



Sunday May 1st, 2022 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***



Call to worship

This is the season of Easter:
the celebration of resurrection,
the festival of hope,
the promise of new beginnings,
the dance of faith,
the song of joy,
the music of gladness,
the hymn of love.
Let us worship our life-giving God!

Opening Prayer

Come to us, Mother of the Ages,
weave us into faith.
Come to us, Wisdom in Humanity,
spin us into freedom.
Come to us, Nurturer of Community.
stitch us into the tapestry of your life,
that we may know the colour of hope,
experience the texture of grace,
and celebrate the fabric of wholeness
in the mystery of your creativity. **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, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing We are Fire and Water TiS 475

Prayer

Confession

For our foolish or careless use
of the gifts of your creation:
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

For our indifference to the needs of others,
our siblings in Christ for whom you died:
Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

For our neglect of the means of grace,
for superficial worship, for selfish prayer:
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

Assurance

Those who are in Christ are a new creation;
everything old has passed away;
see, the new has come!
All this is from God,
who was reconciled to us through Christ.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us:
'Your sins are forgiven.'

Thanks be to God.

Listening

It could be fun to sing an Alleluia between
every reading: TiS 720 - Halle, halle, halle...

Read: Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

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



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Reflecting - Rev. Barbara Strickland

Today's gospel story is one which gives much hope and encouragement to fallible disciples. It occurs in the final chapter of John, which scholars believe was probably added later. After all, chapter 20 had ended with verses 30 and 31, which outline the purpose of John's Gospel and certainly sound as though they are providing a conclusion to the whole gospel. What do we gain, then, from chapter 21?

We are richly blessed by the message of this story, of this post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples. Jesus shows us that we are not abandoned and judged for our frailty, but forgiven, restored and enabled to stand up and go on. Indeed, we are called afresh, given new purpose and strength to become the people of God's potential. We are renewed, reminded once more that we are equipped with divine power, and invited by Jesus to "Follow me" (21:10).

I believe this story speaks words that many long to hear. The Christian life is not for those who would give up at the slightest hurdle. To be faithful is not easy. Yet, if we have fallen away from our calling, or failed in fulfilling God's high endeavour, that is not the final word, for the good news is that God is not finished with us. *God is never finished with us.* If we feel shame, inadequacy or great regret, Jesus is saying that this is precisely the point at which our story can change course.

We can ponder what Jesus thought, after his Resurrection, about his special disciples, the group of twelve he had trained for so long and with whom he had tried to share the importance of his mission. He had chosen them and invested so much in them. He loved them greatly and cared for them deeply, but they had proved to be prone to failure and certainly high risk if the future of the church

and the gospel depended on them. They were a very ordinary bunch.

In this story, four of the disciples had left and Judas had walked his destructive path. Only seven of the twelve were on the Sea of Tiberias when Jesus appeared to them. We can imagine their feelings. Together, they had shared tumultuous and challenging years, as they experienced Jesus' teaching and travelled all over with him. Yet, recent events and the crucifixion had devastated them and though they now believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, they were trying to come to terms with what it all meant. And, what did it mean for the future? It had all seemed to be so glorious, but what now, and what for them? They felt grief, anguish and uncertainty and had gone back to what felt safe – fishing.

In asking Peter three times if Peter loved him, Jesus was not trying to emphasise how much Peter had failed, but was wanting to restore Peter fully, in rich symbolism, with the commission to "Feed my sheep." "I want you. I need you. I am equipping you." Peter was restored to usefulness and leadership in God's kingdom.

As disciples of this age, we too experience failure, despair at our own natures, loss of confidence and the questioning of whether we are of any use to the Lord. And, when we have failed, the weight of shame may flatten us. In these gospel words, we can know the ever-new, life-giving invitation of Jesus. When we are at our lowest ebb, Jesus wants to revive us, to lift us up, to restore us to community, give us work to do and renew our purpose. This is rich and abundant grace. Human failure is never final. We are loved. We are wanted. We are needed. Our future is filled with God's hope.



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Singing Jesus calls us here TiS 477

Offering

God who meets us in surprising ways, be present to us as we offer these gifts, and ourselves. Bless and use them, bless and use us, to feed your sheep and to show your love, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Notices

May 3rd is World Press Freedom Day.

"This day acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics. Just as importantly, World Press Freedom Day is a day of support for media which are targets for the restraint, or abolition, of press freedom. It is also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives in the pursuit of a story."

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldpressfreedomday>

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

Reconciling God,
we pray for the peace of the world.
For the end of all suspicion or rivalry
among the many parts of your Church.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For the exposure of all injustices
and a new courage from all nations
to outlaw them.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For a fairer sharing of the earth's resources
and the feeding of the hungry.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For the resettlement of refugees
and the uplifting of the downtrodden.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For an end of terrorism and war,
and for international commitment
to a just peace.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For the maimed and abused,
diseased and the dying,
the frightened and sorrowful.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For the war and violence,
death and devastation in Ukraine.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

For those elected to Assembly meeting
in May 2022,
may they discern your presence and Spirit
throughout the gathering.
Come with your peace, Lord Jesus;
Come and heal your people.

Reconciling God,
help us to allow the peace of Christ,
which this world's sophistication
knows nothing of,
to keep us sure-footed,
even handed and open armed,
through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**



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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.

Singing - Now the Green Blade Rises TiS 382

Blessing

Go in peace to love and serve God
in the power of the resurrection. **Alleluia!**

The grace of the Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with us all. **Amen.**

Christ is risen, Alleluia!
Christ is risen, Alleluia!

Christ is risen, Alleluia, alleluia!
Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia, alleluia!

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