

Welcome to worship. How are you?
What has happened in your week that has brought you delight? What are you missing in this strange time? Where do you glimpse the awesome blessing of the Spirit of God around you and within you? What are you struggling with?

Make a note of these things and share them with us, (see Notices) and with someone close to you.

Whatever you bring, you are welcome here. You are amongst a great crowd of people who are one body in Christ.

Light Your Candle



Christ be our light,
shine in our hearts,
shine through the darkness.

Acknowledgement of Country



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land where we live.

We pay respect to elders
past, present and emerging.

We commit ourselves to reconciliation,
walking together in truth and love.

Call to Worship

Come, Spirit of life, be present in our worship time. Lift our eyes to see God's glory, warm our hearts with life and peace and open our hands to give and receive love everlasting. Amen.



Hymn TIS 621 O God of every nation

O God of every nation
of every race and land
redeem your whole creation
with your almighty hand;
where hate and fear divide us
and bitter threats are hurled
in love and mercy guide us
and heal our strife-torn world.

From search for wealth and power
and scorn of truth and right
from trust in bombs that shower
destruction through the night
from pride of race and station
and blindness to your way
deliver every nation
eternal God
we pray.

Lord, strengthen all who labour
that all may find release
from fear of rattling sabre
from dread of war's increase;
when hope and courage falter Lord
let your voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter
your servants undergird.

Keep bright in us the vision
of days when war shall cease
when hatred and division
give way to love and peace
till dawns the morning glorious
when truth and justice reign
and Christ shall rule victorious
o'er all the world's domain.

William Watkins Reid Jr. 1923-

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Opening prayer

God of creation,
your awesome creativity stretches out
far beyond our imagination
and leaves us speechless with awe.
In the silence we bring before you
things that rise in profound gratitude
for the abundant environment around us.

Keep silence and give thanks

Jesus the Christ,
you bring us into life and love
with perplexing parables, healing hands
and hard questions.
You trust us to be your body, the church.
In the silence we bring before you
things that rise in profound gratitude
for your living body, the church on earth.

Keep silence and give thanks

Holy Spirit,
you weave your power of light and hope
within us and between us.
You surprise us with mysterious presence
grounded in the here and now.
In the silence we bring before you
things that rise in profound gratitude
for the gift of your companionship.

Keep silence and give thanks

Prayer of confession

We confess to you,
One in Three and Three in One,
that as a church we have not always
been the rock for others to stand strong,
but sometimes
have been the stumbling block,
shaky ground, a source of pain.

Forgive us as we call for help:
(response from Psalm 124:8)

**Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

We confess to you,
One in Three and Three in One,
that as members of your body, the
church,
we have not always allowed our lives
to shine with light
so that others might see the way
nor faithfully spoken
your welcoming words
to the wanderers and the little ones
in our midst.

Forgive us as we call for help:
**Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

We confess to you,
One in Three and Three in One,
that we have let ourselves be distracted
by greed, ambition and hopelessness
and have not always reached out
in compassion, to others on the way,

Forgive us as we call for help:
**Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

Words of affirmation

Forgiving God, you hear our call and you
answer us. Sisters and brothers, members
of the body of Christ, know this: we are
healed, forgiven and set free to live in the
way of love. May it be so.

Thanks be to God, Amen



The Readings

Exodus 1 v 8 - 2 v 10
Matthew 16 v 13-20



Reflection - Rev Deacon Wendy Elson

I reckon that there was a period of time a few years back where my real name didn't get used much. I was known as someone's mum, someone's wife. Even my car was called 's mum's car'. Eventually I came back to my own name (mostly) as it was just a phase in our family. But reflecting on this, I find Peter's divinely inspired response to Jesus to be very interesting. Peter's answer, affirmed by Jesus, is given in terms of both role and relationship. 'Messiah' refers to Jesus' role here. 'Son of God' defines Jesus in reference to God. Of course, we are all children of God, the body of Christ (and members of it). But this response from Peter almost leaves Jesus selfhood out of it and defines him by reference to his role in pointing the way to God. Jesus came to point the way. He kind of says "It's not about me, look further to where I am leading".

Who do people say Jesus is? Let's come back to that.

There is currently a lot in the lectionary passages about naming. Places were named in the Old Testament in a way that held their meaning. Names held identity. This is of course, quite topical when we think of the names we call locations around us. The changing of 'Ayers Rock' back to 'Uluru' for example has been an important recognition that the identity of the area is tied up in its deep indigenous heritage. Many of our place names simply reflect whichever white explorer noticed

them, rather than their more significant and descriptive indigenous names. I wonder what some of these Old Testament locality names were, before the significant events that caused our Biblical characters to name them after their own significant experiences.



Moses was named after being "drawn out" of the water.

Naming something is more important than our culture acknowledges. Years ago I read an excellent series of fantasy books, the Earthsea series, by Ursula Le Guin. The main character, Ged, was known as Duny as a child until he was given his true name. Ged inadvertently freed a shadow spirit who was an evil power, who then hunted Ged. Ged tried and tried to overcome the shadow spirit by seeking to learn its name, all the while puzzling about how it knew HIS name. He came to understand that it was actually a part of himself. When he was able to successfully name the shadow and accept his full identity, he came to have power over this spirit and integrate this aspect into himself. This was his full entrance into manhood. At birth each one was given a child-name, but as they grew their true name was revealed to them. If they gave away their true name to someone else, that person had power over them forever.

As I explored this notion through these books, I realised the truths held here.

Our name and our identity are so closely linked. When God refers to God's self as "I AM", this is a very profound statement. 'I am who you need me to be'. The people named God after familiar things at different times. It is an interesting study to go through Scriptures and note the beautiful terms for God. The Ancient of Days, God as Rock and Refuge and Strength, and so many more. God named for the role and identity being sought at the time.

So then, who we name God as, or Jesus as, is vitally important and indicates how we will be and live in the world. "Who do you say that I am?"



A trite answer would be so easy here. The answer is central to how we represent Christ to others. Is Jesus someone to be worshipped? Idolised? Followed? Spend some time thinking about this....it matters. Is God vindictive and quick to send retribution on us? Or full of grace and mercy. God as Grace is not so much a gift to be received as it is a clarion call to discipleship. God of Abundance will mean we don't hold others back in order to gain for ourselves. Sometimes it is almost like we have to judge others as unworthy in case the plate is empty when we get

there. No, when we include the voiceless we know there is even more there for us. And so we can share the grace and love of God abundantly. We can say yes to all and just allow the grace of God!

So then, who we say Jesus is must lead us into ever deeper love and compassion as we follow Jesus more nearly. On these truths is the Church of Jesus built.

Prayers of the people

We come to the spiritual discipline of prayer. Paul reminds us that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices:

Which is our spiritual worship.

Place your hands on your heart

We pray for the heart of our community
For those who are broken hearted,
And those for whom the heart feels empty
May they who seek the love we know in
Christ, find Jesus.

Place your hands on your temples

We pray for the matters we don't understand.
For those who search for cures to disease,
And for those who are providing health care.
May those who seek knowledge find solutions that help all peoples and communities.

Place your hands on your stomach

We feel for those who are hungry,
Those who have no work or face unemployment.
For parents who struggle to provide for their families.

May we see those in our community who struggle, and may we be brave to practically help.

Place your hands on your legs.

We pray for those who are running hard to keep our nation safe.

We hold teachers and farmers, food processors and energy workers in prayer.

We ask that each one may know your sustaining love and power.

We open a space in prayer to say to God the prayers only we know:

We who are many, are one body in Christ. May the gifts we share: practically bring hope in our community and beyond.

We bring all prayer, together in

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.

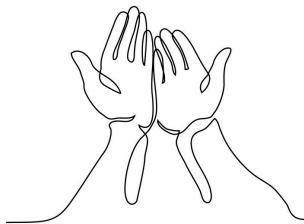
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

Passing the peace

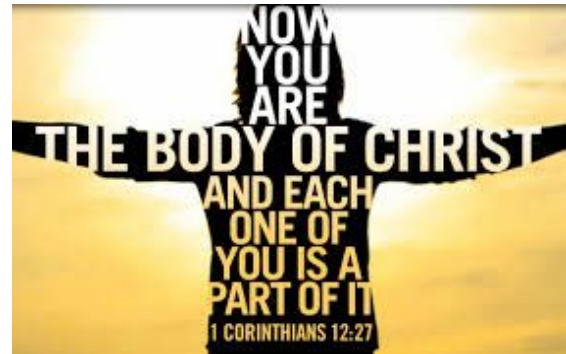


*My peace I give to you,
my peace I leave with you*

Who will you text right now to share the peace as you worship?

Who will you call this week to offer peace into their day?

Make sure you do!



Offering

Romans 12: 4-8: For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Whatever is your gift,
give it freely, for the good of all.

Notices

We would be grateful for contact with you. Tell us who and how you are, and say hello. Maybe answer some of the questions in the welcome at the top of page 1. We'd love to know how you are using these weekly resources and what you enjoy, what you find difficult, whatever!

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Hymn TiS 611 God of Grace God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power;
now fulfil your Church's story,
bring the bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour.

See the hosts of evil round us
scorn your Christ, assail his ways.
Fears and doubts too long have bound us;
free our hearts to work and praise.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore.

Harry Emerson Fosdick 1878-1969 alt.
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May be sung to REGENT SQUARE 142

Blessing

A blessing from Aunty Betty Pike:

May you always stand as tall as a tree
Be as strong as the rock Uluru
As gentle and still as the morning mist
Hold the warmth of the campfire
in your heart
And may the Creator Spirit
always walk with you.

