



# Sunday June 13th, 2021

## The Fig Tree Worship Resource



### **Gathering & Lighting the Candle**

Bring some seeds that can be sown to grow vegetables or flowers. Scatter a few around the base of the candle. Keep some for the prayers. Bring a small envelope for each person.

Light the candle.

Christ is the light of the world.



### **Call to worship**

Come everyone, come into this time of worship  
leave the regrets that weigh you down,  
leave the grudges and the gripes,  
bring your open heart, your ready voice,  
your love, your life.

Come Spirit of God, rest on us all,  
fill us with the fire of your eternal presence  
so that we might shine your light  
for all to see.

### **Acknowledging**



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

As we gather we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this occupied land that was never sold or ceded. This land that is in need of deep healing. We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging and commit ourselves to walking together in justice and truth.

### **Singing - Come to be our hope TiS 688**

NB: Can easily be sung to ODE TO JOY

Come to be our hope, O Jesus  
come to set our people free.  
From oppression, come, release us,  
you alone give liberty.  
Come release from every prison  
those who suffer in our land.  
In your love we find the reason  
still to live and understand.

Come to build your new creation;  
show the way of servanthood;  
give new life to every nation,  
changing evil into good.  
Come and open our tomorrow  
for a kingdom, now so near.  
Take away all human sorrow,  
give us hope against our fear.

Words: Jaci Maraschin *alt*, Music: Marcilio de Oliveira Filho (1989) Used with permission CCLI 206 729

### **Listening**

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13) 14-17



### **Prayer**

#### **Singing: Behold, behold...**

words and music: John Bell AoV2-085

*Behold, behold, I make all things new,  
beginning with you  
And starting from today  
Behold, behold, I make all things new,  
My promise is true  
For I am Christ the way.*

God who makes all things new  
we come with awe and gratitude  
for the gift of this day.  
The winter brings fresh blessings:  
crunchy frost and clear blue skies,  
howling winds and soaking rains,  
snow on the peaks and roaring surf.  
Our senses are filled with your glory.

In the changing of the seasons,  
we witness the parables of Jesus unfolding.  
Harvest is over, soils are bare,  
seeds are being prepared for sowing.  
The cycles of the year teach us  
about preparing, tending, waiting,  
then watching for 'the green blade rising  
from the buried grain'.

We wonder too, at the way you renew us,  
new thoughts, new experiences of you,  
new ways of sharing your life.

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In the quiet we bring our thanks to you,  
for all the new things you are doing,  
within and around us.

(time of quiet)

Singing: Behold, behold...

There are times when life is bare and barren,  
and we lose hope,  
and other times when we struggle to grow,  
or have bits that need to be pruned,  
or are too impatient  
to wait and watch for what you are doing.

Remind us again of your constant forgiveness,  
your freedom, your renewal.  
Make us new so that we can walk your way  
with light steps and a joyous heart.

Make us new, over and over,  
through and through,  
so that we can be your church,  
fresh and alive, with hope in our sails  
and your guiding love at the helm.

In the quiet we wait, we watch and we listen,  
knowing that you will make us new.

(time of quiet)

Singing: Behold, behold...

Friends, from Pauls' letter to the Corinthians we  
read: *So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new  
creation: everything old has passed away; see,  
everything has become new!*

**Thanks be to God, Amen**

### Listening

Read: Mark 4:26-34

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

### Reflecting - Rev. Nathaniel Akoi Atem

I have found the similarity of the parable of the  
growing seed to be related to the parable of the  
Fig Tree. By saying this: these two parables have a  
lot in common with each other based on the

kingdom of God. They are both parables of the  
kingdom, that is, they both tell us something  
about what the kingdom of God is like. They both  
have to do with leaves, seeds and with  
fruitfulness and growth.

So it is appropriate that we reflect together this  
message on the parable of the growing seed. The  
reading of today reminds me and I can quote  
from the previous devotion of Rev Arnie  
Wierenga in our last Church Council meeting in  
Orbost, when he shared the parable of the barren  
Fig Tree in the Gospel of Luke 13: 6-9.

In which I had been interested in the questions of,  
"What can be pruned to help us flourish? What  
expectations/habits can we let go of?"

I had related this question to my Sudanese  
cultural background, where the Sudanese men do  
not cook because they are men! But we let go of  
that shame here in Australia and learnt to cook in  
order to support our wives.

In the reading according to Mark, examples I can  
use to explain this are: If we are disciples in the  
world, we have left our home and family to share  
the Gospel with people who have need to hear  
about Christ. Then we have to minister every  
morning and every evening, we pray that God will  
use us to bring his people to life and to grow his  
kingdom.

And yet the years go by, and we do not see the  
growth. What is happening?

You are a small church for instance in a  
community of people, most of them are not  
interested in Christ. Every Sunday you come  
together to worship God and proclaim his praises,  
you faithfully teach God's word and share Christ  
with friends and neighbours as you have  
opportunity. You plan events to reach out to the  
community, some people visit and stay.

Many others come and go. You are praying and  
working like crazy to see your church fruitfully  
grow, but no matter what you do you seem to  
stay about the same size. What is happening?

Sisters and brothers in Christ in Gippsland regions  
and in our Church. Jesus describes for us in these  
two parables, the parable of the growing seed  
and the parable of the Fig Tree.

Jesus told us these parables in order to encourage  
us to keep on sharing Christ in our regions even  
when we do not see results.

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The kingdom of God does not always grow the way we think it should grow. So we need to grasp hold of these parables so that we may understand how God's kingdom grows, and what is our part in it all.

The first thing we need to learn from this parable I think is that if we want to see God's kingdom grow, we must plant the seeds. This is the most basic step when it comes to gardening or to ministry.

We are a farming community here in Gippsland. We are always preparing the ground and ploughing the land and getting everything ready for planting the seeds.

### **Responding:**

#### **Prayers for World & Community**

*You may choose to invite people to scatter some seeds near the candle as these prayers are offered*

We can not know the many ways  
you work in the world,  
God of all goodness,  
but we ask that you hear these prayers,  
like seeds we sow,  
and through your mysterious presence,  
grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.

We pray for places of ongoing war  
and conflict in our world:  
*(name some places, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

We prayer for places struggling with the  
pandemic with inadequate health care and  
insufficient access to vaccines:

*(name some places, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for lives and livelihoods

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impacted by lockdowns;  
businesses struggling, events disrupted,  
families kept apart, lives lost:  
*(name some people, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for our world,  
national and community leaders  
in the constant challenge  
of making wise decisions in these times:  
*(name some people, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for our church leaders,  
toiling to lead in a time of change,  
looking and listening for the new things:  
*(name some people, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

We pray for those we hold in our hearts,  
whose struggles we see  
and whose pain we share,  
and we pray for each other and ourselves:  
*(name some people, scatter seed)*

**grow hope and healing,  
shelter and comfort,  
reconciliation and peace.**

Jesus, teller of parables,  
open our ears to hear you,  
our hearts to love you  
and our mouths to participate  
in speaking your new words into being.

As we pray the prayer you taught your  
disciples:

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,



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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**

Bless the gifts we bring; our money, our time,  
our faithfulness and our selves. Bless them  
and use them where there is need. Bless  
them and bless us as we participate in the  
growing of your goodness and grace, for the  
love of all. Amen.

### **Notices**

How are your people and your community in  
the latest responses to and challenges of the  
COVID-19 pandemic? What impact have the  
lockdowns had on people and on your church  
community? What new things might God  
have grown through this time?

### **Singing: God gives us a future TiS 687**

God gives us a future, daring us to go  
Into dreams and dangers  
on a path unknown.  
We will face tomorrow  
in the Spirit's power,  
We will let God change us,  
for new life starts now.

We must leave behind us  
sins of yesterday,  
For God's new beginning  
is a better way.  
Fear and doubt and habit  
must not hold us back:  
God gives hope, and insight,  
and the strength we lack.

Holy Spirit, teach us  
how to read the signs,  
How to meet the challenge  
of our troubled times.  
Love us into action,  
stir us into prayer,  
Till we choose God's life  
and find our future there.

Words: Elizabeth J Smith 1956 - Music: John Michael Brierley  
1932- *Used with permission* CCLI 206 729

### **Blessing**

*Offer each person an envelope and invite  
them to take some of the scattered seeds to  
sow in a pot or in the ground, or to give to  
someone who will use them.*

As you gathered us in, so send us out,  
Spirit of life.  
Send us out as new people,  
blessed to have shared this time together,  
open to the new things you are doing,  
and ready to respond as we are able.

Children of God, followers of Jesus,  
go knowing that you are loved  
and that you have a particular part  
in God's mysterious and wonderful work  
in this world.

Sow seeds of extravagant love and blessing,  
wherever possible,  
and watch and wait,  
with hope and joy in your hearts,  
today and always.  
And all the people say: **Amen**

*Reflection: Rev. Nathaniel Akoi Atem,  
Pelican Ministry team, Orbost*

*Liturgy: Rev. Jennie Gordon  
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