



The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Sunday Feb 7th , 2021

Fifth Sunday in Epiphany



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Isaiah 40:21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

As you gather for worship, alone or in the company of others, imagine the deep wisdom of eternal knowing flowing around you and through you. The creative Spirit connecting you to others and to all things.

Light your candle - see it dance into life.

Call to worship

We come, like grasshoppers,
into your tent of wonder,
God of all.

You glory spans the sky
as you call us in
until no one is missing.

Help us to wait for you
and fill us with strength.
Lift our eyes, lift our hearts, lift our lives
to love and serve you. Amen.

Acknowledging



As we gather we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we stand. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves, our households and our communities, to work and speak for justice and truth as we walk together, First and Second Peoples.

Singing - You who dwell TIS 48

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in this shadow for life,
say to the Lord: 'My refuge,
my rock in whom I trust!'

*And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.*

Snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear,
under God's wings your refuge,
with faithfulness your shield.

And I will raise you up ...

For to the angels God's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

And I will raise you up ...

Michael Joncas 1951 - TIS 48. Used with permission.
CCLI 241 739



Prayer

Mark 1:35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

In the morning, in the daytime,
in the evening, in the night,
in the darkness, in the light,
**we come to you Source, Son, Spirit
Three in One, One in Three
knowing that you hear us.**

We give thanks for the wonder of this world,
from the smallest microbe to the tallest trees
from jumping grasshoppers
to soaring eagles
**and we marvel at the knowledge
that you know and love each one of us
and draw us towards you.**

We give thanks for the deserted places
where we can be still

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where we can pray
where we can listen in the silence, for you...
(time of silence)

Closer to us than our breath,
 further than our thoughts can take us.

Lift us up when we falter and fall.
Set us back on your path when we wander.
Hear us as we bring our burdens to you.
(time of silence)

Reach out your healing hand
 and lift us with your forgiving touch.

Free us from the heavy burdens
of guilt and regret,
so that we can soar into this day
sure of your love and pardon,
ready to serve,
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Be assured: you are loved,
 healed, forgiven and lifted up
 into the life that awaits you.

We are renewed. Thanks be to God.

Listening

Read: **Isaiah 40:21-31**

Mark 1:29-39

For these words of faith
 & for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga

Have you ever noticed the magnificence of wedge-tailed eagles (Bunjil) soaring above? When we lived at Yarra Glen on the farm, we were blessed to see eagles often, rising effortlessly on the thermals where valleys and hills meet. They are a reminder to us (Isaiah 40:31) that God is present when we have forgotten, when we are weary and worn and sad.

Not long ago we marked the anniversary of

bushfires that left deep scars and continue to weary people as they seek to rebuild. And who can forget our air was too thick to breathe or that the town of Mallacoota was tinged in an apocalyptic shade of red. And before long there comes another anniversary – the beginning of COVID with interrupted grief that stalled the rebuilding of lives, buildings and community. If you feel tired you have every good reason to do so. But in whatever wearies us, the Scriptures also speak, for we are not the first to need hope and rest for our souls. The reading from Isaiah has a deep beauty and hope despite the reality of struggle. “Have you not known? Have you not heard?” This comes as a question to those of us who are listening. In case we missed it once, it comes again. “Have you not known? Have you not heard?”

as you wait for the Lord
he shall renew your strength,
you shall mount up with wings like eagles,
you shall run and not be weary,
you shall walk and not grow faint.

For most of my life I’ve been aware that my name, Arnold, means ‘as strong as an eagle’. But for the first time it has occurred to me that this refers to Isaiah 40. My name’s a reminder of what God promises all of us. It is a reminder that when we are weary, God remains with us to lift us up, even when we can’t see it’s possible.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?”

I guess we all manage stress in different ways, but the words provoke our memory, lest we have forgotten the ways of God in all the chaos of last year. Through times of stress, we need prophets and proclaimers to tell again the story of God:
beneath us, above us,
around us and within us, God.
as the eagles soar, God.
through the rainbow across the sky, God.
in the life and ministry of Jesus, God.

Since Christmas we have been working through the first chapter of Mark’s gospel and it moves at lighting speed to tell us the story of God as

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revealed through Jesus. In what we hear today we find Jesus in the intimacy of the household healing Simon Peter’s mother-in-law of her fever. Jesus then moves on to heal in public, then withdraws to pray and restore himself, and then he is out and about preaching and ministering in Galilee.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?”

In all these things, God is revealed to us. In the speaking and doing, God is revealed. Through touch, prayer, in silence and in words, God is revealed.

In the proclamation of the story of God, we are invited to remember that God is with us, that as we wait upon the Lord we will be renewed. In my own waiting, I have been reminded of a strength that is not my own, that I am upheld like the strength of an eagle. From now on whenever I hear my name, it tells of the prophetic words of Isaiah, the very promises of God.

What is it that will remind you that God is near and offers strength, rest and hope?

*as you wait for the Lord
 he shall renew your strength,
 you shall mount up with wings like eagles,
 you shall run and not be weary,
 you shall walk and not grow faint.*

May this be true for us all in our hearing and knowing, in the name of Christ, amen.

Singing: O Lord Jesus, Marrkapmirr
TiS 253

(can be sung through twice)

O, Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr,
 all the power belongs to you.
 Hold me by this power, O Lord,
 you alone are king.

Now we praise you for your Word,
 living, true and full of light.
 Yours the hands that rest on me:
 hold me for all time.

*Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land, versified by D’Arcy Wood 1936 -
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Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

God of all, hear our prayer

We pray for all people
 who long for the touch of a healing hand
 to lift them out of their pain and sorrow.

God of all, hear our prayer

We name them in our hearts,
(time of quiet)

We pray for all people
 who are suffering across the world
 through the COVID-19 pandemic,

God of all, hear our prayer

we lift them to you,
(time of quiet)

We ask your blessing
 on those who reach out
 with hope and healing
 lifting others out of their distress.

God of all, hear our prayer

give them strength to rise up
 and serve
(time of quiet)

We pray for all creation,
 that we will find a better way to live
 in harmony with all things,
 learning from the First Peoples,
 reducing our footprint,

God of all, hear our prayer

cherishing this sacred land
 give us courage and unfailing hope
(time of quiet)

We ask your blessing on us,
 and on our churches, families and community
 Let those who lead, lead with courage,
 let those who listen, listen with openness,
 let those who long for answers
 find them in your embrace.

God of all, hear our prayer

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(time of quiet)

Although we pray together across the world in many languages, we use the same breath of the Spirit: As we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples.

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

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

Offering

We bring what we can and offer it to you,
 God of abundance.
 Use these gifts to reach out to those in need:
 lifting them up, helping them to soar,
 as we offer our lives in service to you.
 Amen.

Notices

Contributions to the Fig Tree Worship Resource comes from across the Presbytery of Gippsland. It has followed on from the Shearwater Resource produced by our ministry team along the Bass Coast from March through to the end of December last year. It's available a week ahead -

on the Presbytery website:

<https://gippsland.unitingchurch.org.au/>

and is also posted on the Synod website:

<https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

If you'd like it emailed directly to you each week, please contact Jennie - pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com

Singing: Jesus' hands - TIS 236

Jesus' hands were kind hands,
 doing good to all,
 healing pain and sickness,
 blessing children small,
 washing tired feet, and saving those who fall:
 Jesus' hands were kind hands,
 doing god to all.

Take my hands, Lord Jesus,
 let them work for you,
 make them strong and gentle,
 kind in all I do;
 let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
 till my hands are kind hands,
 quick to work for you.

*Margaret Beatrice Cropper 1886-1980.
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