



## Sunday May 22nd, 2022 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

### Call to worship & lighting the candle

God of many names,  
you show us your wonders  
and you invite us into your story  
so that we might believe  
and in believing, we might live.

*(light the candle)*

**Be amongst us in this time,  
kindle your fire in our hearts  
and your visions in our seeing  
so that we can live as your people  
for the sake of the world you love, Amen.**

### Acknowledging



As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As we approach National Reconciliation week (May27-Jun 3), National Sorry Day on May 26th, and the 5th anniversary of the Statement from the Heart made at Uluru in 2017, we commit ourselves again to walking together in justice and truth. *You may want to show the clip, listen to the audio or read the Statement from the Heart:* <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/>

### Singing Come down o Love divine TiS 398

#### Prayer

Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us, Selah  
**that your way may be known upon earth,  
your saving power among all nations.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you.

**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth. Selah**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you.  
**The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, has blessed us.**

May God continue to bless us;  
**let all the ends of the earth revere him.**  
*(the prayer continues)*

God who is love, we confess  
that we have not loved you with our whole heart,  
*(time of quiet)*

neither have we loved each other  
in the way we see your love,  
shown to us in Jesus.  
*(time of quiet)*

We have also failed in loving ourselves,  
and in sensing the Spirit of love at work within us.  
*(time of quiet)*

Hear then, Jesus' words of grace to us  
from the gospel of John:  
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled,  
and do not let them be afraid.

We are loved, healed, forgiven and made new!  
**Thanks be to God, Amen.**

### Listening

Read: Acts 16: 9-15  
John 14: 23-29

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

### Reflecting - Rev. Gospel Ralte Acts 16:9-15

A vision is a state which enables us to see and know the things that are yet to come. It is not just a mental process of thinking, but is a spiritual experience which gives direction to move on in



## **Sunday May 22nd, 2022**

### **The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

the course of our life-journey. And there is an enabler of that vision. In other words, there is the receiver and the giver of that vision: in this reading it is Paul and the Spirit.

Paul's formation to become a disciple of Jesus Christ began with his zeal to protect Judaism in persecuting the new sect of faith. Saul's active participation in what can be termed in the view of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an "organised crime" led him to turn around to becoming the "persecuted" at his own choice. Saul's mission for preservation of Judaism was suddenly changed and transformed into the mission of a new vision empowered by his new Lord on the way to Damascus. Thus the renamed Paul was commissioned to carry the name of Jesus Christ within and beyond the boundary of the circumcised world (Acts 9:15).

Paul's enrolment among the chosen apostles has a humble beginning, categorising himself as the least of the least, the undeserved sinner. However, his humble beginning becomes his stronghold of faith and obedience to his Lord's will in following the envisioning direction. Paul's willing submission to his Lord's vision has extensively expanded the kingdom of God among the Gentiles.

When did Paul receive his vision of the pleading man from Macedonia? A missional answer is - when Paul humbly realised that his new mission was that of the "Missio Dei." It was not the Mission Impossible, but the mission vision solely empowered and directed by the Spirit of Jesus.

F.F.Bruce, a Scottish biblical scholar of the 20th century, describes the potentiality of Paul's transforming life when he says, "No single event, apart from the Christ-event itself, has proved so determinant for the course of Christian history as the conversion and commissioning of Paul."

The vision Paul has seen describes a "Macedonian man standing and begging him to go over to their place and help them." The man's standing posture can be taken as "the urgency of need," while the begging gesture could be considered as "the earnestness of the need." It was so needful and

urgent that the Spirit of Jesus redirected the original plan of Paul and his friends (16:7). What kind of help was needed in Macedonian city? Why was such help so urgent and needful? Indeed, the urgent and earnest need of the Macedonians was "preaching the gospel of Jesus to them."

The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ which had transformed Paul's life was preached with earnest prayer there at the river bank and won the heart of Lydia's house-hold in responding to become the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. With new life in Christ, Lydia, a merchant, a gentle woman, was so joyful that she opened her house and persuaded the missionary team to stay with them at their place for free!

Where there was no Synagogue, it was the practice of the Jews to pray at the river bank on the Sabbath. The lack of a synagogue (building) did not stop them from praying and worshipping God.

Praying, preaching and worshipping God in any given space and time brings strength to the fellowship. What mission-vision do we receive from the Lord today? Do we obey God and follow God's will and guidance even when our prior missional plan will need to be redirected? (John 14:23). As Paul discovered, this mission of love changes all of life.

#### **Affirmation of faith:**

*(from the Assembly resource - see end-notes)*

**We say** God created the universe,  
and the world we live in,  
and every living thing on this earth.

**We believe** the Creation shows us  
the power and presence of God,  
and makes us want to praise  
and give thanks to God,  
and take good care of the earth  
that God has made.

**We are full of joy** that across the world  
different peoples have their own culture  
and language, and that in God  
we are all united together as one.

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**Sunday May 22nd, 2022**  
**The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

**We say** God is Spirit, breath of life,  
who is always working  
to bring people to life in God.

**We believe** the Spirit has been alive and  
active in every race and culture,  
getting hearts and minds ready  
for the good news:  
the good news of God's love and grace  
that Jesus Christ revealed.

**We are full of joy** that from the beginning  
the Spirit was alive and active,  
revealing God through the law,  
custom and ceremony  
of the First Peoples of this ancient land.

**We say** Jesus is Saviour and Lord,  
and that he began the church  
and prayed that the church  
might be together as one.

**We believe** that in the risen Jesus  
we are all brothers and sisters  
in the one great family of God,  
and that God calls us to live in faith,  
hope and love  
for the sake of the Kingdom of God  
here on earth.

**We are full of joy** that we can learn,  
grow and serve together  
as a pilgrim people  
in the name of Christ.

***Singing - Our God, be gracious ... TiS 37***

You may choose to sing this to RICHMOND - TiS 425

***Responding:***

***Prayers for World & Community***

God who guides us,  
we pause in these moments  
knowing that you are present  
and that you go before us.

With you, we stand alongside  
those who have lost their way;

ones who are lonely  
hungry, frightened or sad.

**Give your peace to them,  
and leave your peace with them.**

With you, we stand alongside  
those who are cast aside, locked away,  
discarded, invisible, forgotten  
in the crush of our selfish systems.

**Give your peace to them,  
and leave your peace with them.**

With you, we stand alongside  
those whose grief is too great,  
past and present losses of land,  
language, culture and identity.

**Give your peace to them,  
and leave your peace with them.**

With you, we stand alongside  
those who struggle with everyday life;  
feeding families, finding meaning,  
paying bills, making friends.

**Give your peace to them,  
and leave your peace with them.**

With you, we stand alongside  
the creatures that share this planet,  
those struggling with shrinking habitat  
and those abounding with life  
from the recent rains.

**Give your peace to them,  
and leave your peace with them.**

God of surprises,  
when we are too set and too certain,  
interrupt us with a new vision, send us out;  
to bring the life that we have known in you,  
to share the love that we have found in you,  
to bless the earth and all,  
in the name of Jesus  
who taught his disciples to pray in this way:



## Sunday May 22nd, 2022

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#### ***The Lord's Prayer***

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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***

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

#### ***Offering***

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**Bless these gifts we bring.  
Use them and use us  
to bring the good news of Jesus  
to the riverbank, to the marketplace,  
to where it most needs to be known,  
in Jesus' name. Amen**

#### ***Notices***

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The dates for **National Reconciliation Week** remain the same each year; 27 May to 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey— the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/>

#### ***Singing- I, the Lord of sea and sky TiS 658***

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#### ***Word of Mission***

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*(from the Assembly resource - see end notes)*

People of God, go from here  
to live out the covenant, into which we,  
the First and Second Peoples of this land,  
have entered with one another.  
Confront and challenge injustice  
wherever you see it.  
Act justly yourselves  
and insist that others do the same.  
Rejoice in the richness of our diverse cultures  
and learn from them.  
Celebrate and demonstrate the unity  
we share in Jesus our Lord.  
Commit to worship, witness and serve  
as one people under God.

#### ***Blessing***

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Go knowing that you are loved  
beyond measure,  
and live as if you believe it,  
**We go to love and serve God,  
in the company of the Spirit,  
in the name of Christ, Amen**

*NB: Affirmation of Faith and Word of mission  
from the UCA Assembly website:*

<https://assembly.uca.org.au/cudw/worship-resources-and-publications/item/861-prayers-liturgies>

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