



Easter 7 - Sunday May 17th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Psalm 68 (selected verses NRSV)

But let the righteous be joyful;
let them exult before God;
let them be jubilant with joy.

**Sing to God; sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides upon the
clouds—his name is the Lord—be exultant
before him.**

Father of orphans and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.

**God gives the desolate a home to live in;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,
but the rebellious live in a parched land.**

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
sing praises to the Lord,

**O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens;
listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.**

Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel
and whose power is in the skies.

**Awesome is God in his sanctuary,
the God of Israel;
he gives power and strength to his people.**

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 - All creatures of our God TIS 100

OR: Community of Christ TIS 473

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



Prayer

O God of all life, in all its diversity. We have seen over millenia your will being worked out in so many places and spaces. Stories abound of people unknown to us who have been caught by your spirit to transform themselves and their communities into places of hope and liberation – all inspired by you.

You provide us with what we need to be part of your Kingdom on earth. We know that we can only do things when inspired by you. Let us listen for the voice of reconciliation and renewal in the world today and rejoice that we are blessed to be part of the Body of Christ.

We confess that we do not always seek to be your faithful people, O God. Caught instead in the confusion of competing denominations, competing theology, preferences for those who pander to our own sense of security. We confess that when we do this, we marginalise those who have different voices and different expectations.

Lord let us work with a spirit of truth that transcends all our differences. That reveals to us again the basics of our faith, the love that infuses and motivates the Church at its best. Let us celebrate the importance of each person's journey of faith, knowing that your recreative power will carry us through our difference. May we be blessed with your unifying Spirit. Amen

Hear then again, the story of liberation for all of us. In Christ and 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.

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.



Easter 7 - Sunday May 17th, 2026 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

Listening

Read: Acts 1:6-14 &
John 17:1-11

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga

If you were to stop and think about it, what
would be the most important thing in your life?

Is it family, or a special relationship?
Is it personal achievement?
Is it your work?
Is it commitment to a cause or working towards a
goal?

Perhaps there are many important things. As I get
older, things once important seem less so. I can
no longer push my body to run or play sport like it
once did, for example. These days I'm more
focussed on recognising each day as precious. It
means that I see things like the wattles are
preparing to flower again when the winter is at its
deepest. I wouldn't have noticed that when I was
younger.

I know people who demand to be known for their
achievements, and others who shy away from
fanfare. I know folk who avoid the elephant in the
room – that our days are limited. I've been in
many pastoral situations where death cannot be
seen because it is so feared. I remember the man
in a hospice who was dying but couldn't let go.
He was constantly on the phone sorting out
business deals despite his family wanting some of
his time. His noise disturbed many others who
knew their days were coming to an end.

I'm also aware that many who have 'stared death
in the eye' seem to have a vigour that others lack.
I was chatting with someone recently who told
the story of running her first half-marathon.
Someone near her collapsed and would have died
without immediate intervention. As a nurse, she

offered emergency first aid. This was such a
significant life moment that now she goes back to
do the same run as an annual pilgrimage. As part
of the trip, she meets up with the one who nearly
died, and they recall the precious nature of life.

In the gospel reading for today, Jesus offers
eternal life. When you hear such an offer, what
do you imagine? Is it something to do with what
happens after we die? An afterlife where we will
be reunited with those we love, where we will
fully understand God and life, where death will be
defeated once and for all, and evil banished
forever?

I'm sure we all have many images and ideas of
what eternal life might be like. As part of the
mystery of Christian faith, we have some clues -
but really know precious little about it. But I
wonder if there is wisdom or insight to be gained
from those who have near-death experiences? If
a confrontation with death brings many to
greater life, this may be a way of understanding
what Jesus is offering with eternal life.

Listen to what he says in John 17. Here he is
praying to the Father within earshot of the
disciples. Jesus is preparing the disciples for a
time when his mortal days end. He is inviting
them into something eternal beyond him.

As Jesus prays to God (who he calls Father), he
describes the nature of eternal life. 'That they
may know you, the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom you have sent.' - in other words, for
you and me to know God and Jesus Christ. Eternal
life comes in knowing God, and knowing God
comes in knowing Christ.

If we think that eternal life is what happens after
we die, we seem to be missing the point. Life,
that is, our mortal life, the days we have, are
about being immersed in the love and life of God.
Knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ sent
by God is what makes life eternal, or perhaps is
the most important thing in life.

Jesus prays that we might know God through him.
The gospels offer us an enduring insight and



Easter 7 - Sunday May 17th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

revelation into God and God's love through the life and witness of Jesus. Know Jesus, know God. The Scriptures more broadly are a treasure trove of God's ways in relation to the created order and the people of God.

I believe I come to know God in many ways including in love, in relationships, in community, in creation. As each day is precious, these are the things I pay special attention to.

Singing - Come thou long expected Jesus TiS 272

OR: The Church's One Foundation TiS 457

OR: What a Friend we have in Jesus TiS 590

Offering

God of glory, bless all that we offer. May all of who we are move towards your glory and live in the life you offer, towards the renewal of all. Amen.

Notices

Next Sunday is **Pentecost** Sunday.
Tomorrow, National **Volunteer Week** begins.

Prayers for World & Community

Gracious Lord, we pray that your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

Around us we see those whose lives have been restricted by poverty, oppression, need, caught in cycles of conflict and violence where there appears to be no way out.

Lord let your vision come so that we may find our way as your church to liberate in your name.

Gracious Lord, we pray that your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

Around us we see people whose lives are full of grief and loss. Broken relationships, broken hearts, illness, bad news and despair.

Lord let your vision come so that we may find our way as your church to liberate in your name.

Gracious Lord, we pray that your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

Around us we see the people of the world being caught in wars and climate disasters, so that their future is uncertain and they will live with the trauma of loss and devastation for generations.

Lord let your vision come so that we may find our way as your church to liberate in your name.

Gracious Lord, we pray that your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

Around us we see the people in our churches and in our civil society, who are being asked to lead through times of uncertainty and dislocation. Where they are confused, Lord, let there be clarity. Where they are cruel Lord, let there be compassion. Where they are self righteous, let there be wisdom.

Lord let your vision come so that we may find our way as your church to liberate in your name.

Lord let us be the people who are not afraid to take on the name of Christ, but understand this means we must be newly and deeply committed to your will through the unity of your church.

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.



Easter 7 - Sunday May 17th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Singing - Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613

OR: Filled with the Spirit's power TiS 411

OR: God of mercy, God of Grace TiS 452

Blessing

We are called to be and to do. Let us take our renewed commitment to each other today, into the world so that people may know us and see us as the disciples of the one who calls us into unity.

In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer. Amen.

Reflection: Rev. Arnie Wierenga

Liturgy: Rev. Heather den Houting

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga

