



Sunday April 18th, 2021
Third Sunday of Easter
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Jesus stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'.

Imagine that peace from Jesus
 seeping into your soul.
 Peace, flowing from the source towards you,
 gently washing over you,
 seeping through your skin
 and into the depths of your being,
 peace invading every cell,
 every doubt, every fear, every pain.
 Light the candle. Peace be with you.

Call to worship

Come! Lift your voices to the Lord, who always
 hears our prayer and praise.

Listen Lord. Hear our voices sing your praises.

Call on the Lord, who bends low to hear us.

Listen Lord. We lift our voices to you in praise.

Call on the name of the Lord, all you people.

**We call on your wonderful name. For you saved
 us, you raised us and turned our lives around.**

Let your name be praised now and forever.

Amen.

Acknowledging

As we gather we acknowledge the First Peoples,
 the traditional custodians of this land and these
 waters. We pay respect to elders past, present
 and those emerging, and commit ourselves again
 to working for justice and peace for all people.



Singing - Now the green blade rises TIS 382

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
 wheat that in the dark earth many years has lain;
 love lives again, that with the dead has been:
 Love has come again,
 like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him,
 love whom hate had slain,
 thinking that he never would awake again,
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
 Love has come again,
 like wheat that springs up green.

Up he sprang at Easter, like the risen grain,
 he who for three days in the grave had lain;
 raised from the dead my living Lord is seen:
 Love has come again,
 like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,
 then your touch can call us back to life again -
 fields of our hearts
 that dead and bare have been:
 Love has come again,
 like wheat that springs up green.

French traditional melody. Words: John Macloed
 Campbell Crum. 1872-1958 alt. Used with permission.
 CCLI 206 729



Prayer

Spirit of God, comforter, counsellor, guide and
 friend, we thank you for your presence with us.
 You teach us the ways of Jesus. You show us how
 to live justly. You equip us for the journey of life.
 You strengthen us and give us courage. We thank
 you for your presence amongst us. You are the
 witness of faith, revealing to us the will and ways
 of God. Without you, our lives would be dull and
 empty.

We thank you for giving us the gift of life and we
 praise you that you sustain us always. Gracious
 God we yearn for hope so much. In your love for
 us and for the whole world, even though so often
 we want to do things our way, do not leave us to
 our own resources, we pray. Please grant to us
 the gift of faith, that we might know how to live.
 Help us to grow through the suffering that is
 inevitable, build our endurance and deepen our
 character, that our hope may be so strong that
 nothing can take it away. May we be agents of
 hope in this world. **Amen.**

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia
 with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*



Sunday April 18th, 2021
Third Sunday of Easter
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Prayer of confession:

God speaks to us in so many ways, through the Scripture readings, and daily activities. God helps us to relate the Scripture to our daily life in a meaningful way.

We confess that there are times when we are content to go our own ways, times when we are deaf to your prompting, times when we are blind to the vision you place before us and too self-absorbed to look to you.

Forgive us we pray, O God for taking your generosity so lightly. Forgive us that we put our trust in our own capacities, rather than seek to be transparently open to your guidance.

Holy Spirit, make us holy. Spirit of life, sweep us up in the abundance of Christ's love. Teacher of truth, reveal to us now the gifts you would have us receive, and the places where you would have us serve. We are here to experience the fullness of your being. Enable us to be open to you now, we pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Word of Assurance:

We are the people of Christ, filled with the Spirit of God. What shall we say then!

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Listening

Read: Acts 3: (1-11) 12-19

Luke 24: 36b- 48

For these words of faith

& for Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon

the gifts of fear, doubt and disbelief

filled with wonder and amazement, utterly astonished... it's important to read the beginning of the story from Acts, from the start of chapter 3, to sense just how the people were reacting to Peter and John's healing of a man who had been unable to walk from birth. Peter's proclamation, the set text for the week from the book of Acts, flows directly from this event.

startled and terrified, in joy and disbelieving... the gospel of Luke describes the reactions of 'the eleven and their companions' at the sudden appearance of the risen Jesus. He asks them why they are frightened and why doubts arise in their hearts. It is as if he had expected something else, something deeper, maybe a little more enthusiastic and enlightened.

These two stories hold some common truths for us. That our first response to something beyond our understanding, good news or bad, will probably be disbelief and possibly even fear. That the Spirit of God, present in that moment, will continue to be alongside us as we grapple with the new truth before us. That these situations offer an opportunity for our minds to grow and our hearts to be more fully opened.

We all appreciate our comfort zones. When life is known, balanced and unfolding as we expect, mostly we go about our daily tasks with ease and sleep well in our beds. When the usual patterns of our days are disrupted, we are thrown off balance and can be filled with fear and doubt, making it hard to do even the simplest things, especially falling asleep.

Recently I was listening to a young woman who had accepted a proposal of marriage from her dearly loved companion. Her confusion was that, instead of feeling completely overjoyed, optimistic and totally blissed, like everyone around her, she was 'freaking out'. "This always happens at big life-moments. I didn't choose to fall in love with him, and now this. It's the most incredible and amazing thing ever, and I'm so scared." In letting yourself go, falling further into love, committing your life alongside another, the risk is so great, it's massive. As we talked, she sensed that her fear response had come from being thrown off balance by this mighty force of love, overwhelmed by the unimaginable possibilities of life together.

The risen Jesus is patient with the gathering in their joyful unbelief. He shows them his wounds, he eats fish in front of them. He reminds them of

The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.



Sunday April 18th, 2021
Third Sunday of Easter
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

the fulfillment of scripture, of the voices of the prophets, of the mission of repentance and forgiveness that they carry, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading to all nations.

Peter and John are patient with the crowds, telling them about the power of the risen Christ, reminding them of the words of the prophets and about their actions in sending Jesus to the cross; 'you killed the Author of life,' and stating again God's action of raising him from the dead.

The Spirit is patient with us, in this Easter time, when again we are overwhelmed by the force of love that defeats death and maybe even thrown off balance by the mystery of eternal life. Fear may arise, along with doubt and disbelief, as we struggle to make sense of this outrageous gift. Let them come, they have things to teach us. Through doubt and fear we can journey deeper into the unknown. Through the lostness of disbelief we can find new paths to travel and new insights to guide us. We are assured of the constant presence of God through all the changes and challenges of our lives and even as we walk through the valley of death. As Psalm 4, verse 9 reminds us, *'safe and sound, I lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, keep me secure.'* May it be so, Amen.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Dear Lord, we thank you that you have come for all, died on the cross for us and for many.

We thank you, it is through your crucifixion that we see your goodness. It is on the cross that you show us love.

Seeing you on the cross reveals not only God; but we also see ourselves, that we are really your children.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all congregations in the East Gippsland Churches, for elders and for the Church councils for all members of these communities. Please God sustain them and give them the power to continue to worship you in peace and love.

We thank you for the blessings of all years of their lives, but also we thank you for the help of the Spirit that they have experienced for the glorification of your name.

We pray for those who are living in the retirement villages, for those who are experiencing sickness, for all who are taking care of them. We pray for our families, and our friends and for all who live in Australia and beyond.

We pray for the World's leaders and all who hold positions of authority and responsibility for all nations.

Lord, we come together before you with fresh minds as we overcome difficulties through Christ's resurrection. Lead us in your ways with compassion and love, to follow your way of life, and bring glory to your name.

Almighty God, teach us how to reconcile this world in peace and harmony through Christ. God we bring ourselves to you this day to bless us, and answer our prayers. We thank you for our relationship and friendship to each other. And for you to be our friend also forever and ever. Amen.

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 the risen Christ be with you:
and also with you.



*Sunday April 18th, 2021
Third Sunday of Easter
The Fig Tree Worship Resource*

Offering

Risen Christ, bless these gifts we bring, and bless us, heart, mind and soul, as we open ourselves to the surprising abundance of your love. Use these gifts, and use us to witness to that love and share your peace, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Notices

What can you do to share the peace of the risen Christ with those around you this week?
Is there someone on your mind who would be helped by a phone call, email or a visit? Do it.

Singing - Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like,
no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled
at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord,
at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome,
your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord,
at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment,
whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord,
at the end of the day.

Irish traditional melody. Words: Joyce Placzek 1901-53
Used with permission CCLI 206 729

Blessing

May the grace of God flow through us. May the love of God keep us whole. May the peace and presence of the Spirit be our guide. And the blessing of God be with us always.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Contributors this week:

Liturgy and Prayers -
*Rev. Nathaniel Akoi Atem, Orbost
Pelican Ministry Team*

Reflection:
*Rev. Jennie Gordon
Presbytery Minister*

*Presbytery of Gippsland
Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon
pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com*



*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia
with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*