



First Sunday in Lent, March 6th, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

This Shaker song is believed to be written by Joseph Brackett (1797–1882). The tune *Simple Gifts* can be found at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simple_Gifts

Light the candle.
The light shines in the darkness
and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Prayer:
Lord, help us to keep our feet moving, our hands outstretched, and our hearts open to you. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, keep us from temptation and help us to do Your work in our world. Amen

Call to worship

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation. (*Psalm 91:14-16*)

Hearing these words of promise, let us worship this worthy God

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, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing - O for a thousand tongues TIS 210



Prayer

Lent is a journey
We journey with Jesus and the disciples
We journey again to the cross,
remembering and forgetting,
Remembering our journey with Jesus, forgetting those who have hurt us and forgiving.

Remembering that our God is a restful God while we live in a restless world.

Let us walk closer to God, closer to our neighbour, loving God, ourselves and our neighbour.

We know that we forget your wonder and try to do things in our own strength.

Forgive us

We forget that we are your people and behave as the world does.

Forgive us.

We forget the need to care for the resources of the world and your command to love our neighbour.

Forgive us.

We are loved, forgiven people. **Thanks be to God**

Listening

Read: Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

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

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Reflecting - Rev. Barbara Strickland

Lent has been called a time-out, a time when we stop doing what we usually do and examine our lives. It is time when we focus on what is important. In the season of Lent, we are invited to be intentional about our Christian commitment and practice.

A popular notion of this season is that we must “give up something” and various responses to that can be somewhat simplistic. Perhaps, rather, we could think about what is important to embrace. In seeing the bigger picture of faith. To question - how are we connected to God’s plan of love and care for the world? What part is ours to fulfil? What is our call and our challenge?

Our Scripture today presents the story of Jesus in the wilderness. We are told he was led there by the Spirit and tempted for forty days by the devil. Jesus is confronted with real temptations about using his power to gain instant results.

This account comes immediately after Jesus’ baptism where the voice from heaven declared that Jesus is God’s Son. The Spirit had anointed Jesus and now continues with him during this wilderness time of testing in preparation for his mission.

We are invited to accompany Jesus during this experience. It is not a path we readily choose, but a trip to the wilderness can be soul-building. Through need and challenge we can discover real life.

For Jesus, and for us, what is at stake is our identity. Who are we in the nitty gritty of life, when the pressures are great and when questions are thrown at us about what are our allegiances and priorities? The various temptations to compromise who we are as the beloved children of Almighty God can be very potent and attractive. We are constantly bombarded by the allure of power and influence, the seduction of self-interest and the appeal of the easy fix.

What did Jesus do? For each enticement of the devil, Jesus responded by quoting the Word of God. Jesus used the words of Holy Scripture as a reminder of God’s larger story and are a guide to us, also, as to how to respond when we are tempted. Jesus refused to allow himself to become distracted or diverted from his mission of service and his identity as the Son of God.

Jesus was well-acquainted with the words of scripture and readily able to bring these to mind. How well do we know life-giving words we can summon, to give us power and remind us of God’s promises? Might we grow our intent to commit the words of scripture to memory?

Perhaps, for us, Lent can provide an opportunity to learn that times of wilderness and temptation need not be moments of weakness, but rather places in which to encounter the Holy Spirit and gain strength.

The first week in Lent invites us to a life of abundance, which we can find in the practice of spiritual disciplines and in taking responsibility for our own soul health. We are assured of God’s care and protection.

The Scripture readings this week call us to focus, not on our challenges and the many temptations that surround us, but on God – God’s care, God’s Word, God’s protection and God’s equipping.

Jesus was called by the Spirit in baptism, tempted away from God in the wilderness, yet chose to remain faithful to his mission and ministry. We too can answer the call God issues to each of us, by fixing our attention on Jesus and trusting in God’s provision. Whatever we may face in the unknown future, God is our ever-present Friend and Guide through the Holy Spirit.

Singing - You who dwell Tis 48



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Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91)

We are invited to pray without ceasing. This is not a burden but a freeing gift, an invitation to stay present to our constant dance with you.

We hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; and all who live close to the threat of war and violence. We remember especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for nonviolent and peaceful resolutions of conflict. Give to us all hearts of hospitality and sanctuary, forgive us all our hostility and hatred. Bring all people to the humanity you give us, and to the reconciliation and healing for which you give your life.

We pray for all who suffer with Covid, those ill, health workers, particularly those in aged and under stress, governments struggling to provide vaccinations, those reluctant and unable to receive vaccinations.

We pray for our country and leaders, that their concentration may not be on power for themselves but on the good of all people in our nation.

We pray for our church, those who lead worship, those who participate and those who cannot, we pray for closer relations among all our churches.

We pray for our community, all those we encounter each week – particularly...

We pray for our families and ourselves, the prayers we don't say aloud but you know are in our hearts and we pray together the prayer Christ taught us:

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

God of Lenten journeys, as we offer these gifts in the name of Jesus we recall the temptations offered him and his determination to rebut them. May we find the strength to offer the fullness of who we are in our journey with Christ. Amen.

Notices

Each week through the season of Lent we invite you to engage in a daily Lenten space, *Beneath the Fig Tree*. You can find that on the last page of this resource.

Singing - Holy Spirit, go before us TiS 420

can be sung to AUSTRIA TiS 93

Blessing

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Let us leave this place and remember to do just that in all our work, play and rest.

In the name of the Creator, redeemer and sustainer. **Amen**



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Beneath the Fig Tree

a daily Lenten space:

For each day of Lent we will offer a bible reading and a comment or question for you to sit with. You could create a space that you go to each day at a particular time, light a candle, journal the images and thoughts that come to you, listen to music, or simply sit in silence. The prayer words might remain with you for the day and open you to the needs of others and the yearnings within.

Monday March 7th

Read: Psalm 27: 1

You may recall a time in your life when these words brought comfort, what images come to mind?

Prayer words: light / stronghold

Tuesday March 8th

Read: Psalm 27: 4

What is the one thing you long for? How do you dwell in God's house? Are your eyes open to God's beauty?

Prayer words: behold / inquire

Wednesday March 9th

Read: Psalm 27: 8

How do you hear the words of your heart?

Where might you find the face of God?

Prayer words: come / seek

Thursday March 10th

Read: Psalm 27: 13

What do you see in the land of the living?

How do you recognise the goodness of God?

Prayer words: goodness / living

Friday March 11th

Read: Psalm 27: 14

Do you need help with patience and waiting? What does it mean to have courage while you wait for God?

Prayer words: wait / courage

Saturday March 12th

Read: Luke 13: 34

Can you imagine being gathered under God's wings?

How do you hear this maternal longing from Jesus?

Prayer words: desire / gather

Other hymn suggestions for this week:

numbers are from Together in Song (TiS)

- 111 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty'
- 644 'Safe in the shadow of the Lord'
- 744 'Seek ye first'

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