



Sunday August 23rd, 2026

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

God as we gather we give you thanks
for your steadfast love and faithfulness
For the hands that hold us
and the arms that carry us
God we give thanks and praise you

For coming to us in Jesus Christ
guiding our path and walking beside us
sharing our lives and our struggles
forever near to those who cry out to you for help
God we give thanks and praise you

Near to us as breath, through the Holy Spirit
Come and inspire us today
with your vision of a different world
and a better way of life for all creation
God we give thanks and praise 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 - Love Divine, TiS 217

OR: O for a thousand tongues TiS 210

Prayer



God in whom all our beginnings and endings
are held together in love

as we begin our worship this morning,
we remember who you are
and who it is that has called us here.

We acknowledge your greatness,
and thank you for your mercy,

for the light and life you bring,

for the gospel that guides us
and shows the way of Christ,

for your presence through the Spirit
and the way you enliven our hearts
with energy and vision
to help bring about your Kindom among us.

Help us to see the world through your eyes
as we gather this morning.
Help us to hear what you would have us do
to shape your hope for our world in our lives.
Help us to see where you would have us go
and share of your love and mercy,
in Christ's name.

We confess that we often miss the mark,
that we don't always live up to the standards
of love and grace you call us to.

Forgive us, and show us
where we can make a difference
for those in need around us.
Show us where your voice is calling
over the clamour and confusion
that all too often distract us from your ways.
Show us how and where to love and serve
generously and without holding back.

Heal us from what keeps us captive
free us from what holds us back
to live fully as members of the Body of Christ.

PROCLAMATION OF FORGIVENESS

God's love and forgiveness is there for us
if we open our heart
to God's presence and care for us.
The God who came in Jesus Christ
longs to heal the brokenness of our world



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and our lives
through grace and mercy.
So let us open ourselves to God's presence
and allow that healing peace
to enter our minds and hearts.
In Jesus name, Amen.

WORD OF ASSURANCE

This is how God showed love among us:
That God sent the Son into the world
that we might live through him.
This is love: not that we loved God,
but that God loved us and sent Jesus,
to show us how to live in that love.

Thanks be to God! Hallelujah! Amen!

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Exodus 1:8-2:10
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

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

Reflecting - Rev. Heather den Houting

Our role of peace makers in the Community of Christ

The story of Moses is one that we teach in Sunday School, presumably because it is a story of peril and the rescue of a child (who then goes on to do amazing things). As adults, how often do we sit with the deep story and implications for the Israelites?

It is a sobering realisation that we still encounter stories of dispossession and genocide. These behaviours seem to be written into the history of humanity. Equally, we can find our own contemporary stories of daring rescues and events

that turned the tide of wars. Stories of active resistance, where the idea of our shared humanity overcomes the descent into tribalism and war. I can think immediately of the situations in Sudan, or Myanmar, or the Middle East. You may have your own. These are not stories we can leave behind as if they are for children only.

Instead, we can study the Moses story, the current world situation and the teachings of Paul and Matthew to help us find the clues for our behaviours as a community of Christ

Firstly, we must look at the world around us. Not in terms of good and evil, but to ask where God calls us to be. Instead of being overwhelmed by the inevitability of persecution, we should be encouraged to understand that we always must be the active resisters where we see conflict based on tribalism. We must always promote the idea of our shared humanity. We must always look to our Christian teachers, in this instance, Paul and Jesus Christ and ask the question, how are we to respond to these things around us?

Secondly, we are encouraged to recognise that we never do this alone. We are in community, with each other and in and through Christ. There is always a bigger story than ourselves as individuals. So together (like the midwives) we can choose the path that honours God, by honouring the fullness of life around us. "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."

We can use the gifts that we have in community to promote the message of peace. Paul outlines a (not exhaustive) list of gifts that can be utilised in community and reminds us that while these can be found in the community of believers, that is not the end of God's influence in the world. Address the world, he implores us, with sober judgement. Look around and find what God has available for you.

Thirdly, we do this in humility, with the deep and abiding belief that God is and has power beyond



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us. We do not have to direct or control that power, but we should at all times be conscious that we can tap into the power of God as faithful disciples. Not to injure or smite the enemy, but to be the ones who tell the story of reconciliation in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Notice here how immediately after Jesus reminds the emerging church of its power; he instructs people not to reveal his claim of prophetic identity. Why do you think this is? Perhaps because the full story of Christ in the world had not yet been revealed. Perhaps because Jesus did not want to be seen as a challenger to the empire at the time. Perhaps because the work of God can be done without fanfare and acclaim, but be like the leaven, the mustard seed, the small tremulous beginning of something that will change the world.

In both the story of Moses and the claims of Jesus, we see the beginning of new movements in history that defy expectations. The community of vulnerable and quiet resisters, who insist on promoting the grace and compassion of God, overwhelm the brutality of those who claim to be the architects of history.

It is important that we do teach these lessons to children, but they are not for children alone. In all aspects of our community, we must continually remind ourselves that power for peace comes from the graciousness and spaciousness of God. Together, we can find ourselves in those places where, with humility, we discern again what is acceptable to God.

Singing - Inspired by love and anger TIS 674

OR: When I needed a neighbour, TIS 629

Offering

Bless these gifts we bring, along with our lives; bless them to be like the leaven, the mustard seed, the small tremulous beginning of something that will change the world, even this small part of the world we know here. Amen.

Notices

Today is the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

August 26: 2001 - Tampa Affair and the rescue of 433 Refugees

Prayers for World & Community

This is a 'ripple prayer' format. The congregation are invited to join in and add their own prayers and thoughts as we go....

I invite you to imagine our prayers this morning to be like circles in the ocean made by throwing a stone into the water. As the stone drops in, the surface of the ocean is broken and circles emerge.

The first circle invites us to pray for those closest to us, the people sitting beside and around us. In silence or out loud we pray for each other. For the cares and concerns of those in the room. And although we might not know all that is going on, God does.

Moment of silence

As the circles spread – the second circle invites us to pray for the people that are part of our daily lives. For those we share a home with, for the families, friendship and fellowship groups, and for the communities we are part of. For people working in our schools, in our health and welfare systems, for those who keep our streets clean, who keep us safe, who work in the shops we frequent, the public transport we travel on, deliver the packages we've ordered through the internet and many others who are part of the web of our lives.

Moment of silence

As the circles spread wider in the third circle we pray for the country we live in. We pray for those



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in positions of power who have to make difficult decisions on our behalf concerning the welfare of the nation. We pray for our national church, and all who minister and administer within it. We pray especially for its witness and service in this time, - as well as congregations who are giving thanks for growth and renewal. Synod. We pray for all those who are looking for support and care at this time and for systems and policies that will support them and bring about deeper systems of justice and care in our country and in our Church.

Moment of silence

As the circles spread right out and reach the far corners of our world we pray for the daily struggles that are part of the life and experience of so many in so many places around the globe. For struggles brought about by poverty, by drought, by flooding and other natural and man-made disasters.

This week we think in particular of the earthquake in Columbia and the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.

We bring our concerns for those who find themselves displaced or made homeless, for those parents whose endless struggle it is to make ends meet and bring up their children without want or fear.

We remember those whose battle is for health and peace of mind.

We pray for peace, in every sense of the word, to descend on places where there is struggle, conflict and grief anywhere around the world and for justice and healing to come in all places where it is needed.

Moment of silence

God, our prayers today are only a stone thrown into an ocean, a tiny offering of love in an ocean of need. Please take our prayers and, in love, hold us and our world.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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 - O God of every nation TiS 621

OR: Forth in your name TiS 571

OR: We are your people TiS 468

Blessing

As you go, may your faith in God
be the source of your joy and strength.
May the light of God's Word be your guide,
and may hope in God's love and presence with us
and with all of creation
be the source of your peace.

Go in peace to share God's love with the world
Go, be heroes of faith,
leaving a trail of light behind you,
In the name of the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

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