



Sunday August 2nd, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Singing - As the Deer Pants TiS 703

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

We are a people called into community together.

with Christ at the centre.

God is in the midst
of our struggles for meaning.

**We come, prepared to wrestle,
trusting in God's abundant grace.**

The Spirit knows our hunger.

We come to be nourished in God's love.

Let us worship the Eternal One.

We offer our trust and humility.

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 respect 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 - Amazing Grace, TiS 129

OR: Let all creation dance TiS 187

OR: Come, O God of all the earth TiS 181



Prayer

Holy Mystery,

You meet us in the darkness

and invite us to struggle and prevail.

You meet your children in the place of scarcity
and share with us your abundant grace.

You meet us in our uncertainty

and encourage us to share your compassion.

May we be ever thankful. *(pause)*

Holy Wisdom,

You invite us into closer relationship with you,

You invite your beloved to share our resources
that all might be fed.

You invite us into communities of grace
and generosity.

May we be ever thankful. *(pause)*

Ancient of Days,

You claim us as your own.

You equip us for lives

which serve your purposes in the world

You love us into word and deed.

May we be ever thankful. *(pause)*

Trusting in your goodness and mercy,
we give voice to our shortcomings.

When we are distracted or disillusioned,
forgive us. *(pause)*

When our trust in you falters, forgive us.
(pause)

When we hoard your gifts for ourselves,
forgive us.
(pause)

God of the hungry and the least,
set us free



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from all that presses our selfish buttons,
release us from any shame or guilt
and equip us once more
to live life fully and faithfully.
In the name of the Compassionate One
who sets the prisoner free.
Amen.

Words of Grace (UiW2)

This is best of all:
when we are empty,
God fills us
when we are disheartened,
God is compassionate
when we are wounded,
God brings healing
when we confess our sin,
God forgives.

In Christ, through Christ
and because of Christ
we are reconciled to God.
Thanks be to God.
You refill the cup of life.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Genesis 32:22-31
Matthew 14:13-21

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

Reflecting -

This reading from Genesis is such an important origin story for the Hebrew people. We know that Jacob at Jabbok is part of the series of stories that narrates the faithfulness of God to God's people. From Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah we

have the convoluted story of Jacob, his 2 wives and concubines, on the run from Esau and Laban. Both family members who have been subject to his trickster antics.

We have travelled with him as he gets himself in all sorts of convoluted schemes to protect himself, his family and his assets. Whether or not you think his behaviour is justified, make no mistake, the point of this story is that Jacob at this time in his life is caught between a rock and a hard place. This is the situation he is in as a result of him being "the smartest one in the room." He cannot go back, and he has to return to his brother and meet the consequences of his behaviour as a younger man. How is he going to get himself out of this pickle?

So the story of his encounter with Jabbok is quite literally a turning point for him.

The phrasing for this moment sounds almost mundane, after all the plotting and the planning, all of the clever ways he tries to get himself out of trouble, something happens that transforms him and his life. "And Jacob was left alone. And there was one who wrestled with him until daybreak."

He wrestles with God. All of his cleverness and cunning do him no good. Instead, he is alone fighting until he is injured and broken. He is physically, emotionally and spiritually stopped in his tracks.

But this does not conclude the story. Jacob continues to wrestle, fighting now in desperation for the blessing of the God who comes in faithfulness; but not as expected. It is in the struggle and the brokenness that Jacob finds his way, is blessed and becomes the father of Israel.

I think that you can actually see the same story revealed in the reading from Matthew.

God comes to us, but not always as expected. Despite our best planning and schemes, our expectation of the way things should turn out and the exercise of our own cleverness, God still can overwhelm us with abundance.



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I was struck by the commentary in the “By the Well” podcast for these readings. The hosts encourage us to read the loaves and fishes passage concurrently with the previous story about the beheading of John. Here, they pointed out, is one story of power, a cruel trick, violence and an extravagant feast. All the stories that belong to a world where people believe they hold all the cards and act in the hubris of the moment. The death of John had an enormous impact, but not in the manner that they imagined.

Compare this story of the powerful, with the story of the powerless. Jesus has withdrawn in grief, but as soon as the crowds are aware, they flock to him and he has compassion for their desperation. He must also overcome the disbelief and pragmatism of the disciples. They understand the way the world works and so spend their time suggesting how to solve this logistical problem. Into all of this, Jesus brings us to the crux of the matter. The food is blessed and God transforms the moment. There is enough for everyone (much more than 5000 if you count the women and the children!) and there is even more left over.

When we stop struggling, plotting, planning and relying on our own resources, the faithful God of abundance has room to move.

Singing - Faith will not grow from words alone TiS 691

OR: Jacob struggled for a blessing. (This is a Robin Mann song and many tunes will fit if you leave out the chorus eg: NETTLETON TiS 392 -link to lyrics - [JACOB STRUGGLED FOR A BLESSING](#))

OR: Let us talents and tongues employ, TiS 537

OR: Feed us now, bread of life, TiS 538 (if you are celebrating Holy Communion).

Offering

Bless these gifts we bring,
God who multiplies the meagre
and feeds all those who hunger.
Bless us also
as we bring our time, talents, hearts and lives
again to you.
In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Notices

August 4 is the National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day.

August 6: 1945 - Destruction of Hiroshima by Atomic Bomb

Prayers for World & Community

God of the Intersections of Life,
we pray for your world,
your church and your people.
Bridges and fords, crossings and passages
challenge your people as you did Jacob.
For leaders, board members,
councils and parliaments
For directors, principals, managers and chiefs,
may they, may we,
find the courage and will to do what is just.
May your grace be embodied
and lives transformed.

God of the In-Between Spaces in Life,
we pray for your world,
your church and your people.
Beaches and wetlands,
seasonal creeks and glacial edges.
Have compassion for the people as Jesus did.
For peoples floundering
on the edges of society,
for people adjusting
to changing circumstances,
may they, may we,
find courage to do that which honours you.
May your grace be embodied
and lives transformed.

God of the Hard Places,
we pray for your world,
your church and your people.
Cliffs and rocks,
mountaintops and deep crevasses.
Softening hard hearts as you did the disciples.
For people holding grudges,
for your children struggling
in difficult relationships,

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may they, may we, find courage
to do that which honours humans
in community together.
May your grace be embodied
and lives transformed.

God of the Starving Stomachs,
we pray for your world,
your church and your people.
Puffins and whales,
orange bellied parrots and endangered frogs.
Show us how to turn things around
as Esau forgave Jacob
and welcomed him home.
For people made hungry by war,
by famine, by corruption,
for your children rendered malnourished
by poverty, by neglect, by systemic failure,
may they, may we, find the courage
to do that which honours ourselves.
May your grace be embodied
and lives transformed.

God of the Hungry Hearts,
we pray for your world,
your church and your people.
Fish, sheep, soy bean and grain.
Feed your hungry, human family
as Jesus fed the five thousand.
For anyone starved of connection,
for everyone longing for community,
for communities hungry for peace,
for First Nations peoples craving respect,
for your children thirsty for justice to reign,
for your people desperate for healing,
dwell in us and transform our lives.

In the name of the risen Christ,
the resurrection and the life,
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 - Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613

OR: Our God our help in ages past, TiS 47

OR: Christ from whom all blessings flow, TiS 440

Blessing

Words of Mission

Our God is the True God who tells us
who we truly are.

We have wrestled and prevailed.

Jesus entrusts us
to be beacons of hope in a starving world.

**We go trusting that we are equipped
for the task.**

The Spirit sends us
with hearts filled with compassion.
We go alert to the needs of others.

The Eternal Three-in-One provides
and nourishes us for the journey.
We go fully fed and with hearts overflowing.

The blessing of God the Creator,
Christ the Redeemer
and the Holy Spirit of Peace and Justice
be with you and remain with you always.
Amen.

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