



Pentecost 8 - Sunday July 19th, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Let us worship and remember God's faithfulness.

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 - Love divine TiS 217

OR: You are before me, Lord, you are behind TiS 87

OR: Here in this place new light is streaming TiS 474

Prayer



Loving God,
help us to settle in the quietness,
to remember your greatness and your concern
for us, in our smallness, our insignificant lives and
worries. Thank you for your love.

Let us rest in the beauty of creation, the crispness
of the morning and the bulbs that flower. The
bare branches of the trees, stark against the sky.

We bring our lives, our achievements and failures,
our procrastination and worries about little
things. Forgive us for focusing on ourselves
instead of others.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me
and know my thoughts.*

*See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

(Psalm 139:23, 24)

And in this place, knowing your closeness,
loving God, we seek forgiveness.

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: Genesis 28:10-19a &
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown

It's a mixed bag, be patient

In this difficult parable Jesus brings us back to
earth, back to the everyday experiences of life
and some wider meaning it might hold for us.

A light-hearted story and then a little background.

The minister of a large church was taking a
Confirmation service. From the back of the
church a large, two headed, fire-breathing
monster slithered hideously down the aisle and
joined the group to be confirmed.



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The minister moved along the candidates, at the monster placed hands on its heads, said a couple of words. The monster moved down the aisle and out the door.

The minister went back to the lectern, heaved a sigh of relief, "Well, I must tell you, I just confirmed my worst nightmare!"

An enemy planting weeds in a crop is a farmer's worst nightmare! There are enough hazards in farming without nightmares becoming realities.

There wasn't much forest in Palestine, even in Jesus' time, so even weeds had their use – to be dried, bundled and used as fuel. Listeners would have been familiar with family feuding that wasn't uncommon; enemies planting weeds was not past imagination. The wheat and the weeds is another of those real world BUT's. Yes, there will be a harvest, but. But on the way there are weeds to deal with. Our experience is mixed, we can get frustrated by the way the world is, can't we?

Imagine the questions Jesus might have been answering when he told this story. Were they asking, "Jesus, why is there evil in the world? Why do good and bad often look so much the same?" Or "Jesus, can't we do something about the bad people in the world, can't we root them out?" Or maybe asking each other, "why does Jesus mix with sinners?"

Serious questions about life and meaning, all from one little story about everyday experience. Life is a mixed business, isn't it? There are no fields or gardens that don't grow weeds, there are no lives that don't at some point have their share of pain and trouble. The good coexists with the bad, sometimes so closely that we can't separate the two.

There have been times in the history of the church when Christians were so confident that they knew right from wrong, good people from bad that they thought they would be better off without the polluting elements.

In the 13th century, European church and state combined to hunt out heretics; the evil people. The ironically named Pope Innocent 4th allowed the use of torture to help the guilty confess. Penalties of the Inquisition came to include even death. The Spanish branch by the way, was only wound up in 1834. Luther used today's parable to preach against the use of force by the church. He affirmed that only God can separate false from true believers:

"From this observe what raging and furious people we have been these many years, in that we desired to force others to believe; the Turks with the sword, heretics with fire, the Jews with death, and thus outroot the weeds by our own power, as if we were the ones who could reign over hearts and spirits, and make them pious and right, which God's Word alone must do."

Jesus' wisdom about who can judge good folk from the bad is - you can't. Jesus says, "You would uproot the wheat along with the weeds if you try to pull the weeds". Is Jesus telling us that there is nothing we can do against the realities of evil? I don't think so, but the clear warning is against judging a person or a group and calling them unacceptable, trying to get rid of them.

We may think that we are experts in the garden and never pull out a good plant and our selective herbicides may leave all the wheat to grow clear of the weeds. The clear message of Jesus is, don't you try to pull out the bad from the good people, for you will do more damage than good, whatever your intentions are. The weeds though, are mostly inside us, all of us are a mixed bag of good and bad. Ghandi said; "The only evil in the world is in our hearts. That's where the battle should be fought." We ought to pray that we never fall for the trap of thinking we know how to judge on God's behalf. It may not be as dramatic today as the Inquisition, but don't we still make judgments, don't we still subtly exclude? As well as calling for self-examination, this story shows God's wonderful patience and God's amazing generous grace.



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And in God's grace, may none of the seeds of our words or actions be weeds to others, but reflect the generosity of this patient farmer. Amen.

Singing - The great love of God TiS 164

OR: When trouble strikes TiS 184

OR: Sent forth by God's blessing TiS 531

OR: Father in heaven TiS 465

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

July 26 is *National Tree Day*.

Prayers for World & Community

Loving God, we come to you with our prayers, we come as your people, trusting that you are in control of our world, that you hear our prayers and understand our needs.

We pray for our world, so focussed on power and wealth. We long for the presence of people who follow you and understand the need to seek the common good and to care for the world and all living things.

Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for our country, for all the people who live here. May we be open to the ideas and cultures of others listening and accepting and seeking places where we agree not disagree. Help us to share and care for our resources, so everyone may find a home and their basic needs.

Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for our church and communities. May we and our leaders respond appropriately in crises, give what and where we can. Help us to show your example in what we do.

Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for those sick and in care, grieving, sad and lacking hope and all those who care for them.

Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for ourselves, the needs deep in our hearts that we dare not say aloud.

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 - Community of Christ TiS 473

OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer TiS 569

OR: Loving Spirit TiS 417

Blessing

Go out into a world
Where God is present,
Remember that you cannot hide
And it is a loving God who seeks you.

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

Amen



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Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown
Warragul

Liturgy: Rev. Moira Dodsworth
Drouin, Trafalgar Parish, Yallourn

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
revarniewie@gmail.com

