



Sunday May 30th, 2021 - Trinity Sunday

The Fig Tree Worship Resource



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

As we gather for worship you are invited to light a candle.

As the flame flickers into life we ponder the mystery of God revealed to us as one in three and three in one...

Call to worship

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below,
praise God above, you heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

from Together in Song 768, used with permission CCLI 206 729

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

We praise and worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit in this gathering, but we recall also the call upon us to live out a reconciling and just faith wherever we are. As part of this we acknowledge the place we worship and the lands and waters of the traditional custodians and commit again to a journey together towards justice and reconciliation.

Singing Praise with joy (Tis 179)

Praise with joy the world's Creator,
God of justice, love and peace,
Source and end of human knowledge,
Force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory -
Power to rescue and release.

Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,
Frees the captive, finds the lost,
Heals the sick, upsets religion,
Fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence -
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us,
Liberating truth from pride,
Forging bonds where race or gender,
Age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure -
Foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
One God in community,
Calling Christians to embody
Oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
Shown Christ's vibrant unity.

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Prayer



We give you thanks, God of life and love, for the ways you make yourself known to us. We hear of Jesus praying to the Father and wonder of the relationship there, and our adoption as the children of God. We hear Jesus' desire that we not be orphaned and know the coming of the Holy Spirit as breath of God among us.

As we offer thanks for your deep and mysterious revelation to us through time and place, we recall that our response to you has often fallen short, even of what we might hope for ourselves. So as we offer our praise and thanks we remember the God of the covenant, reaching out again and again, reaching out with Jesus Christ, reaching out with the Holy Spirit that we might find our way and our life in you.

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So amidst the reality of our struggles in life and faith, we pray you forgive us, remind us, and renew us, that we may meet the mystery of grace as it transforms and enlivens us as your people. In all of this through Jesus we can boldly say, we are made new, **thanks be to God. Amen.**

Listening

Psalm 29 & John 3:1-17

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

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

How do you understand God? If someone asked you that question, how would you answer?

I would imagine that you might find it rather hard to do, especially if you tried to explain God in just a few words.

The reality is that God is a mystery, that cannot be **fully** explained by mere humans. Certainly, we can describe God, at least in part, by using such words as creator, redeemer, saviour and almighty, but after a while we realise that no words do full justice to God. God is beyond even our most sophisticated explanations and doctrines, for God is a mystery.

Trying to explain God is like trying to explain love, which is another mystery. They are not puzzles which can be solved by finding all the right pieces and putting them in the right order, for in mysteries there is always more to discover than we will ever know.

However, we do need to be able to talk about God in some sort of coherent way, in order that we can grow in our understanding of God and in our discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ, and so that we can share the good news of the Gospel. To do this, we need to be able to understand something of the nature of God and of our relationship with God.

Christianity is monotheistic, we worship one God. We believe that there is one true God, and that God is the one who became the God of the Jewish people when he called Abram out of Haran and offered to him the promised land and many descendants if he would obey and follow Him. But our worshipping of that One God is complicated by the fact that we also believe in Jesus Christ, God's own Son, who himself is divine and to be worshipped, and equal to God the Creator/Father/Redeemer. And we also believe in the Holy Spirit, who is God's presence with us in the world, guiding and strengthening us.

This makes it seem to some people that Christians worship three Gods.

To refute this misunderstanding, the early church fathers developed the doctrine of the Trinity to try to give some coherence and a way of understanding our relationship with God, and to make clear that Christianity is monotheistic. They said that God consists of three 'persona' in relationship with each other- Father/Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit, but they are all aspects of the One God – indivisible and incomplete with each other. Together they make up the One God.

The Trinity is an attempt, although imperfect, of describing something of the fullness and relatedness of God, and it helps remind us of the overflowing love that lies at the heart of God. God the Father loves God the Son, who returns that love and also loves the Holy Spirit, who loves the Father, who loves the Holy Spirit.

All that love flows to embrace us and redeem us as we are reminded of in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

But like all human attempts to understand God the Trinity is incomplete. As Justo Gonzalez has said, "Trinity is a mystery, not a puzzle. Love is a mystery, a cross word is a puzzle. You try to solve a puzzle, you stand in awe before the mystery."



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There is no doubt in my mind that we can never fully understand God. There will always be something of God that is concealed from our eyes, or that we are not open to seeing or understanding. However, what is of most importance is to know that God loves us and that God wants to be in relationship with us. We are called to embrace that love and the forgiveness and guidance that comes with it. We may never fully know God, but we are fully known by God, who still keeps loving us despite all of our failures and frailties. Amen.

Responding: ***Prayers for World & Community***

God of deep mystery and wonder, you call us to be salt and light, to be the body of Christ in the world. So we pray for the spaces we inhabit, for people we care for, and for a world that is overwhelmed by pandemic and in need of comfort.

We pray for countries who are overwhelmed - with health systems failing, infection rates alarming, death rates beyond comprehension. We pray for a fair sharing of resources - medical systems, workers and protection of those on the front line; repatriation where possible; the just sharing of vaccines. We pray for families who are stuck on foreign soil, or those who endure long separations through closed borders.

We offer our prayers for leaders in Australia who make difficult decisions daily that impact on many. May the different levels of government work creatively together for the good of all with compassion and generosity.

We pray for the church, for all who are moved by the mystery of Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Guide us and challenge us to be the people you wish us to be. As we pray, inspire us to offer practical care to those we remember in our prayers.

We offer prayers for those close to us - neighbours, family and friends who face challenges and struggles. Help us find words of

love or be present in ways that share your love and grace.

You may wish to pray aloud or in silence for particular people or places ...

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.

Offering

While God cannot be fully known to us, we can respond to God's mystery with generosity. What does it mean to do so today and how does that shape our giving of gifts and self in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Notices

The COVID gathering rules have changed for places of worship from May 28th. We can gather in larger groups, but check the updates for the latest information.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/>

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Singing - Guide me great Redeemer
(TiS 569)

Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and ever more,
Feed me now and ever more.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the living waters flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield,
Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee,
I will ever give to Thee.

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Blessing

Go now into the world,
and bear the image of the one in three
and three in one - love, life, mystery.

As you are sent, so are you blessed:
The blessing of God Almighty be upon you,
in the name of the Father,
and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit. Amen

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