



Sunday September 6th, 2026 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Praise the Lord!

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
sing his praise in the assembly of the faithful.**
Let us praise his name with dancing,
**you can find us rejoicing and making melody
to him with tambourine and lyre.**

For the Lord takes pleasure in his people;
**we are ready for our future for we know that
he adorns the humble with victory.**

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 - Praise the Lord, you heavens adore him TiS 93

OR: For the beauty of the earth TiS 137

Prayer



Bless us today gracious God, we who have gathered in the name of Jesus Christ. We who are called to be a gathering of reconciliation in a broken world.

Show us the way today and all days to adore you through our words and actions. We gather because we know you are faithful to us and we commit ourselves again to your path for us.

We acknowledge in this gathering however, that we have not loved others as you love us. We have not always sought the way of faith, hope and trust. We have been unable to match our words of commitment with understanding, patience and growth.

We have found ourselves in conflict and have been unable to reconcile. We have acted in ways that dishonour others and have not realised the impact of our behaviours. We have been focussed on the fulfillment of the law, rather than the fulfillment of your law, to love one another.

Before you God, we confess that we have failed to live out our calling as your people of reconciliation. **Forgive us.**

Before you God, we confess that we have doubted our future in you and through you.

Forgive us.

Before you God, we confess that we have resisted your calling to us for renewal.

Forgive us. In penitence and faith, we bring these prayers before you. Amen

Assurance of Forgiveness

Know then that we are caught up into the Spirit of the Great Reconciler. The one who has given us the gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. With him and through him, 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: Exodus 12:1-14; Romans 13:8-14 & Matthew 18:15-20

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

The story of Moses is an incredible one with lots of ups and downs.

As a baby, Moses was miraculously saved from death; but as a young man he really struggled. He even killed a man. Under sentence of death, he fled to Midian where he found a new life and a new family, well away from his turbulent past.

No wonder then that when he encountered God at the burning bush, he was adamant that he would not accept God's call to him to lead Israel out of captivity in Egypt.

Moses did everything he could to try to get out of this calling. He used every excuse in the book. But God didn't budge. God had instead given him answers for his questions, powers to compensate for his perceived inadequacy, and Aaron to be his mouthpiece to overcome his speaking difficulties.

But Moses continued to quibble, in fact he even asked God to send someone else! But God did not back down and ordered him to get going!

After all that vacillating, we might have expected Moses to have been a hesitant and insecure leader. But instead, as we read of the many encounters between Moses and his people and Moses and the Pharaoh that led to the episode we read about today, we see that Moses grew in stature and authority and courage.

That's not to say that there weren't moments when Moses faltered or showed signs of insecurity, but as his relationship with God deepened and as he learned to trust God, he

exhibited great courage and resilience in the protracted negotiations with Pharaoh for the release of the Israelites from slavery. For he and Aaron faced up to Pharaoh armed with nothing more than a simple staff.

By contrast, the Pharaoh was an extremely powerful figure, backed up with vast armies and weapons. To him, at least initially, Moses and Aaron must have seemed like pesky irritants, like mosquitoes that should be swatted. But as Pharaoh soon learned, appearances can be deceptive. Moses and Aaron may have looked defenceless but they were backed by a mighty God who was more than a match for the vast resources at the Pharaoh's disposal.

But like many megalomaniacs down through the centuries, the Pharaoh refused to concede that this was a fight he would not win.

He did not back down and free the people of Israel even when faced with one disastrous plague after another, even though it must have been clear that these plagues were coming from God.

This intransigence made Moses' courage, endurance and tenacity all the more remarkable, as often he found himself under fire from both sides. On one side he had Pharaoh refusing to concede and dishing out sanctions, and on the other side he had his own people despairing of ever being freed and suffering an ever-increasing load of hardship. Moses only survived and kept going because he trusted God, and God gave him the strength and endurance he needed and as we well know, the Israelites were eventually freed.

The story of the transformation of Moses reminds us of the power of God to change people. Probably the most famous story of an amazing transformation is that of Saul, a Pharisee, who in the time of the early church was the foremost persecutor of the Christians. He was a zealot, utterly convinced that his task of persecution was God-given. But God appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus in an amazing theophany of blazing light and a voice from heaven and spoke to him,



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just like he earlier spoke to Moses in the burning bush.

Not only did God change his heart and convert him to Christianity, God also called him to the task of evangelism.

As a result of this conversion Saul had a change of name and became Paul, and in response to the call that God had laid on his heart he went on to become the most effective missionary evangelist and founder of churches that the world has ever seen and the foremost Christian writer. The power of God working in him transformed his life utterly.

Perhaps we might think this pattern of God calling people to God's mission and empowering them for their calling is the stuff of Biblical times but not today.

However, having myself experienced such a calling, in my case to the ordained ministry, I can assure you that it isn't. And having talked to many of my ministerial colleagues about their 'calling' I can also testify to the fact that when God calls someone to a mission or ministry God is not easily deflected.

God calls, but God also empowers and equips those that God calls. Paul refers to this equipping and empowering when he reminds us to put on the armour of light.

God can call at any stage of life. And God can use all sorts of people with all sorts of gifts and abilities to do God's work. Sometimes the tasks will be enormous, like Moses and Paul's, but often they will be very much smaller. Perhaps God is calling you to do something different or something more?

We should always be open to that possibility. For the God who has given us gifts and talents also calls us to use them for the sake of the Gospel. May we always be open to God's guidance and call. Amen.

Singing - All my hope on God is founded ***TiS 560***

OR: Jesus calls us here to meet him TiS 477

OR: How firm a foundation TiS 578

Offering

We offer these gifts as part of our commitment to grow your church gracious God. In all the new possibilities that you have opened up for us, with all the people you invite us to meet on the way, for all the flourishing that happens with us and around us. We give you thanks for the generosity of your Spirit. **Amen**

Notices

Sep 7 is *National Threatened Species Day*.

Sep 8 is *International Literacy Day*.

Sep 10 is *World Suicide Prevention Day*.

Sep 11 is *RU OK? Day*.

Prayers for World & Community

Lord we pray for wisdom – so that we may see the realities of the world around us. We name those areas of concern and trouble that are so obvious in our world. And we pray for those things that we may not know, but where there are people suffering still.

In your mercy Lord – **hear our prayer.**

(Silence)

Lord we pray for compassion – so that we do not turn our faces away from those parts of our lives and communities that need us the most. While we cannot do everything Lord, bring those places and spaces that we need to know about to our attention, so that we may respond in ways that honour your generous love.

In your mercy Lord – **hear our prayer.**

(Silence)

Lord we pray for patience – we acknowledge that we want things to happen our way and in our time. Instead, Lord, we think of the places and people that are on our hearts today. We ask for



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action from our leaders, the restoration of our churches, the well-being of our communities and the healing of our families. Lord let our prayers be combined with your faithful purposes, so that we might respond when we are called.

In your mercy Lord – **hear our prayer.**

(Silence)

Lord we pray for action – we know that you will provide the resources we need, when needed. Even small steps Lord are sufficient for us. Where we can be used to your purposes Lord, let the invitation for us to act be so clear and open to us that we can only respond in joy to your calling to us. Lord let our willingness to be part of your reconciling purposes, be matched by the opportunities to act.

In your mercy Lord – **hear our prayer.**

(Silence)

We bring these prayers to you Lord as a community of faith called again to be your people. In witness to this, let us pray together the prayer that we have been taught:

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 - We are your people TiS 468

OR: Tell out my soul TiS 161

OR: Brother, sister, let me serve you TiS 650

Blessing

Let this gathering of the people be so enriched, so revitalised and so confident in the presence of your reconciling Spirit, that we go in joy and to live out new lives in purpose and through your power.

Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ, Amen

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