



## Sunday June 27th, 2021 The Fig Tree Worship Resource



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

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Light the candle,  
see how the flame comes to life on the wick,  
and lifts, strong and steady.  
It reminds us that Christ is the light,  
shining love that reaches into the dark.  
Sense that light shining for you,  
and be thankful.

### **Call to worship**

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Come, Spirit of light and life,  
shine into us with your radiance.  
Lift us up, fill us with hope.  
Raise us to life,  
so that in this time together,  
we can bring our whole selves  
in worship to God.  
Raise us to life,  
so that when we leave,  
we are empowered  
to serve the One who sends us,  
in Jesus' name, Amen

### **Acknowledging**

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As we are gathered, in this time and on this land, we honor the traditional custodians and pay respect to elders past and present. We remember again, our covenant: truth telling, justice and walking together, First and Second Peoples, as followers of Jesus.

### **Singing - O Christ, the healer TiS 638**

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Note: also goes well to the tune TALLIS CANON, or O WALLY WALLY. Frederick Pratt Green

O Christ, the healer, we have come  
to pray for health, to plead for friends.  
How can we fail to be restored,  
when reached by love that never ends?

From every ailment flesh endures  
our bodies clamor to be freed;  
yet in our hearts we would confess  
that wholeness is our deepest need.

How strong, O Lord, are our desires,  
how weak our knowledge of ourselves!  
Release in us those healing truths  
unconscious pride resists or shelves.

In conflicts that destroy our health  
we recognize the world's disease;  
our common life declares our ills.  
Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

Grant that we all, made one in faith,  
in your community may find  
the wholeness that, enriching us,  
shall reach the whole of humankind.



### **Prayer**

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*You may want to invite people to open their hands and lay them, palms facing upwards, on their knees as we pray.*

God whose hand reached out to us in Jesus,  
we give you thanks for all the ways  
your healing touch has blessed us:

For the beauty of the world  
for the magnificence of all creatures  
for the wonder of the stars  
and the mystery of the ocean  
**we open our hands in gratitude**

For the love of family  
for the kindness of strangers  
for the compassion of neighbours  
and the miracles of birth and death  
**we open our hands in gratitude**

For your light on our path  
for your ear when we cry  
for your laughter at daybreak  
and your hope in our hearts  
**we open our hands in gratitude**

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God of abundant goodness,  
we confess that there have been times  
when we have been less than generous  
with our love, life, money, time  
and our whole selves.  
We have not loved you, as we could.  
We have not loved each other  
or ourselves as we should.

In the quiet, we bring these things  
to you, asking for your forgiveness.  
*(time of quiet)*

Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
hear these words of faith:  
we are forgiven, healed and made new again,  
**Thanks be to God!**  
**Help us to keep our hands and hearts open,  
to give and receive the love  
that falls afresh on us each morning  
and stays with us through the night. Amen.**

### Listening

2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Mark 5:21-43

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

### Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

Many years ago, when I was on a Methodist Work Party to Samoa, we were invited to a Stewardship service in a village church. After the sermon, the head of each family was invited to announce their family's financial pledge for the coming year. It soon became clear that everyone's financial state was well known by the church leaders who had clear views on how much each family should give. And so it was that quite a few of the heads of families were told that their pledges were not sufficient and had to be increased, and some were told that their pledges were satisfactory, and a few told that they were too high! Generosity was expected of all members.

Now we might find it rather hard to accept that the church leaders could tell their parishioners how much to give; but their call to the church to be generous in its giving certainly would have been supported by the Apostle Paul, who in today's reading from the Second Letter to the Corinthians was urging their church to be generous in their giving.

He certainly makes it clear that he is not commanding the Corinthians to be generous givers, but rather he points out that one of the out workings of the love and grace of God poured into the hearts of Christians is compassion and generosity.

As Paul sees it, the Corinthian church, as those incorporated into the body of Christ and baptised into the river of his influence, are to see themselves as called to live out the life of God that they saw modelled in the life of Jesus Christ. In other words, they are to join in God's loving of the world. And one of the ways that they can express this loving is in their giving to help their brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the heart of Paul's theology of giving.

However, Paul isn't above also using a carrot and a stick to help them see that they should give generously. The carrot, the incentive, is to point out how generous giving will reflect well on them. And the stick is two-fold. Firstly, he points out how generous the Macedonian church has been despite their poverty, the implication being that the much wealthier Corinthian church would not want to be seen to be mean or out given by those who were much poorer. Secondly, in the verses that follow on from today's reading, he points out that they would be shaming him if they did not keep previously made promises to contribute to this appeal. Shame was a big thing in that society and culture, and Paul evidently thought that they wouldn't want to have him embarrassed.

But what does all this say to us? Well, clearly Paul's words about the call for Christians to join in God's loving of the world are addressed to us as



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well as to our forebears in the faith. And clearly, living as we do in a relatively wealthy country, those of us who have more than enough to provide for the essentials of life have a duty of care to our brothers and sisters in Christ who do not have enough to eat or who lack housing or other basic needs.

But there's another reason for generosity that is present in Paul's writing that we haven't yet addressed. And that is the link between joy and generosity that is suggested by Paul as he talks about the generosity of the Macedonians. The great German theologian Paul Tillich taught that joy is different from superficial happiness or pleasure. He said that joy, which is deep and abiding, is the result of fulfilment of our true purpose. Now, when we are loving, when we abide in the loving spirit and purpose and example of Jesus, then we realise the fulfilment of our true purpose, and the result is joy. We find joy in fulfilment; we find fulfilment in God's abundance; and God's abundance is love.

This is what Paul called upon the Corinthians to do following the generous example of their Macedonian brothers and sisters who "gave according to their means, and even beyond their means." (2 Cor 8:3). This is what we also are called to do, following in the example of Jesus Christ, and sharing in his love. Amen.

### **Responding:**

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

*(words from the first hymn)*

*O Christ, the healer, we have come  
to pray for health, to plead for friends.  
How can we fail to be restored,  
when reached by love that never ends?*

We pray for our world:  
for countries at war,  
for places battling the pandemic,  
for nations drowning under rising tides,  
for communities on the edge of existence.

**Bring healing and hope, God of all,  
and help us, who have much,  
share with those who have less  
with your joy and love in our hearts.**

We pray for our nation:  
for the widening divide between rich and poor,  
for the privilege of some at the cost of many,  
for the horror of history and the legacy of loss,  
for families divided and lives at breaking point,  
**Bring healing and hope, God of all,  
and help us, who have much,  
share with those who have less  
with your joy and love in our hearts.**

We pray for our church:  
struggling like a boat tossed in a storm,  
longing to give what the world will not take,  
witnessing wonder in big ways and small  
and unsure of what lies ahead.  
**Bring healing and hope, God of all,  
and help us, who have much,  
share with those who have less  
with your joy and love in our hearts.**

We pray for our friends, family and ourselves:  
*(time of quiet)*

*(last verse of the first hymn)*  
*Grant that we all, made one in faith,  
in your community may find  
the wholeness that, enriching us,  
shall reach the whole of humankind.*  
as we pray together:

#### **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.

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### ***Passing the peace***

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

### ***Offering***

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*Now, when we are loving, when we abide in the loving spirit and purpose and example of Jesus, then we realise the fulfilment of our true purpose, and the result is joy. We find joy in fulfilment; we find fulfilment in God's abundance; and God's abundance is love. (from the reflection)*

Bless these gifts of love, Spirit of abundance. Bless the hearts that offer these gifts that they may be filled with joy. Bless the gifts that they may assist the work of the church to bring hope, lifting up the downtrodden, healing the broken and offering life in your name. Amen.

### ***Notices***

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### ***Singing Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665***

John L. Bell & Graham Maule

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 kingdom'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.

1998 WGRG, Iona Community  
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### ***Blessing***

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People of the living Spirit,  
pilgrims on the way,  
go knowing that you are loved,  
wildly and without limit,  
beyond your own understanding!

Go knowing that you have, within you,  
a light that defeats darkness  
and a joy that cannot be quenched.

Shine that light of Christ at all times,  
and be generous in your living,  
with words, with love,  
with deeds of compassion and kindness  
and your joy will be contagious.

**God to love and to serve God,  
in the name of Christ, Amen.**

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