



Sunday August 28th, 2022 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Sing aloud to God our strength,
shout for joy to our God.
God has invited you
to share in fellowship at the table.
**We come to be present to God
and to one another.**

Come to worship
and share in confidence in God's love
and in mutual affection.
We share in God's grace and mercy together.
**Right here is a place of belonging for all of us,
for sinners and for saints.**

Light the candle.

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 First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing - Sing to God, TiS 92

Prayer



God who is love, for all that we have been able to receive we are truly thankful. You have offered us the hospitality of your love, wrapped up, embraced and surrounded by grace. You have promised to never leave us or forsake us and we are grateful.

For all that we have been able to receive we are truly thankful. You are faithful to us and have given us confidence and assurance about the consistency of your care for us. The same gracious care which is shown to us in the past, the present and the future. We can rely on you to send people into our lives to lead us forward in our faith.

For all that we have been able to receive we are truly thankful. You have invited us to your table and shared with us from your bountiful blessing. In our poverty of spirit you have enriched us and enabled us through your grace. May we also be generous and kind with one another in sharing your table and your bounty. May we be humble and hospitable to others, for you have included even us in your love.

(pause)

You are the Lord our God and you walk beside us. You have fed and sustained us always.

We have not always listened to your voice or walked your paths, we have rejected your fountains of living water and exchanged your truths for easy platitudes.

We have been excited by broken cisterns. In our stubbornness we have followed our own way and missed some of the richness of the blessing you have offered us.

Forgive us Lord and help us to hear you and walk in true companionship with you.

You long for us just as we long for you.
Feed us we pray O God, feed us and satisfy our souls.

May we listen to your call on our lives and **share the love you have given us so freely with one another.**

(time of quiet)



Sunday August 28th, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

God's heart is for you and God longs to feed you with the finest wheat and the sweetest honey. Your sins are forgiven and you are restored. Walk in joy with God as your strength. **AMEN**

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Hebrews 13: v 1-8, 15-16

Luke: 14 v 1, 7-14

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

Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon

If you could invite anyone at all to dinner, who would it be? You might want to share your answer with someone close to you and talk a little bit about why you chose that person.

Jesus often uses mealtimes to teach, especially in Luke's gospel, making the most of gatherings around the table. In today's reading he is invited to dinner and does not behave as the perfect guest. He begins by noticing people choosing the best seats, the places of honour and gives them strong direction in the form of a thinly disguised parable, entreating them to humble themselves. In the same story, he turns to the host with some advice about the guest list, telling him he should invite people who cannot repay the invitation. I wonder how the meal proceeded from that point. Was there a prolonged awkward silence? Was the host, or other guests dreadfully offended? Was he asked to leave, or Jesus stay and eat with them? If he stayed, where did he sit and who engaged with him about what he had said?

It is easy for us to listen to this text and miss the absolute disruption that Jesus is causing, not just to the dinner, but to the accepted codes and practices of his time. We hear that we must humble ourselves and think, "of course", because we are children of the resurrection, and have experienced the glory of Christ, humbly emptying himself in the suffering and humiliation of the cross, and then being raised to new life, and taking us with him. Humility is part of our lexicon, our language, if not always our personality and our practice.

From an article by Roshni Patel in The Harvard Ichthus¹ we read:

"It has been well established that "humility" was not a virtue in Greco-Roman ethics. Rather the word (humilitas in Latin, or tapeinos in Greek) meant something closer to "debased" or "crushed." It was a term reserved for failure and shame. The ancient Greeks considered the 146 maxims of the Delphic Cannon from the 6th century BC to be the substance of the ethical life; there is no mention of the word, let alone the theme, of "humility." Rather, it praised philotimia, "the love of honour." It would seem that building one's honor and reputation would prove to be far more advantageous than completely debasing oneself."

How outrageous then, that Jesus would suggest to the guests and the host, that they should not be seeking honour, but rather, humility, debasement, being shamed...

When we look at leaders in our churches, towns, country and around the world, we can see the ones who have chosen to follow the Greco-Roman ethics of seeking honour for themselves, and the ones who might choose the other way of humble service, not always as followers of Jesus, but treading a similar path. Maybe there's a deep survival instinct in us that pushes us to the front of the food line, that demands we be respected when we feel we have earned it, that encourages us to hang out with people who can repay our

¹ <https://harvardichthus.org/2011/11/the-great-horror-of-humility/>

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 August 28th, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

reaching out with hospitality and friendship, with reciprocally worthy invitations and conversations. BUT - Jesus comes amongst us and disrupts this sort of table talk and we need to listen again, and again, and even though it doesn't startle us, it should. It should.

- Does Jesus often come in and disturb your table gatherings, if not, why not?
- Look around you today, who is here and who is missing? Who might you invite next time?
- What voices do you listen to most often and whose silence goes unnoticed?
- Now, if you could invite anyone at all to dinner, who would it be?

Singing - Kneels at the feet - TiS 640

Offering

We offer our prayers, our time, our talents and our gifts. We offer our donations and our tithes. We ask a blessing on all we offer, that it may bring your kingdom closer and that it may be an invitation to others to share in your fellowship table. **AMEN**

Notices

Please be sensitive to people in your congregation who may find this notice distressing:

It is **International Overdose Awareness Day**. Roisin Ruddy, Harm Reduction Worker, wrote to us saying: *As you may be aware, Latrobe Valley has one of the highest regional overdose death rates in Australia, and a significant amount of our community have experienced loss related to overdose. However, due to the stigma around overdose, and perceptions of it only affecting people who use illicit drugs, this grief is often suffered in silence.*

International Overdose Awareness Day is an annual opportunity to open up the discussion, acknowledge the loss of people in our community and the family members who mourn them. More information is available here:

<https://www.overdoseday.com/>

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Let us weave our prayers into a colourful cloth of warmth and care:

As we place the warp of our fabric, we bring the poor, the lame, the crippled and the blind. These are with us now as they always have been. Help us to take seriously your call for us to visit the prisoners and care for those on the fringes.

Lifting the weft, we pray for the little ones, for the least and the lost, the sad and the lonely. May we listen to your Spirit and seek the places in our lives where we can share and encourage.

Threading the warp, the homeless are very present to us in our communities and we know that this is a growing reality for many. We feel frustrated and wish we knew what to do. Show us the places where our actions count and how to be involved in making a difference and creating change. We long for all people to feel the warmth of hospitality and shelter rather than the cold of loneliness and despair.

Looping over the weft, we pray for our hospitals, our medical staff, our doctors and nurses and orderlies and cleaners and first responders. We know that they are overly stretched and exhausted. We give thanks for their dedication and faithful service and pray for strength and sustenance for them as they serve our communities.

Underneath with the warp, we pray for our children, their parents and caregivers. We pray for those in the caring system and those whose experience of family is troubled. We pray for our schools as they care for our kids and educate them for the future. We pray for

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 August 28th, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

those who struggle in the education system, that we will find ways to adequately nurture and care for them. The weft threads through, and we pray for those with whom we have disagreement. There are so many fractured voices and so much antagonism toward one another. Help us to be able to see things differently without having to protect our own stance or be angry towards someone else's views. Bring peace.

The warp edges our fabric as we pray for prisoners whatever their story. For those who are incarcerated in prisons across our country, for the families and those who have been impacted by their behaviour. We pray for those who have been detained for other reasons. We pray for those for whom prison takes on other meanings and for those who have issues of addiction, or issues around mental or physical health. We pray for authorities and those who care for people who are imprisoned in all of these ways. We pray for change in our systems and for new ways to bring about restoration and healing.

'Angels' look like regular people and they inhabit our world through those who are suffering and sad and those who care for them. May we look in the eyes of those who are hurting, and see the face of God, present among us. May we wrap our communities in the fabric of our prayers and in our love as we pray together in our own heart language:

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

To be inclusive, you may choose to change the first line of this song to "Kinfolk, sibling, let me serve you."

Blessing

As you go, be mindful always of Christ present in one another. Honour one another and be hospitable to all. Be blessed, and share the blessing of God's love and faithfulness to you with one another. The grace of God is all around you. Remember whose you are.

Blessing Song: TIS 776 The Aaronic Blessing while looking at one another.

Liturgy: Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

Reflection & Editor:

Rev. Jennie Gordon

Presbytery of Gippsland

[*pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com*](mailto:pastoral.ucagipps@gmail.com)

