



Sunday March 7th, 2021
Third Sunday in Lent
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

What do you come with this morning?
 What words are in your mouth?
 What meditations are in your heart?

As the candle is lit, let it bring you into a place of stillness, inside and out, as you offer this time, all the words and the meditations to God.



Call to worship

Come into this time of worship, listen:
The heavens are telling the glory of God.
 Come because you are called to be here, and
The heavens are telling the glory of God.
 Come and lend your hearts and voices, as
The heavens are telling the glory of God.

Acknowledging



As we gather we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging and commit ourselves and our church to listening, learning and keeping the covenant as we walk together, First and Second Peoples.

Covenant poster:
<https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Covenanting/Covenant-with-UAICC-A2-poster.pdf>

Singing Let all creation dance, TiS 187

Let all creation dance in energies sublime,
 as order turns with chance,
 unfolding space and time,
 for nature's art
 in glory grows,
 and newly shows God's mind and heart.

God's breath each force unfurls,
 igniting from a spark
 expanding starry swirls,
 with whirlpools dense and dark.
 Though moon and sun
 seem mindless things,
 each orbit sings: "Your will be done."

Our own amazing earth,
 with sunlight, cloud and storms
 and life's abundant growth
 in lovely shapes and forms,
 is made for praise,
 a fragile whole
 and from its soul heaven's music plays.

Lift heart and soul and voice:
 in Christ all praises meet
 and nature shall rejoice
 and all is made complete.
 In hope be strong,
 all life befriend
 and kindly tend creations' song.
 W: Brain Arthur Wren 1936- M: John Darwall 1731-89
 TiS 187 Used with permission CCLI 241 739

Listening

Read: 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25
 John 2: 13-22
 For these words of faith
 & for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**



Prayer

God of all creation, in the quiet we listen
 for the sounds of life around us,
(time of quiet)
 We hear your song of glory;
 in the warble of the magpies,
 in the rain on the roof, in the roar of the surf.

 We hear your song of glory;
 in the breath of the person near us,
 in the sighing of the wind in the trees
 in the rattle of windows in the breeze.

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We hear your song of glory;
in the music of our faith, in the cry of a baby,
in the way someone speaks our name.
**Spirit of all creation, thank you for this song,
help us to find the sounds to sing along.**

*(you may like to hum, or say your name out
loud, or sing a verse of a hymn you love)*

Yet, we confess,
that our own internal soundtrack
often drowns out your song of glory.
We fail to listen,
and in our disbelief, we demand clear signs
and well constructed sentences of wisdom
to assure us of your presence and power.
Help us to listen deeply

Yet we confess,
that our own noise contributes
to the clamour of confusion around us.
We are quick to judge others,
measuring their worth, making us feel safe,
diminishing them with our words.
Help us to keep silence

Yet we confess
that our own apathy and fear
disarms us when we should step forward.
We fail to speak,
for fear of being foolish or inviting trouble,
and in our silence we are complicit
with abuse, injustice and oppression.
Help us to speak out

Jesus who turned the tables in the temple
and spoke angry words into the silence,
forgive us for not following you as we could.
(time of quiet)
Sisters and brothers in Christ,
hear this and know it in your heart and soul.
We are forgiven, healed and renewed.
Thanks be to God, Amen.

Listening

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

For these words of faith **Thanks be to God.**

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

When I travelled to Europe in 1989 the old communist regimes that had kept so many people repressed were failing. In Budapest, the capital of Hungary, it was clear that most people were happy with their new freedom. However, in some places the experience was very different. In Romania when the brutal dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown and executed, his country descended into turmoil. His death left a vacuum. He had been a despot who had repressed any dissent. But now no one was in charge. Amid the chaos, a woman told reporters, "We have freedom," she said, "but we don't know what to do with it."

There are many people in today's world who have freedom, but don't know what to do with it; just as there are also many people who are oppressed and long for freedom. For freedom's not an absolute, it needs direction, and it needs care and consideration for others, lest one person's freedom becomes another person's nightmare.

Ironically, the people of Israel, whom Moses is leading towards the Promised Land, are a people who once longed for freedom because they were slaves and oppressed in Egypt. They had cried out to God begging for freedom.

But now the people who were spectacularly liberated have even longed to be back in slavery! They struggle to trust Moses and struggle to trust God. Despite God's provision for them, and God's promise to lead and guide them, Sinai is for them a scary place. They are frightened and anxious. They are not enjoying their freedom.

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But God wants the Israelites to be a community of worship, justice and harmony that lives according to the just ways of God. For they are to be a 'treasured possession... a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.'

For this to happen the Israelites need guidance. This is the role of the Ten Commandments (and the other Law that will later follow).

The first part of these Ten Commandments (verses 1-7) provides guidelines for their relationship with God. They are reminded that God is their liberator and redeemer and the identity of Israel will always be as people who were freed from slavery. Freedom from bondage is here connected, indeed directed, to the worship of the one and true liberating God and not of any other god.

Verses 8 – 11 give guidelines for observing the Sabbath. Taking the time for Sabbath rest is a crucial reminder that Life is so much more than just doing or producing or achieving or consuming; it is also about being, and Sabbath enables us to rest from all work and just be. Sabbath provides time for worship, and also time for relationships, and for God to minister to our deepest hurts, fears and longings.

Verses 12 – 17 give guidelines for relationships between people beginning with honouring father and mother – the union from which human life is conceived and sustained for all time. Honour given to parents is intended to be the basis for the ethical behaviour shown toward all other members in the community. Right relationships begin in the family circle and then extend to neighbour, community and the world.

We need, as Christians, to view the Ten Commandments through the lens of the teachings of Jesus Christ. They do not cover everything, but they do point us to three major issues for all people of faith- the centrality of our relationship with God, the issues of priorities including finding space for worship, rest and

relationships, and the importance of our relationships with others.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Spirit of God,
 we bring before you the cries of the world.
 Bring healing where there is hurt,
 bring hope where there is despair
 bring release where there is captivity
 bring life where there is fear
 Spirit, hear us, **hear our prayer**

As you pray, name each place or situation, each struggle or person (keeping confidentiality), follow each petition with:

Spirit, hear us, **hear our prayer**

as we pray together in the words of Jesus:

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

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

Offering

God of abundance, help us to see that our offering is not about buying your favour, but made as a response to your overwhelming goodness and glory. Bless what we bring. May these gifts empower and enable us, your church,



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to be the leaven in the loaf, to bring your outrageous life to those who need it.
 In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notices

Have you heard about what happened in the Synod meeting last week? Go to the website and have a read. There will also be a recording of the Synod worship online if you missed it.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/about-us/synod-meeting/>

Singing- Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets:
 no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
 Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
 Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,
 where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
 Listen Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
 In the Kingdon's causes let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;
 curing those who suffer,
 touching those he greets.
 Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
 Let my care be active, healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,
 where each sign of hatred he with love defeats.
 Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.
 Where good conquers evil let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,
 'Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet.'
 Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
 Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

W: John L Bell 1949- French melody
 Used with permission CCLI 241 739

Blessing

May the glory of God shine from you.
 May your words join the song of the heavens
 and the outrage of Jesus.

May the work of your hands bring justice
 and may the Spirit be your guide,
 this day and always,
 Go in peace,
 with silence, word, wisdom and song,
 to love and serve the one who calls you.
In the name of Christ, Amen.



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A song from the blog: Singing from the Lectionary -
<http://lectionarysong.blogspot.com/>

"How can God's house be a den of thieves?"
 Proclaimed the raging Son
 "You bring the ruin of many a poor boy
 You steal from everyone."

Now mothers gave their coinage
 And fathers gave their sheep
 The taxes of the temple there
 Made poor widows weep.

Yes, Jesus cared for children
 He saw what priests had done.
 They spread much sin and misery
 In God's house it was safe for none.

We can share so much compassion
 For victims of greed or gun
 But anger demanding justice here
 Makes you stand with the rising Son.

Petereo 2018 (tune: House of the rising sun)

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