



Pentecost 9 - Sunday July 26th, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

We come together today to participate in the flourishing of the Kingdom of God.

We do not know what might be planted in our community of faith, but we do know that God will be with us in the future, as God has been with us in the past.

We gather in hope that the seeds of your spirit develop and grow in us, inspiring those who will come after us to understand your faithfulness.

We gather to remind ourselves of the caring support and love which begins and ends with you.

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 - Thine be the glory risen conquering Son TiS 380

OR: God has Spoken to His People TiS 636

Prayer



O God of all our days, we are thankful for the process of growth that has led us on this path. We know that in all our searching and all our wisdom, you call us into a world more generous, more insightful and with larger visions of your love across the world. We thank you that we are given the opportunity to follow the beacon of your love and your will for us as your children. But Lord, we recognise our own wilfulness, our inability to see the depth and extent of your vision for creation. Though we have all the signs and all the guidance that we need, we still fall into futures where we believe we fully understand the Kingdom of God. We ignore those that trouble us, fight with those who disagree with us, retreat to the seclusion of certainty and unwillingness to change. Gracious God, we darken our sight so that we can only be distracted by those things that make sense to us. Holy Spirit we pray that you will intercede with groanings too deep for words. In your mercy Lord, we confess our sins and remember again your faithfulness to us. Amen.

Remember that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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.



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Listening

Read: Romans 8:26-39 &
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga

The kingdom of heaven is like ..., says Jesus. And half a dozen examples later, he says something like, you've got this, right? And the resounding response is yes!

But yes, to what, I wonder? Yes, to a full and deep understanding of the kingdom of heaven? Yes, to a new insight that helps understanding? Yes, because we desperately want to understand? Yes, because we think that's the right answer to give?

I want to say yes to Jesus, but nagging questions remain.

I've been reading a book about my ancestors in faith, the Huguenots. Staunch Protestants who followed the teachings of John Calvin, they were forced to flee France in the late 17th century and find refuge in places like Holland. A recurring theme arising is the strong conviction to speak up against the injustices of the world. I recognise this is part of my inheritance, for I rile against perceived injustices.

Which is why I find at least some of this passage difficult. Jesus offers, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." But Jesus, what of the person who owned the field before? Is that person taken advantage of? Wouldn't the just thing to have been honest about the proposed purchase? 'I'd like to buy your field, good owner, because I've just discovered it has some hidden treasure!'

I don't believe the kingdom of heaven encourages us to take someone else's treasure, so what now?

I recently heard about the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) currently being built. A telescope of 1000 Christmas-tree-like antennas in Western Australia has just been able to observe a ground-breaking amount of detail. This is just a test run with a total of 131,000 antennas to be built and synchronised together to be able to observe the cosmos in ways never done before. One antenna offers little towards understanding. 1000 antennas provide a glimpse of understanding. 131,000 antennas promise to show more than 600,000 galaxies.

Jesus doesn't just offer one idea of the kingdom of heaven. Rather there are many because it seems no one parable offers enough insight. To analyse the treasure story as being unjust misses the commitment required to go and sell everything to buy the field containing the treasure.

Bit by bit, Jesus offers glimpses that become a picture. A merchant finds a glorious pearl and commits everything to buy it. The kingdom of heaven encompasses everything, even the good and the bad. The kingdom grows from something insignificant to encompass all.

Have you understood all this?

Well, perhaps not so much. It seems like another 130,000 parables might be needed. But I understand from the experience of the Huguenots that they were totally committed to living out their faith as if their eternal souls depended on it. For that is what they believed, that their eternal souls depended on how they conducted themselves in their mortal life. They lived as though the treasure in the field was more important than any earthly hardship. They could not compromise on faith or how they lived for the sake of convenience. Their faith was everything. It was as though they had found one pearl of great value and sold everything else in life to attain that pearl.



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That is something I can learn from, a way to deepen my understanding of what Jesus speaks of. I also believe that we need more than a few short examples from Jesus to really understand this whole faith journey. Like the many antennas looking to the sky, each moment and insight from Jesus' life is like an antenna building up a picture for us. Each story of faith from the Scriptures, each struggle for understanding, each encounter we have with others in faith (and without faith), each mysterious encounter with the glory of God builds up a picture that a few parables cannot do alone.

The kingdom of heaven is like a journey of life, lived with eyes towards what God is doing with us, through ancient stories of faith, through encounters in everyday life, through stopping to gaze at the stars and wonder what 600,000 galaxies might mean.

The kingdom of heaven is like being close to Jesus on the journey and encountering the one he points to on the way.

Singing - Christ be my leader by night as by day TiS 624

OR: Breathe on me Breath of God TiS 407

OR: Guide me O thou great Redeemer TiS 569

Offering

We offer these gifts in thankfulness for the lives of those around us. May we know the joy that comes from being part of your community gracious God, in all we have and all we do. **Amen.**

Notices

July 30 is *World Day Against Trafficking in Persons*.

Prayers for World & Community

Our life is richer because we acknowledge your mystery O God. In the treasures we find in the everyday moments of life. We bring to you now, those names. Places and times where we need your support and encouragement.

We pray for the state of our world. Lord, we think about the places we know where there is trouble, war, famine and natural disaster. We are so tuned into those things that are going on that we can feel overwhelmed. Lord, we pray for each other to be sustained in hope and to do what we can where we can. We pray for all those directly affected, and for those who are working and caring for the injured and dispossessed. Lord, we pray for peace in our time.

We pray for our country, for Australia. As we grapple with what sort of nation we want to be, let our voices be filled with your discerning wisdom. Let us do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you.

We pray for our communities, for those we know and those who are unknown to us. Let your life and wisdom bless those in this region and let us as a church support those when and where we can. For those in our schools, our hospitals, in emergency and police services. Lord, where we can let us be beacons of your love and light. We pray for those close to us. Who we name in our hearts today. Lord, you know us all so well, we long that you are able to be known today in a glimmer of love and light. For those with illness and injury, grief and despair. May they find blessing in the knowledge of your love.

And we pray for our church. We surrender all to you God, knowing that we are your body and try to be faithful to you. For those in ministry and leadership positions, may you guide them and our community to recognise your Kingdom is at hand.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:



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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.

Reflection: Rev. Arnie Wierenga

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Singing - Great is Your Faithfulness TiS 154

OR: The great love of God TiS 164
OR: God when human bonds are broken TiS 683
OR: Amazing grace how sweet the sound TiS 129

Blessing

We go out today knowing that we are vehicles for
your redeeming love. Let us be part of the great
reconciliation through Christ, as you make all
things new.

Go forth now to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ Amen.