Aberdeen is Bell Rock, which was the site of an average of six shipwrecks per winter before a lighthouse was erected. Bell Rock was submerged for 20 hours per day, which was why it claimed so many victims. The renowned Stevenson family erected the Bell House lighthouse between 1807 and 1810. Several lives were lost during the immensely difficult construction, but at the end, the world's tallest lighthouse was completed and it stands and shines its light to this very day. Since its construction, only two ships have been lost on Bell Rock, but countless lives have been saved by that light guiding ships to safety.

I recalled that lighthouse, shining its guiding light into the darkness of the North Sea, this week, as I read those words of Jesus when he says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

This verse comes from a part of John's Gospel called Jesus' "Farewell address".

Jesus knew that his death was close at hand. He had washed his disciples' feet and shared a last supper with them. He was now trying to prepare his disciples and close followers for the time when he will no longer be with them in the flesh. But they are troubled and afraid. They struggle to comprehend what he means, and to understand the necessity for his death. They are also afraid for themselves.

Jesus speaks directly to their troubled hearts promising an ongoing relationship and a heavenly home. He says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you

to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)

Jesus is assuring them that their relationship with him will not end with his death. Jesus is going ahead to prepare for them a place in his Father's house, where they will remain united with him forever. He is reminding them that their and our true home is with God, and Jesus who comes from the very heart, bosom, and presence of God, is going ahead to prepare for them a place in God's heart and presence. This is not a place in the conventional understanding, but rather a relationship, a relationship in the very heart of God, made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is for all of eternity. As St Augustine said in his Confessions, "Lord you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

The resurrection was not something that the disciples were able to anticipate, for nothing like it has ever happened before. And they do not yet understand that Jesus is the Son of God, who will return to God's presence when his time on earth is over.

To them he is a dear friend and teacher. They are yet to realise that he is very much more. Jesus is trying to teach them about himself, but also about God. For the God they have learnt about in the Jewish faith is the God of the Law and commandments. The God who demanded strict obedience to the Law, and the making of sacrifices to placate the divine wrath as they continually failed the impossible demand to be fully obedient.

But Jesus, God's own Son, who is close to the Father's heart, is pointing them, and us, to the God who wants to be in relationship with his people. Who wants us to be God's children.

For the incarnation (God becoming human) changes humanity's relationship with God, and God's relationship with humanity. The tangible presence of God's love for the world is present in Jesus, and this love is about to be spilled out in Jesus' life blood on the cross. A love so deep that



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it holds nothing back from what is needed to restore the relationship between God and humanity.

The disciples could not understand this, despite Jesus' best efforts to teach them, but by the time John writes down these words in his Gospel, the fledgling church is beginning to comprehend the power and love spelt out in these words.

To the early church, and to all Christians since, it is a joyful, world-changing theological affirmation. God is now longer distant and unable to be reached or comprehended or known. For God has been made known to them, and us, in Jesus Christ who shows them, and us, the way to God. The way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ who shines like a beacon of hope and liberation and salvation. Shining across the darkness of the world. A light that is never hidden nor unavailable, but which is present in the darkest nights that the sinfulness and brokenness of the world can bring.

As God's people, we are called to trust in God and to seek to shine with the light of Christ into the darkness of the world. We are called to be Christ's true servants and imitators, and to be like the beacon on the Bell Rock lighthouse that gave guidance on the right way to go.

#### **Singing - Christ is the world's light TiS 246**

OR: I want to walk as a child of the light TiS 643  
OR: We are marching in the light of God TiS 666

#### **Offering**

Bless all that is offered, living Christ. May these offerings lead us and others into communion with the author of life. Amen.

#### **Notices**

**May 9** is World Fair Trade Day.

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

*Editor's note: The following 'stations' prayer is offered to us by Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson. If you wish to offer a more traditional prayer rather than stations as described, simply lead the prayers and omit the italicised stations preparation notes.*

**Station 1**, *Print out the following prayer and make a little stone pile next to it.*

#### **Stone upon stone we build, living stones**

Stones remind us of rubble and places of war and conflict. It hurts and we want to turn away from images of people destroyed beneath the rubble of their buildings. Especially the little ones, we are reminded of them by the small things left behind, Legos, a piglet toy, the details and mementos of daily living. But we cannot turn away, we can only hold in prayer and do are very best to change systems by simply loving fiercely.

**Station 2**, *Print out the following prayer and trace out small heart shapes for people to cut and place in a bowl.*

**Stone upon stone we build, living stones.** Build us into a spiritual home.

Rejected, 'unacceptable' and alone, yet chosen and precious on God's sight. This image of Jesus is reflected in so many around us in our community today. Build us into a home that includes all. Chosen and precious, may we not forget how loved we truly are.

**Station 3**, *Print out the following prayer and put a blanket and pillow next to it..*

**Stone upon stone we build, living stones.** In the awareness that there are sick ones among us, in our families, our communities and our congregations. As we build, we bring our vulnerable ones to you. May the love and concern we have for these dear ones be our mortar which holds us all together.



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Station 4, Print out the following prayer and place a world map and a newspaper next to it.

**Stone upon stone we build, living stones.** We bring to you our nation. It is easy to feel despair. We bring our leaders to you and ask that they show grace and mercy to each other and to their constituents, and may it flow back to them. May they make policy which cares for the least and the lost and holds the privileged accountable to care for others. We pray about those big decisions we make as a nation, for people deliberating about these decisions, for the listening and truth telling and covenant holding, and care and support for those who are disadvantaged by disability or economically.

Station 5, Print out the following prayer and place a pile of legos near it. You could build the foundations of a house and let people add blocks.

**Stone upon stone we build, living stones.** May we build these stones to create structures which last, which shelter people and give comfort and rest. As we build our spiritual home, we think of those who have no literal home. Those literally homeless or at risk of it, those whose homes do not provide what they need to flourish and those who have lost their homes due to natural disasters, climate change, war and conflict or changing politics. We are in a housing pinch and many are suffering, many face the injustice of not being able to afford a home.

Station 6, Print out the following prayer and put some town brochures or something else that represents your community. Perhaps the hearts from station 2 could be carried to a bowl at this station.

**Stone upon stone we build, living stones.** We hear your call to us to be a home in our own neighbourhoods. May our churches truly reflect your character, your welcome, your shelter, your open hospitality and acceptance. We are your beloved, your chosen, your precious ones. May we have generous hearts and may we show

kindness toward all those with whom we share our lives.

Cornerstone, central rock that gives us our structure and our form, our times are in your hands. May we take the risk to taste and see that you are good.

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 - God gives us a future TIS 687

OR: Holy Spirit go before us TIS 420 (alt tune: AUSTRIA)  
OR: Christ is alive Let Christians sing TIS 387

### Blessing

Go to bless all you meet  
with the astonishing love of God.

As you have known God  
because of what Christ has done,  
be love and grace  
in a world too often short of these things.

Go and be encouraged in these things  
by the very blessing of God upon you:

In the name of the  
Father,  
Son, and  
Holy Spirit.  
May it be so, Amen.

Reflection: Rev. Sandra Houghton  
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Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga



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