



Sunday May 23rd, 2021

The Fig Tree Worship Resource



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

And the breath came into them and they lived.

As we light this candle remind us anew of your breath in our lungs. As we listen to our breath and feel it expanding our lungs bring us into the awareness of the breath of your Spirit. Bring us to life, Holy One.

Call to worship

Come, Holy Spirit,
 be as close to us as our breath,
 surprise us again with your presence amongst us,
 bless us with understanding and insight
 as we gather in your Spirit,
 as we long to live in justice
 inspired by your outpouring love.

Acknowledging

We find our shelter on the lands and by the waters of the First Peoples and we acknowledge their custodianship of this ancient land of the Holy Spirit, and pay respects to their elders; past, present and emerging. We commit ourselves anew to working for reconciliation and justice in this land.



Singing (TIS 100 verses 1, 2, 4, 7)

All creatures of our God and King,
 Lift up your voice and with us sing:
 alleluia, alleluia!
 O burning sun with golden beam,
 and silver moon with softer gleam:

*O praise Him, O praise Him,
 alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Swift- rushing wind that are so strong,
 and clouds that sail in heaven along,
 O praise Him, alleluia!
 fresh-rising morn, in praise rejoice,
 and lights of evening, find a voice:

Dear mother earth, who day by day
 unfold rich blessings on our way,
 O Praise him, alleluia!
 All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
 let them his glory also show;

Let all things their Creator bless,
 And worship Him in humbleness,
 O praise Him, alleluia!
 Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
 And praise the Spirit, Three-in-One:

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Prayer

Spirit of God your works are manifold.

All that is, you have made in your wisdom.
 We give thanks today for the creatures we live alongside. For the bees and the worms and the un-noticed insects which help our gardens and food sources to thrive, we give thanks.



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For the fish and the coral and all that swims or creeps or floats or burrows in the sea, we give thanks.

For the animals in the fields and the bush, and in the trees and in our homes, for the birds of the air and the insects and the spiders. For all of your creatures we give thanks.

In your wisdom you have made them all. But sometimes we wonder about your wisdom in making us! Forgive us for our destructive ways. You have assured us of our worth by coming to us as one of us. May we also treat all that is with this embodied worth, as an expression of your love. For you breathe on us and we live.

We are amazed again that we are forgiven and loved. Already you have reached out to us in your love. When our bones are weary and we feel dry and scattered you gather us in, breathe new life into us and re-energise us with the breath of your Spirit. We are blessed indeed.

Listening

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Acts 2: 1-21

Romans 8: 22-27

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

Reflecting -

I love reading these stories in the lectionary in a 3 year rotation. But the danger of hearing anything repeatedly is that we fail to really hear them deeply. Sometimes though, something strikes us again unexpectedly. And of course, sometimes our context changes and that is one of the gifts that our devastating 2020 has given us. I hear again

the thread of “all in this together” as I look at the readings for the week. We tell the story of Pentecost all over again in the Acts passage. The bones are knitted back together and given life when Ezekiel speaks to them as God commanded him. The Holy Spirit prays for us in the Romans passage and we are shown an image of redemption and reconciliation. The Psalms passage tells us that the Spirit is present in and through the whole cosmos, and that the redemption picture is an entirely new order of epic proportion! Every little creature, and every created thing, holds the breath of the Spirit sustained in the unity of creation. The phrase ‘teeming with life’ is such a rich image.

The truth of it is though, that despite knowing this, I need the reminder again and again. Sometimes life feels arid and dry and it is hard to see past my own fringe!

And there are times we miss the glaringly obvious. This morning as I meditated and listened to my breath, the missing piece from this reflection came at me like a tsunami. As I breathed in and out the thought of not being able to breathe and the absolute need for oxygen came alongside the devastating and unbearable images from India and its surrounds. Where is the breath of the Spirit in these images? They are more like the dry bones of pain and grief. And where is the breath of the Spirit in the “I can’t breathe” statements of Black Lives Matter. And lest we think that is an overseas issue, so many of our own indigenous folks are dying in custody. Where is the Spirit of Life here?

I wonder too how others hear these passages. How might bushfire survivors and firefighters hear violent winds and tongues of fire? We hold so much trauma in our lives, reminiscent in a way of the desolate valley filled with bones. All of creation groans as it longs for redemption. But the Spirit prays for



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us with groans too deep for words. We pray for one another in the same way, and sometimes that is all we have to offer and it feels like not enough. Let us continue to love our world and to live in hope as we pray for it and do all we can to make a difference. The Spirit is present with us in our deep longing. Take a moment now to pray in the silence and groaning of your heart. Listen to your breathing and ask for hope and love. And then go share it with a groaning world.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Breath-taking, breath-making God, You sustain us in your Spirit and reveal to us the unity of your creation. And we are a part of it, given the joy of the care of it, given the privilege to pray for it, and for the people you have made and loved.

Your Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but your Spirit prays for us, and in us and through us.

There are people and situations amongst us who grieve and are in pain. We hold the ones who are sick, who are struggling with age, or disability, or unemployment, or the struggles of change and adjustment.

For our churches and our communities of faith, we give you thanks. May we be places of justice and compassion, hospitality and welcome.

We pray for our children and young people, for our schools and places of training. May they be places of learning and of belonging and support. We pray for our young families in the daily activity of life and the relationships which hold them together.

We pray for those who are incarcerated, for prisoners who are in jail, for those detained in immigration, for prisoners of relationships

or of their own homes, or of addiction. For prisoners of debt and despair and the relentlessness of being caught in the poverty cycle.

We pray for our region, for the wise and respectful use of our natural resources. Bring us compassion for your creation that we might keep each other accountable for its sustainability and its wellbeing. We can only flourish when our environment flourishes also.

Help us to be deep listeners and truth tellers. Help us to always operate from a place of love, our very reason for being. May we live and dwell in justice, in right relationship.

We pray for our cosmos and our planet. We are so tiny in the scheme of things, yet we also wield great power to be custodians of your created world.

In the name of the one in whom we abide,
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 forever. Amen.

Passing the peace

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



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Offering

The vision of old dry bones being given life reminds us of what God does with us and our community. As you think of what you might offer today, how do you envision God moving to bring life where none seems to be present?

Notices

This resource is for sharing widely. It is intended to resource worship leaders lay and ordained and to encourage folk who may not have been used to worship leading to begin now.

Singing (TIS 407)

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew;
That I may love all that you love
And do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure;
Until with you I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
and all my life refine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with your fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with you the perfect life
Of your eternity.

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Blessing

**The breath of the awesome and inspiring
God is your invitation to life in its fullness.
Share life with all you encounter. Be inspired
to love and to serve in the name of God who
is Source, Wisdom and Breath.**

*Liturgy & Reflection this week is
thanks to Rev. Wendy Elson*

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