



Sunday August 7th, 2022 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Come Spirit of life,
**gather this little flock,
however few, however many,
under your loving wings.**

Come Breath of life,
**breathe into our gathering,
into our open hearts and minds
with the renewal of your presence.**

Come Word of life,
**be the light in our darkness
the treasure in our hearts
and the peace, when all is done.**

light the candle and pause...

Acknowledging in prayer



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

God, whose flock reaches beyond these walls and embraces all the people on earth. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging, and ask your blessing on all Indigenous Peoples of the world. Help us, as First and Second Peoples living and walking together, to continue to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

Singing -O God our help in ages past TiS 47



Prayer

O God, you have been our help in all ages, and remain our hope, through eternity. We stop and bring to you our gratitude for life and all the treasures of our hearts.
(pause for a few minutes)

We bring our confession, beginning with the words of *Isaiah, Chapter 1, verses 16 and 17: Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good;*

God of justice, we confess that, all our lives while we are learning to do good, sometimes, often, we fail.

For the times when we have caused harm to others, either because of what we have done, or what we have not done, forgive us, **forgive us.**

For the times when we have caused harm to ourselves, either because of what we have done or what we have not done, forgive us, **forgive us.**

For the times when we have turned away from seeking your face, choosing to go it alone, hungry for the wrong kind of treasure, refusing to be part of the flock, forgive us, **forgive us.**

Forgive us and restore us to ourselves, to each other, and to you, In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sisters and brothers, Christ's work of reconciliation continues in us. Hear these words of assurance: Our sins are forgiven,
thanks be to God, Amen.

Passing the peace

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



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Listening

Read: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Psalm 50 - responsively, from *The Message*
verses 1-8

The God of gods—it's God!—speaks out,
shouts, "Earth!"

**welcomes the sun in the east,
farewells the disappearing sun in the west.**

From the dazzle of Zion,

God blazes into view.

**Our God makes his entrance,
he's not shy in his coming.**

Starbursts of fireworks precede him.

He summons heaven and earth as a jury,

he's taking his people to court:

**"Round up my saints who swore
on the Bible their loyalty to me."**

The whole cosmos attests to the fairness of this
court, that here God is judge.

**"Are you listening, dear people? I'm getting
ready to speak;**

Israel, I'm about ready to bring you to trial.

This is God, your God, speaking to you.

**I don't find fault with your acts of worship,
the frequent burnt sacrifices you offer.**

verses 22-23

"Time's up for playing fast and loose with me.

**I'm ready to pass sentence,
and there's no help in sight!**

It's the praising life that honors me.

**As soon as you set your foot on the Way,
I'll show you my salvation."**

Read: Luke 12:32-40

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

I am going to avoid verse 33 of the gospel reading because, ouch! I really think it means literally what it says and I have so much stuff. Perhaps if I sold it I could finance a whole country of hungry people. Let's start instead with the imagery of the Psalm.

God speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. The opening word from Psalm 50 is quite an image. All day from sunrise to sunset. God shines forth and gathers the faithful ones. What does faithfulness to God look like? It is not about sacrifice and fulfilling our dutiful measures of worship, but rather it is about faithfulness in seeking justice, doing good, freeing the oppressed and advocating for the marginalised (imaged here as widows and orphans). Eating the good of the land can only happen when we all get to eat of it together.

In our current time of deepening poverty and grim economic forecasts, living in the shadow of a world in turmoil and still in the grips of a pandemic, we are yet called to faithfully serve. We are only whole as a society when all people are being helped to wholeness. Here is the way to build up your treasures, for where your treasure is, there also is your heart.

I recently read an old 'wisdom story' about daybreak. A rabbi asked the students in his class about what signifies the end of night and the beginning of day. He asked if it is when one type of tree can be differentiated from another. Or when one animal can be seen distinctly from another. No, the way to tell when the morning has come is when you can look at the face of another person and see that they are your sisters and brothers. Up until then it is always night because the light has not yet come. This is where our heart and our treasure needs to be, in recognising the Christ in one another.

The reality of our time is that people are becoming homeless and hungry at a huge rate of knots and every one of us is never far from this as a possibility. What does our love of Christ ask of



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us? The gospel message this week suggests that we be ready at any time, that we remain on alert. The time to reach out in love is right now.

But sending some stuff to the op shop or a one-off sacrifice of some desired possession is not what we are being asked to consider here. While we are bound up in our 'stuff', we are honouring the wrong things. Our lives and our lifestyles need to reflect care for the planet and for one another. This is a whole different kind of economy. It is part of our advocacy for the marginalised. Until we are all free from oppression then none of us is truly free.

We are encouraged in Hebrews to aim for the promises even if we don't personally feel the effect of them. We are to face forward in faith, to take courage to make the decisions and not look backwards to what was.

"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears." This quote by Nelson Mandela holds such wisdom for us. We hope that the world can be different. We know that there is enough love, enough food, enough shelter, for all people. All we need to do is set our sights on sharing it. This is our treasure and right here is our faithful service.

So today when God summons us all day, how will God shine forth through you?

Singing - When he comes back Tis 280

Offering

God of unfailing treasure, we bring these gifts from our hearts and ask you to bless them. May they be used for ministry in ways that bring help, hope and healing to those most in need. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notices

Today marks the end of National Homelessness Awareness week. Do you know that churches work together to help people who are sleeping rough in winter? You can find about Stable One here: <https://stableone.org/winter-shelters/>

August 3-16 is Fair Trade Fortnight - do you know who you are supporting when you shop? Who are the 10 companies who own our largest brands? You can find these answers and more here: <https://www.ethical.org.au/>

August 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and the theme is : "The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge". <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-peoples-2022.html>

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

Spirit of hospitality, we pray for people who struggle to find shelter in these cold winter nights. For those who long to be gathered in the warmth and safety of decent housing and good company. We ask your blessing on Stable One and other organisations who are making a difference, offering care, comfort and compassion.

Spirit of justice, we pray for people who must work in unethical situations, here and across the world. Those experiencing slavery and degrading work in poor conditions without adequate payment. Bless the ones who are challenging the greed of corporations that put profits before people, exposing the human cost of our thoughtless and unrestrained consumerism.

Spirit of the land, we pray for Indigenous Peoples across the world. May the women's wisdom and knowledge be preserved and passed on, enabling us all to be more carefully connected with each other, with and all of creation and with you.

Spirit of grace, we pray also today for those places and people in our hearts, in the quiet we name them ...

(pause for a few minutes)

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as we pray together in the words that Jesus taught his disciples:

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 - Guide me O ... TiS 569

Blessing

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
the words from Isaiah send us out:
Cease to do evil, learn to do good;
seek justice, rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Go knowing that you are loved beyond measure.
Live where you find your true treasure
and there you will inhabit your heart.

Go in peace to love and serve God,
In the name of Christ, Amen.

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