



Sunday Oct 10th, 2021 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Today is World Mental Health Day and also the start of Anti-Poverty week. As we light our candle we seek justice for all people. We seek companionship in the loneliness and despair. And we seek a fair go for those doing it tough. Holy light in the darkness, may the light of your presence infuse our interactions and encounters. Infuse our world with the light of your love.

Call to worship

**Pass us not, O gentle Saviour,
hear our humble cry.**

We stand before you
in our prayers and worship.

Pass us not, O sorrowing one,
For you know our comings in
and our goings out.

Pass us not, O one who hears our prayers,
For you see our hearts
and know our longing for you.

Together and in solidarity,
we approach you this day
yearning for you as you yearn for us.

**We approach the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need.
Unite us in your Spirit
and surround us with your love.**

Acknowledging



*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress*

You have shared your earth, your sea and your skies as gift, Creative God. This day we acknowledge the traditional owners and we pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging. We covenant to be truthful and justice seeking in all we do.

Singing - Come thou long expected Jesus TiS 272

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every loving heart.

Born they people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

w: Charles Wesley 1707-88

m: adapted from a chorale in 'Psalmody Sacra'
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Prayer

Beloved of God, we come united in prayer.
Let us pray.

Sometimes God we wonder where you are. We look around and see the sadness and the sorrow. Then we remember our own participation in the systems which contribute to the pain of others. We seek forgiveness, from you and one another.

Lord, hear our prayer

We wake up each day determined to be different, to take on more of your character and to be our best selves. Then we have our first cuppa and, in frustration, we realise we have already fallen short of our own hopes and expectations. Where are you God?

Lord, hear our prayer

The idea of giving all we have to the poor is great, until we think about actually doing it. And then we feel the frustration again. Our intentions are

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like wax, they melt out of shape without us even noticing.

And then we remember that you called us because you love us, you are close beside us whether we meet our own expectations or not. You softly say our true name, “Beloved”, and we can rest in the knowledge that you have been with us since before our birth and you have fed us on your sustaining mercy and grace. Nothing separates us from you.

Holy God we seek healing and wholeness, for ourselves and each other. Restore us and rejuvenate us so we can be the light and love in your world again.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen

Listening

Read: Psalm 22 1-15,
Hebrews 4:12-16,
Mark 10:17-31,

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

Reflecting - Rev. Sandra Houghton

Have you noticed that there have been rather a lot of television programs that feature forensic investigators and pathologists? There are programs like ‘Silent Witness’ where the pathologists take centre stage solving difficult diagnostic cases, and there are shows like ‘Midsomer Murders’ and ‘Vera’ where they provide the vital clues that help the intrepid detectives solve the murder mysteries. Those things which are not visible are revealed by their detailed scrutiny and a host of specialised tests.

The reading from the book of Hebrews contains a similar picture to that of the pathologist investigating the human body. It says “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword,” And it then gives imagery that reminds us of a surgeon using a scalpel to open up the human body for surgery when it says, “piercing until it divides soul from spirit,

joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.” Hebrews 4:12-13

The imagery is very strong. Under the scrutiny of God, nothing can be hidden. Everything is exposed to God’s penetrating gaze. Just as the pathologist finds the hidden cause of death or illness, God can see what is going on in us deep below the surface.

We can hide our thoughts, feelings, desires, hurts, belief or unbelief from our family, our friends, our minister, and maybe even deceive ourselves, but nothing is hidden from God. God sees all that we are, and all that we could be – our gifts, our potential, our strengths and our weaknesses, our successes and our failures. God longs for us to be open to really being his disciples in the world. Longs for us to use fully our gifts and our potential

What does God see in us which is hidden?

Does God see in us a willingness to trust God and seek to be God’s disciples in all of our lives, including being open to God’s new possibilities? To take risks for the sake of the gospel? To put God first?

In the gospel reading, we have the story of the rich man who came to Jesus earnestly seeking guidance on how to inherit eternal life. What was it, I wonder, that God in Jesus saw when he looked into that young man’s heart? For there must have been a reason for Jesus to ask him to sell everything and give the proceeds to the poor, and then, follow him. After all, this wasn’t something that Jesus asked other people to do. What was it that Jesus saw that made him put such a demand upon the man?

In the way that the story unfolds, it would seem that Jesus saw that wealth was the most important thing to the man. It distracted away from a full embracement of God’s kingdom and away from discipleship. And so, it proved, for the man went sadly away.

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But if we are honest, we will realise that under the scrutiny of God's eyes, that there is much in our lives that distracts us also. And that our discipleship is sometimes half-hearted.

We, too, have to respond like the disciples did to Jesus saying, "Who then can be saved?"

We, too, need to hear Jesus' reply, "With man (humans) this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

It is only through God's grace that we can be saved. And it is only through God's grace that we can dare go on a journey of discipleship. God's scrutiny of our lives may involve judgement, but it also involves love and forgiveness and possibilities. God sees in us gifts and graces that God longs for us to use, and potential God wants us to fulfil. And God longs to guide us and encourage us into fullness of life. Thanks be to God.

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

Hear our prayers for a hurting world, we pray loving God. We do not understand why there is pain and suffering. Everyone suffers, those who we consider good or innocent, as well as those we are sometimes guilty of considering deserving. Yet we know that all people are loved by you, beyond our imagining.

And so, we bring before you firstly our friends and family, our loved ones who might be doing it tough. We think of those in our church groups who we know are struggling. We hold them gently and quietly in our hearts in a moment of silence.....

We pray for those in other places in our world. We pray for Afghanistan. We are so very sad that there is so much suffering for the people. It is always the vulnerable who suffer the most. Transform our world we pray.

Transform our own country too. We pray for love

and compassion on those seeking shelter on our shores, for those who are homeless in any form. We pray for our families, for the teenagers and for the children. We pray for our schools. We feel like our world has tilted a bit with Covid. Help us to find our balance, and be the salt and the light as you ask of us.

We especially pray this day for those whose mental health is shaky, for those struggling through pandemic shutdowns, for those whose mental health is precarious even without Covid. We pray for those affected by addictions of all kinds and other entrapments which hold them captive. We pray for broken and distressed relationships. We pray for flourishing for all. Give us true compassion and a heart to make a difference.

And we pray with our hearts open and sorrowing, for those for whom poverty is their heartache and struggle. We know you have a heart for the poor and so we cry for justice and a true fair go. Help us to make choices that show we are truthful in our prayers. We acknowledge the words in our gospel reading today, help us to regard material things as things to be shared, along with your grace, mercy and compassion.

Hear our prayers for others this day and use us to make a world of difference as we share of your abundant blessings. The prayer Jesus gave us is not just words, and we pray it together from our hearts.

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.



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Passing the peace

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

Offering

We take this moment and use this prayer to give you thanks for your many blessings. We share with others through our offering of our time and talents and monetary gifts. Use us and our gifts to make our world a fairer and more just place to be, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Notices - from the World Health Organisation

Mental Health Care for All - let's make it a reality.

On World Mental Health Day, 10 October, it will have been more than 18 months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some countries, life is returning to some semblance of normality; in others, rates of transmission and hospital admissions remain high, disrupting the lives of families and communities.

In all countries, the pandemic has had a major impact on people's mental health. Some groups, including health and other frontline workers, students, people living alone, and those with pre-existing mental health conditions, have been particularly affected. At the same time, a WHO survey conducted in mid-2020 clearly showed that services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders had been significantly disrupted during the pandemic.

Yet there is some cause for optimism. During the World Health Assembly in May 2021, governments from around the world recognized the need to scale up quality mental health services at all levels and endorsed WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030, including the Plan's updated implementation options and indicators for measuring progress.

It's time to capitalize on this renewed energy among government leaders to make quality mental health care for all a reality. World Mental Health Day presents an opportunity for government leaders, civil society organizations and many others to talk

about the steps they are already taking and that they intend to take in support of this goal.

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day/2021>

What are you going to do today to support mental health, for yourself and for others?

Singing - Christ be my leader TiS 624

Christ be my leader by night as by day;
safe through the darkness, for he is the way.
Gladly I follow, my future his care,
darkness is daylight when Jesus is there.

Christ be my teacher in age as in youth,
drifting or doubting, for he is the truth.
Grant me to trust him, though shifting as sand,
doubt cannot daunt me, in Jesus I stand.

Christ be my saviour in calm as in strife;
death cannot hold me, for he is the life.
Nor darkness, nor doubting, nor sin and its stain
can touch my salvation, in Jesus I reign.

Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926-
Scottish traditional melody
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Blessing

Dear ones, hold fast then to your confession.
We have approached the throne of grace
with boldness, so that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need. You
are blessed indeed.

Go now to serve and bless others. And may
mercy, grace and peace be your companions.

Liturgy & Prayers:

Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson
Wonthaggi/Inverloch, Shearwater Ministry Team

Reflection:

Rev. Sandra Houghton
Supply - Sale, Currawong Ministry Team

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



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