



Sunday June 21st, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Today we celebrate the 49th anniversary
of the Uniting Church in Australia.
Happy Birthday church!

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Today is a day for celebrations.
A day to acknowledge
all the gifts we have in Christ.
Today we fall into our knees in thankfulness
as we praise the name of the one
who shows us the way.
Come let us worship God.

We light the candle,
to acknowledge God in all God's abundance,
the offering of the gift of Jesus into our history
and the Holy Spirit our Guide and Advocate.

Opening Prayer

(Source: Roddy Hamilton, abbotsford.org.au)

One Day A Church

One day we will have a church
that dreams ambitiously
loves with purpose
and dances with danger
a church that sends up balloons as often as
prayers
and celebrates joy as much as tradition
a church that believes mountains can be moved
and relishes the challenge of moving them
a church that lives the politics of the kingdom
and the faith that brings the kingdom into politics
a church that discovers the beauty of humanity
and celebrates their diversity and imagination
a church that find resurrection in sunrises
and trusts the promise that colours sunsets
a church that learns to live before it learns to
worship
and discovers worship is life and life is worship
a church that loves to bless the stranger
because she recognises God in their eyes
a church that has the sense to leave behind
those things that do not bring it life

and a church with courage to step in faith
towards those things held by God
and stirred into life by the belief that
we are God's companions on this way. **Amen.**

Acknowledging



(Source: UAICC Acknowledgement IV)

This is God's Land. Many have gone before who
have honoured God by caring for this Land, in the
ways they have lived and the stories they have
shared. We give thanks for the *(name here the
First People's of your region)*, who have held as
sacred the duty of protecting the Land and living
in harmony with it.

May God honour and bless them, now and to
eternity.

Singing - The Church's One Foundation TiS **457**

OR: Holy, holy, holy, TiS 132



Prayer

(Source: A Litany for the Church, Uniting in Worship 1)

O God, you built your Church on the rock of human
faith and trust; we praise you for Jesus Christ, the
foundation and cornerstone of all we believe.

We praise you, O God.

For the great people of history, whose love for
your Church made it a willing instrument
of your care and mercy; who placed you first in
their lives and held to their faith in good times and
in bad:

We praise you, O God.

Save us, O God, from living in the past, and from
resting on the work and witness of others. Let us
catch a new vision and make a new beginning, that



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we may faithfully serve you in this congregation
and in our world today.

Lord, have mercy.

Keep us, O God, from lack of reverence for truth
and beauty; from artificial life and worship, from
all that is hollow or insincere.

Lord, have mercy.

Spare us, O God, from pride that excludes others
from the shelter of your love; from the selfishness
that uses your Church as a means of getting social
position or personal glory.

Lord, have mercy.

Save us, O God, from sin and worldliness which
deny the saving power of the gospel; from
shallowness of faith and hypocrisy of life which
cause others to remain empty or be disillusioned.

Lord, have mercy.

That we may accept the responsibility of our
freedom, the burden of our privilege; and so
conduct ourselves that we may bring others to
faith in Christ;

O God, be our strength.

That we may not be content with a second hand
faith, worshipping words rather than the Word;
but that we may find joy in study of the Bible, and
growth in exposure to new insights;

O God, be our strength.

That we may be actively engaged in the life of our
congregation, of our presbytery and community,
sharing in Christ's mission to the world,
and always seeking the common good;

O God, be our strength.

That we may find in your Church a prod to our
imaginings, a shock to our laziness, and a source
of power to do your will;

O God, be our strength.

O God, you gave us minds to know you, hearts to
love you and voices to sing your praise.

**Send the Holy Spirit among us,
that, confronted by your truth,**

**we may worship and serve you as we should;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Assurance of new life

On this day, as on every day, God stands, arms
wide open to embrace us; heart wide open to
forgive us. The Spirit is poured out upon us,
restoring the relationship between human and
divine; between heaven and earth.

We hear this good news and say:

Thanks be to God

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Genesis 21:8-21,
Matthew 10.24-39

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Karen Eller

It's quite difficult to digest, the patriarch
and matriarch of Hebrew foundational mythology,
Abraham and Sarah, narrated as turving their
family members into the wilderness and likely
death. For what? Land, water, cattle, goats, and a
woman's petty jealousy. Their murderous intent is
thwarted however. Hagar, distraught at the
impending death of Ishmael, encounters God in
the wilderness. And God shows Hagar where to
find water and the means of survival. More than
survival, we are witness to the tale of the
foundation of the step-brother Arab nation.

For any of us who have been rejected by
family, or expelled from community, or found
ourselves in a marginal place, the Genesis
narrative offers hope. The God of Hebrew
Scripture sees Hagar and Ishmael and has
compassion for them. Wherever we find ourselves
located, we can remember that God sees us and
will help us out of our predicament.



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Today the family of Ishmael find themselves in a marginal existence in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria - under deathly bombardment for the age-old temptations of land, water, stock and petty jealousy. Despite the violence and displacement, Gazans still have faith in God. It is their faith in humanity that has been fouled.

We might wonder where God is when hospitals are being bombed, or food relief trucks are shot at or journalists murdered. Or we might despair about the heartless direction humanity appears to be taking. Our Gospel reading can help us out here. It seems we have a collection of sayings - sayings that the community has remembered as pointers toward life in God's loving embrace.

I expect Jesus understood God's wisdom permeating traditional maxims for living together in community. "A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master." That is to say don't go getting above yourself. In Australian Aboriginal culture, no one is more important than anyone else. Aboriginal governance has ways of dealing with people who disrupt community well-being by considering themselves more important than others. It is the responsibility of the whole community to deal with the miscreant.

"I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." There is a lived experience here that when God's justice is at stake there will be disruption and division, even amongst families. Jesus is remembered preaching mercy for people who are despised, and for including the most unlikely people into his intimate circles. For people rejected by church and society, there is assurance here that God wants to make things right, even if it means upsetting the status quo.

For many months protestors have gathered in Melbourne demanding justice for Palestinians. It has been costly, not only for their time, but for the risk of arrest and assault, and perhaps their standing in Australian society. But as Israel escalates attacks on West Bank properties,

the global glare on the atrocities intensifies. It seems the Israeli leadership and military have forgotten the God of compassion who befriends those who are cast out and lifts up the downtrodden.

Matthew remembers Jesus exhorting his followers to step into life, even if their actions stir up controversy. We can trust that God goes ahead of us, even when we find ourselves in hostile country and hostile company. May God's grace and dignity remain with us as we live with integrity to Gospel values.

Affirmation of Faith – We are a Pilgrim People
UIW 2

**We believe in God,
sovereign in grace and love,
maker of all things.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word of God,
the firstborn of a new creation.**

**We believe in God's eternal Spirit,
pledge and foretaste of the future,
given that we may not lose the way,
who has endowed us with a diversity of gifts.**

**We are a pilgrim people
on the way to the promised goal.
On this way, we are called to live and work
within the faith and unity
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
In this unity, we offer our worship, witness and
service
and receive one another in love and joy.**

**We are being led to the free obedience
of the children of God,
and so we look with yearning and hope
to the final reconciliation of humanity with God,
and the renewal of all creation.
Alleluia. Amen.**



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Singing - By gracious powers TiS 617

*Try the tune LONDONDERRY AIR (Oh, Danny Boy) -
and join the verses together: 1&2, 3&4.*

OR: What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590

Offering - from Uniting in Worship 2

We bring our gifts before you, in gratitude and hope. In dedicating these gifts we dedicate ourselves again to be your people in the world, in the strength and enabling power of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

June 22 is the UCA's 49th anniversary.
June 26 is the International Day in Support of
Victims of Torture.

Prayers for World & Community

God of all our days – God of the past and God of the future, we know that you are well before us in the world. That our role is to catch up to you already on the road, caring for the poor, the lonely, the despairing, the confused, those in grief. We bring our prayers for others to you now.

We pray for your church in the world. For those who have been before us, those we do not know who are praying to you now, and those who will come after us whom we will never meet. May your Spirit of hope and life infuse us with the knowledge that in Christ, the best is yet to come.

We pray for people who live and work for the goodness of this world; who care for people and the planet, who look always for the opportunities to make our communities and ways of living full of wholeness and wellbeing. May your Spirit of connection and community infuse us with the knowledge that in you we are one.

We pray for our communities and families. We think particularly of those who are in times of transition or grief. Where the world is full of

longing and regret. Where despair may be overcoming them. May your Spirit of compassion and grace infuse us with the helping hand and prayerful companionship that is needed from us at this time.

God of all our days – we honour the past and anticipate the future as your church. May we be caught up in hope and love. May we surrender ourselves to your will for us Lord. May we be part of the renewal of your church. These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, 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.

Singing - God gives us a future TiS 687

OR: Make me a channel of your peace TiS 607

Blessing

We celebrate our gathering here together
Gracious God,
reminded again of your plans for us.
Go forth into the world in peace;
We are the church;
We are the hands and heart of your mission;
You are the author of our future.
**In the name of the Creator, Redeemer and
Sustainer, Amen.**

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