



## ***Sunday June 26th, 2022*** ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

### ***Call to worship & Lighting the Candle***

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We come from the whirlwind of our lives.  
We come seeking your voice of calm.

Whatever the landscape of our lives  
you lead us like a flock.  
We come remembering your works of old,  
to meditate on your heart  
and muse on your holiness.

Beloved of God,  
come in your lament and your confusion.  
Come with deep faith or no faith.  
Come in longing and thirst.  
God meets us here  
and we find shelter and empowerment  
in the warmth of God's mantle.

WE LIGHT THE CANDLE WHICH SPEAKS TO US  
OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.

### ***Acknowledging***

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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 Breath of life ... TiS 409***

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#### ***Prayer***

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We long to be guided by your Spirit. Yet we wonder sometimes if we have really put away the things which we know do not bring life. We become fearful and allow the whirlwind of

routines and of hectic lives to diminish the energy we have to live into our true selves.

We know that the fruits of your Spirit are life giving, they nourish and sustain us and everyone around us. Yet we hold you to ourselves. We long for joy but we can be caught deep in our own minds, we seek patience but even the smallest thing can annoy us.

We seek peace in the world but our intentions are sometimes divisive and self-serving. God who knows our every thought and desire, meet us in our yearning and free us to live into our full humanity as we share your gospel of belovedness and liberation with our community.

Beloved, God is generous and faithful and we are held, forgiven and set free.

#### **THANKS BE TO GOD**

#### ***Listening***

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Read: **2 Kings 2:1-2,6-14;**  
**Galatians 5:1,13-25;**  
**Luke 9:51-62**

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

#### ***Reflecting - Rev Sandra Houghton***

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The prophet Elijah's life was one of extraordinary highs and lows. There were times when he triumphed gloriously through God's power, but there were also times when he feared for his life and had been reduced to utter despair. But each time he hit rock bottom, God reached out to him and gave him what he needed to continue in his calling of being God's prophet.



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His life illustrated well the old proverb which says, **"When you get to your wit's end, remember that God lives there."**

After one such episode of despair God sent him to find Elisha, and anoint him as companion prophet and successor.

From that time forward Elijah had the very loyal and tenacious Elisha as his companion and student. Elisha was constantly learning and imitating, and watching and waiting, preparing for the time when Elijah would depart and he would take on the responsibility of being God's prophet.

God was there when Elijah reached his wit's end and believed he couldn't go on. God gave him what he needed to continue and complete his task.

God was also there after Elijah had gone, when Elisha might have faltered and failed to take up the challenge that lay before him. God was there ensuring that Elisha knew that God would equip him with what he needed for his demanding calling. For when Elisha with trembling hands held the mantle (cloak) of his mentor Elijah and tested it out on the waters saying, "Where is the God of Elijah?" God was there parting the water to show Elisha, and everyone else present, that God would be with him.

When we are struggling with our faith, and with the demands and difficulties of life, we may fear that we are alone, and we may be tempted to give into fear and give up on trying to live a faithful life.

When I feel fearful or despairing, Elijah's story is one of those that I bring to mind. But I also remember other stories of God enabling people in times of crisis. Stories that have been handed down to me. One such story is of how on January 27, 1956, a young pastor

called Martin Luther King Jr. sat in his kitchen in Montgomery, Alabama unable to sleep. He was facing multiple death threats, and was losing hope that the American Civil rights movement would ever make real progress.

In his despair, he prayed pouring out to God his fears and his lack of courage. As he was praying for the gift of perseverance, he became aware of God's presence. He testified, "And it seemed at that moment that I could hear an inner voice saying to me, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you, even until the end of the world." I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me alone (Freeman, Upon This Rock, 173).

In the middle of that night, when he'd all but given into despair, Martin Luther King Jr. found that God gave him the strength he needed to continue on in his important work. He became a major voice against oppression organising non-violent protests, became the founding leader of the Southern Christian Leader's Conference and won the Nobel Peace Prize, before his untimely death by assassination in 1968.

We, too, can trust that God has not abandoned us, and that God will enable us through God's Holy Spirit to persevere in seeking to live faithful lives. Lives that display the fruits of the Spirit which, as the writer of Galatians reminds us, are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. or in the parlance of Martin Luther King's vision righteousness, justice and truth.

St Theresa's Prayer, 'Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the



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earth, yours are the feet by which He is to go about doing good and yours are the hands by which He is to bless us now.'

***Singing*** - *All my hope on God is founded* TIS 560

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

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The depths of winter are settling on us and the drama of the Psalms imagery is easy to imagine. Massive waters, loud thunder, crashing lightning and huge seas. These elements can impact us so strongly. We are mindful this day of those whose homes are being impacted by the sea, or by flood waters and other powerful forces of nature.

In the cold of this season we especially think of those who are exposed to the elements. Those who are homeless or inadequately sheltered, those without warm clothing and warm food. We give thanks and pray for strength for those providing a mantle of care for others. We include carers in our own families and also agencies. This day we give thanks and pray for the work of those who provide a wider mantle of care, such as Frontier services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

We think of those who are in pain and who reach out to God in the night. Bring comfort and kindness we pray. For those whose spirits are weary and those for whom the world is a fearful or exhausting place, we pray for caring folks around them to share the mantle. Lead us, Spirit of God, into ways to gently and generously share your goodness.

For whirlwind places in the grip of the chaos of war, places where jealousy, violence, anger and quarrels bring suffering to others, we pray your gentle spirit of compassion and kindness. Let us show the way by truly loving our neighbours, and even our enemies, as ourselves.

We especially think of refugees, and we are reminded of the need to care for the least and the lost. Bring justice, bring freedom. Bring the radical values of your Kingdom. Give care to your little ones, to the least and the lost, through the mission of your church. Give us your Spirit of Love, of Joy and of Peace to share amongst us, and the willingness to generously share it with each other and with our hurting world.

### ***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.**



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Grace and peace be with you as you serve  
Christ this coming week.

***Offering***

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This offering is a symbol of all that you generously share with us. We take the time right now to say thanks. May we see abundance as the measure we share back with others. Bless our gifts of time, energy, money, our hearts and our lives. In your service.

**AMEN**

***Notices***

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It is has been Refugee week and World Refugee Day on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for those who find themselves displaced and in need of the care of others. Pray for justice for those seeking refuge.

***Singing - God gives us a future TIS 687;***

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***Blessing***

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While the sky thunders and the lightning crashes, while the waters tremble and the earth shakes, yet God never leaves us or forsakes us. While unseen God's footprints guide us. God's strong arm redeems God's people and leads us ever forward. God gives us the Spirit and lead us into fruitfulness.

While we long to stay, God leads us out to accept the mantle of mission. To warm the world with the embrace of God's love.

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