



Sunday Oct 17th, 2021 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Psalm 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honour and majesty.

Light the candle

**The light of Christ shines in the darkness
and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

Call to worship

Job 38:4 - 7

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements--surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?"

God of mirth and mystery,
of unimaginable creativity
and unmeasurable power,
gather us in as your people today.
Alone and connected, apart and together,
bless us with your Spirit
as we learn from Jesus to be a servant people.
Be present in this sacred time,
hold us, teach us, love us, lead us.
In the name of the Holy
Three in One, One in Three, Amen.

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening deeply to sacred stories and accounts of hurt and harm, truth telling in spaces of doubt and disdain, and seeking justice where it has been scarce, absent and misused.

Singing - Stars & planets TiS 186

Sung to the familiar tune PRAISE MY SOUL TiS 134

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
galaxies that swirl through space,
powers hid within the atom,
cells that form an infant's face:
these, O God, in silence praise you;
by your wisdom they are made.

Skies adorned with sunset splendour,
silent peaks in calm repose,
golden fields awaiting harvest,
foaming surf and fragrant rose:
earth, its bounty clothed with beauty,
echoes all creation's praise.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,
beast and fish and swarming insect,
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:
these, your creatures, join in chorus,
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,
born of dust but touched by grace,
torn apart by tongue and colour,
yet a single, striving race:
we, in whom you trace your image,
add our words to nature's song.

Gracious God, we bring before you
gifts of human life alone,
truth that throbs through song and story,
visions caught in paint and stone:
these, O God, we gladly offer,
gifts to praise the Giver's name.

Christ, the Word before creation
as creations' final goal,
once you came for earth's redemption;
by your Spirit make earth whole:
then, O God, the new creation
will your praise for ever sing.

w: Henry John Gauntlet 1805-76 m: John Goss 1800-80
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Prayer

Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent,

you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.

You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.
O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
ALL: Praise the LORD!

Our prayer continues

Our praise echoes long and strong,
singing out to greet you God of wonder,
yet, we confess,
that often we get so caught up in ourselves
and we lose sight of your glory.

For the times when we have demanded from life
the best place at the table, the smartest clothes,
the sweetest deal
without considering the cost to others.
Forgive us, **Forgive us,**

For the times when we have used words
that make us feel clever and important
while making others feel small
Forgive us, **Forgive us,**

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For the times when we have expected service
demanding that our needs are met,
pushing ahead of others
while missing the opportunity to serve ,
to wait patiently,
to listen for the longing around us.

Forgive us, **Forgive us,**
(time of quiet)

Here is the good news, sisters and brothers:
Jesus came to serve,
and teaches us to do the same.
Each time we get it wrong, we are forgiven.
Each time we wander off, we are found.
Each time we turn away, we are called back
by the One who will not leave us.
We can walk on, knowing we are loved.
We are forgiven, freed and made new again.
Thanks be to God, Amen.

Listening

Read: Mark 10:35-45

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

Reflecting - Rev Barbara Strickland

Who on earth do James and John think they are, with their audacious demand of Jesus? What a nerve these two have! Yet, Jesus gives them an amazingly polite response, just asking what it is they want. He might have cut them off at the outset, on hearing they were asking him to do for them "whatever we ask of you".

When they reply, they waste no time in staking their claim to the seats of honour, right up there, sharing the glory with Jesus.

Have you ever shared with someone an experience when you were really in a bad way? You might have been describing a terrible grief or a loss of some kind. You may have been at your wit's end and were hoping that this person, quite probably a friend, would give you support and empathy, but their reaction to what you shared from a deep pain was met inexplicably by a surface response. It seemed like they didn't "get" what you'd gone through, what you had hoped they might understand.



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Well, through the Gospel of Mark, we are told that Jesus has tried many times to explain to the disciples where he was headed, that his journey was taking him to a cross - that anyone who wanted to follow him had to be prepared to share the pain and suffering of that journey. Yes, there was an upside, a quite magnificent outcome for those who signed up and grasped what it meant to be his followers and friends. Jesus' road of suffering was leading inexorably to his death, but beyond that to the resurrection. Those who followed this Way would also experience resurrection and abundant life, but there was no costless way to be part of all this. To follow Jesus, the Christ, was demanding. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, there was no cheap grace, only costly discipleship.

So, Jesus must have been feeling disappointed at the very least, that none of the disciples, and here James and John, seemed to have gained the slightest understanding of what lay ahead for him and of the part he had hoped and still hoped they would play in being people of the Kingdom. That they still lacked an appreciation of his true role, was painfully apparent. Their focus, however, was on promoting themselves. And, if we are tempted to deride their behaviour, are we any different from the sons of Zebedee? How often do we approach Jesus with self-centred demands about what we think will be good for us, rather than listening for what Jesus might want for us and through us? Yet, Jesus entrusts the future of the Christian community to frail and flawed human beings. This is both challenging and encouraging.

Turning James and John's question around gets to the heart of the Gospel. Their demand, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you needs to be turned on its head by all disciples, then and now, into "Teacher, we want to do for you and for others whatever you ask of us." Jesus emphasised many times that it was only through obeying his commands that the measure of a disciple could be seen. There is little value in vaguely expressed hopes or weak intentions, only in actually doing the Word.

The challenge for us in the maelstrom of life is to become the people God wants us to be, not necessarily the people we want to be, and to find and fulfil our unique role of service in the Kingdom.

Going against our instinct to claim greatness through power and status and influence, we need to listen and hear the call to renounce our own desires and to serve with no expectation of any return. Paradoxically, therein we find our greatest joy and fulfilment.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Information and words from World Vision website:
[https://www.wvi.org/fragile-context/context/5-crises-t
he-world-can%27t-ignore-in-2021](https://www.wvi.org/fragile-context/context/5-crises-that-the-world-can%27t-ignore-in-2021)

We pray for people suffering from food insecurity:

50.5 million children under five acutely malnourished. In 2021, the effects of the global pandemic, ongoing conflict, and climate change are steadily increasing food insecurity for families and children.

Refrain: (may be sung - TIS 640)

Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbours we have from you.

We pray for Refugees:

In 2021, more children will be on the move than ever before in history. Last year more than 80 million people around the world were forced to flee their homes, around half of whom are under the age of 18. Violence and conflict are the main reasons people flee.

Refrain: (may be sung - TIS 640)

Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbours we have from you.

We pray for those suffering impacts of Climate Change:

The weather on our planet is becoming more extreme, with direct impacts on the poorest and most vulnerable children. Parents struggle to feed their children when rains are late or non-existent. On the other end of this scale are deadly floods and landslides that destroy crops and communities, and become a breeding ground for disease.

Refrain: (may be sung - TIS 640)

Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbours we have from you.

We pray for victims of Child Marriage and Gender Discrimination:

COVID-19 has created a crisis for girls around the world. As vulnerable families lose their incomes, girls are being sold into child marriage just to make ends

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meet. We believe that as many as 13 million extra child marriages will occur in the years immediately following the pandemic, with at least four million more girls married in the next two years. The global pandemic has also created an education disaster for vulnerable girls. COVID-19 lockdowns, meant to keep children and families safe from the pandemic, have seen teen pregnancy rates spike.

Refrain: *(may be sung - TiS 640)*

Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbours we have from you.

We pray for victims of Child Labour and Trafficking:

The number of children experiencing physical, emotional and sexual violence, both now and in the months and years to come is set to rise. As COVID-19 puts strain on family incomes, children are being forced to beg in the streets, or sent to work instead of going school just to help their families get by. In Asia alone, as many as 8 million children are being forced into begging and child labour because parents cannot afford to buy enough food.

Refrain: *(may be sung - TiS 640)*

Yesu, Yesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbours we have from you.

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

Bless what we give, God of abundant grace,
may we serve you in many ways, Amen.

Notices

Want to go to the Justice and International Mission Convention? Well, you can - online, - register here:
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/justice-and-international-mission-convention-2021-tickets-167812958075>

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Singing - O Christ the healer, TiS 638

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 clamour to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess,
that wholeness is our greatest 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 diagnose 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.

m: David McCarthy 1931- w: Frederick Pratt Green 1903
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Blessing

God of mirth and mystery,
of unimaginable creativity
and unmeasurable power,
send us onwards as your people today.
Alone and connected, apart and together,
bless us with your Spirit
as we learn from Jesus to be a servant people.
Be present with us at all times,
hold us, teach us, love us, lead us.
In the name of the Holy
Three in One, One in Three, Amen.

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