



Sunday July 10th, 2022 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

What do you see?
What must we do?
Who is my neighbour?

We come with questions.
We come with wonder.
We come with fears and tears.
We come dancing with delight. We come.

Receive us as we are
ever-present Source of all.
Gathered into your body,
we become one in you.
Enlivened by your holy breath,
we abide in your love.

**Reach us, teach us, bless and send us
in Jesus' name, 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, to stand up, show up and speak up, seeking justice for all.

Singing God of freedom.. TiS 657

Prayer

We meet you
in the wisdom of reluctant prophets
and the cries of the discarded,
Holy One.

Today we give thanks
for the stories that have shaped our faith,
shown us your way
and strengthened our love.

Thank you for the treasure of texts,
read to us in childhood,
and pored over in searching times;
shelter in the storms
and shouts of joy in our lifting up.

For the ancient biblical stories
part of our heart language.
For the stories of Jesus
with new insights each time we engage.
For the fresh writings from diverse voices,
prophets of the new day
calling us to life.

In the quiet we recall a story,
a story that has shaped us.
We give thanks.

*(generous time of quiet...
You might want to pause here
and share those stories with each other.)*

Storyteller God

**whose manuscript is all around;
beside, behind, before and within us,
forgive us for forgetting,
for thinking that we've heard it all,
for being closed to new stories
and new understandings of old stories.**

**Forgive us for believing
that we can define people
with a single story;
refugee, homeless, offender,
black / white,
rich / poor,
boy / girl ...**

**Grow us into the complex stories
of each other's lives, and our own,
and help us to read them with compassion,
empathy and care.**

as Jesus did, so will we. Amen.

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia
with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*



Sunday July 10th, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Amos 7:1-17

Luke 10:25 – 37,

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

Reflecting - Rev Ian Brown

“still not a bad question –
Who is my neighbour?”

The news is always full of violence and tragedy, like in Ukraine, Bangladesh, Sudan. The world for many of our neighbours is distressing. What causes the problems in our community and such drastic ones around the world? What makes for a good community, how can we be good neighbours? If there's one thing we can all agree on from what we learn in the news, it's that we have a lot of neighbours, and many of them are in distress.

So today some stories of neighbours and their needs, to reflect on the question of who is my neighbour and how can we help?

At the site of the former Presbyterian Mission at Mapoon, Cape York there was a brutal forced resettlement in the early 1960's. Homes were torched as local people were forced off their land by Government administrators and relocated to Bamaga.

The Uniting Church has since apologised to the residents of Mapoon for failing to intervene. Members of the displaced community have now returned and rebuilt. Are our neighbours all far away?

As a church, we support people seeking asylum. 'Uniting' is a major housing and support provider. We might meet many others in need. Are my neighbours all homeless and in poverty? We all

know that to be a “Good Samaritan” is to be a kind helper, someone who gets involved, but who with and how much?

One way of unpacking Jesus' much loved story is to say ‘there are things that stop us being good neighbours. Prejudices, racism, sexism, greed and selfishness that get in the way of us being who we should be. We need to do better!’ We do, but heaping guilt and “do good” burdens on us, doesn't help.

Remember this is a lawyers' question. It's interesting that Jesus peoples his parable in reply, with other respected professionals. A priest sees, but passes by on the other side. He ought to represent God to the people and the people to God. But the priest fails in his most basic role. It's a scathing critique of uninvolved religion!

Next comes the Levite. He registers the man, the need. Levites were officials connected with the Temple. If anyone knew the law and what it required, it would be a Levite. Little wonder then that this parable is paired with Amos, with his scathing words against Israel's leadership.

God shows Amos a plumb line measuring Israel's crookedness. The king tells Amos to keep quiet and get lost! But God will not be silenced! God is not disinterested in our affairs. God cares about what we do, hence the villains of Jesus' parable.

These are, in many ways, people like us. People who see needs – the homeless, the refugee, the depressed, the addicted, the sick, the lonely – and who fail to do something. The doing is what Jesus seems to be most concerned with here.

Some of our world neighbours most in need are those suffering the effects of war. If we wonder, ‘what are their needs and what can we do, answers don't come easily. The Good Samaritan is a story that has been part of our collective psyche for a long time. We know we should treat neighbours with kindness. We know that loving and caring for those in need is the most fundamental fulfilment of God's law.



Sunday July 10th, 2022 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

But there are too many needs for us to meet them all. So it's not hard, is it, to let ourselves off when we pass by a person in need. Jesus offered his story to its hearer – to a lawyer then, to us just as much, to help us not walk by.

The hard truth is that we and our world are in need, sometimes dire need. To greater or lesser degrees we're broken, in need of help ourselves. Perhaps we could see Jesus as the good stranger who comes unexpectedly, with compassion to comfort us, to mend our brokenness and to restore our faith. And then, as we are renewed by Christ, we are invited to go and do likewise, to be Jesus helping hands out there amongst the neighbours we meet.

Our giving is helping as far away as Ukraine, but as always, more people need to join in being good neighbours, rather than leaving it to the few; Jesus says to the questioning lawyer and to us, "who was the neighbour to the one in need? Come on, lend a hand, for God's sake." Amen.

And here we must sing:

Singing When I needed a neighbour TiS 629

Offering

**God of all, take the offerings of our lives,
bless them, use them to bring your story of
hope to those who need it most, Amen.**

Notices

Do you have a story of how your church community reaches out to neighbours? Do you have a story about how you recognised NAIDOC week? Share it with each other, and then send it in to the story-sharers at Crosslight with a fabulous picture... crosslight@victas.uca.org.au

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

You may choose to have a sand tray and taper candles and invite people to come forward and offer prayers at different times.

We pray for our neighbours.
For those across the world who are hungry, displaced, suffering disease and despair:

Singing: (chorous of TiS 640)

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

We pray for our neighbours.
For those caught up in the destruction and devastation of war:

*Singing: Yesu, Yesu,
Fill us with your love
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

We pray for our neighbours.
For the habitats, animals, birds, fish and all living things that are being harmed by the effects of climate change:

*Singing: Yesu, Yesu,
Fill us with your love
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*

We pray for our neighbours.
For those who are suffering abuse, neglect, illness and isolation.

*Singing: Yesu, Yesu,
Fill us with your love
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.*



Sunday July 10th, 2022
The Fig Tree Worship Resource

We pray for our neighbours.
For those who are so near to us that we do not
see them, and do not stop to hear their
stories.

Singing: *Yesu, Yesu,*
Fill us with your love
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

Reflection: *Rev Ian Brown*
Wattlebird Ministry Team - Warragul
Liturgy & Editor: *Rev. Jennie Gordon*
Presbytery of Gippsland
pastoral.ucajpps@gmail.com



We pray for ourselves.
Help us to notice when we are hurt,
and when we are in need of help,
and to accept the hand of a neighbour
however unlikely or difficult that might be.
(time of quiet)

As we pray together these words:

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.

Singing Brother, sister ... TiS 650

Blessing

We go with more questions.
We go with renewed wonder.
We go with fears and tears.
We go dancing with delight. We go.

Send us as we are
ever-present Source of all.
Gathered into your body,
we become one in you.
Enlivened by your holy breath,
we abide in your love.

Reach us, teach us, bless and send us
in Jesus' name, Amen.

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia
with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*