



Sunday October 18th, 2026 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

(time of quiet)

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

from Psalm 99:1-3

The LORD is king;

let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;

let the earth quake!

The LORD is great in Zion;

he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise

your great and awesome name.

Holy is he!

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 - Holy, Holy, Holy - TiS 132

OR: Immortal, invisible, God only wise - TiS 143

OR: You are holy, you are whole - TiS 753

Prayer



Loving Lord, we come to you in prayer.
We sit, quietly,
setting aside the busyness of our lives,
seeking your presence.

We praise your glorious name
in the joy of spring and newness.
We draw near to you in worship,
grateful for all we have,
listening for your message
and the peace and love you offer.

As we think of your greatness and goodness,
we acknowledge our failings.

We confess
that our focus is so often on ourselves,
our needs, feelings, worries and insecurities.

Forgive our lack of awareness of others
who need our attention
- the hungry and homeless,
- sufferers from family violence,
- the 'invisible' people around us,
and our careless use of resources
and creation.

Forgive us and help us to care
with our minds, resources and gifts.
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: Matthew 22:15-22

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

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Friends of the Fig Tree, Uniting Church in Australia
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Reflecting - Rev. Karen Eller

Today's reading brings into the open the memory in Matthew's community of the rising malice against Jesus in his last days. The Herodians, loyalists to Herod Antipas, are remembered frothing at the mouth to arrest Jesus for treason. You can just about feel the tension of raised clubs ready to beat Jesus into submission as soon as Jesus suggests not paying taxes to Rome. And we can almost smell the sweat of the Pharisees hoping against hope that Jesus will indict himself by not resisting the Roman occupation and approving paying exorbitant and life-diminishing taxes to the cruel colonists. Between these groups, they're pretty confident that they are going to 'get' Jesus. Arrest and beatings are imminent. It is a real tipping point of the Jesus narrative.

But Jesus is far ahead of both groups, and way too clever to be caught in this trap of human malice. The Divine One cannot be tricked or coerced into the snare. Instead of answering the question, Jesus draws attention to a denarius, a coin that should not even be in the Temple! The image of Tiberius is on the coin – along with the inscription, 'Son of God.' And with that the famous phrase is uttered, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

In the Temple, the appropriate things to be doing are to praise and worship God. In Matthew's community, the evangelist instils a faithful response to Jesus. As we read further on into the last days of Jesus, we hear of further attempts to trick Jesus, culminating in Jesus summarising all the laws and prophets with 'The Greatest Commandment.'

So, what are we to make of all this? Who are the no-good tricksters today, vying for our loyalties where we and our planet can only become losers?

The Gospel reading today reminds us that the Divine One brings to light malicious intent and sees right through evil schemes. Today there seems to be an endless march of self-serving malice toward humanity and Creation. The worship of the almighty dollar is killing us all. Matthew points us back to Jesus.

The way of Jesus is to identify and find ways to circumvent evil plots with integrity. Rising Tide is currently targeting the ANZ bank to get a commitment from the bank to not fund coal mine expansions. Our church has had a modest presence at Pre-COP 31 events across the country. What more can our congregations and places of ministry do and say?

In the Gospel narrative, Jesus is at the serious end of the narrative. We too are approaching several catastrophic climactic tipping points. Are we serious about joining in God's life-saving, creative work for the flourishing of all God's good creation? Jesus beckons join him.

Singing - Lord Jesus we belong to you

- TiS 686

OR: Made in God's likeness, - TiS 671

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**



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Notices

Nov 19 - 2001 - SIEV-X sinking and drowning of 353 asylum seekers.

Nov 24 - United Nations Day

Prayers for World & Community

Loving God,
you know the depths of our minds and hearts.
We bring our prayers to you,
sharing our concerns, our fears.
Laying them before you,
trusting that you hear and answer
even before we ask.

We pray for our world, your creation.
May we treat it wisely and share the resources.

We pray for leaders of the world,
and the countries they lead.
May the leaders be wise and the people united,
seeking justice and peace for all.

We pray particularly for places where there is
war or natural disasters,
May all be seeking the common good.

We pray for our country, our leaders.
We don't understand decisions that are made.
We see greed and injustice.
Keep us and them hopeful for change.
May this always be a country
that values freedom, justice and equality.

We pray for our church and its work.
May our leaders stay focussed on you,
working for the good of all.

We pray for those in need,
the poor and hungry, social outcasts,
those in need of employment, housing
or simply acceptance.

We pray for the sick and for people in care,
and for those who care for them

We name those in our community
who are on our hearts,
and all those we love.

We join in the prayer that 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 - This day God gives me - TiS 642

OR: Sent forth by God's blessing - TiS 531

OR: Come down, O love divine - TiS 398

Blessing

Go out into a world
where God is present,
healing, refreshing, loving and giving hope.
May we join in showing this example.

We are God's people;
created,
redeemed,
sustained,
today, yesterday and tomorrow.
Amen

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