



Sunday September 25th, 2022 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the LORD,
"My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust." (from Psalm 91)

Let us worship God.

*A candle is lit as we recall
the light of Christ shines among us.*

Optional: Sing TiS 747

The Lord is my light, my light and salvation

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, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing

TiS 613 Lord of all hopefulness Lord of all joy



Prayer

Lord of all hopefulness and Lord of all joy,
we offer you our thanks and praise today.
You are the Lord of all faith, Lord of all grace, and
Lord of all calm.

For this time of worship we give our thanks.
For the strength you sow within us, we are
grateful. For the love, peace and bliss you inspire
in our hearts we give our thanks.

We hear from the Scriptures that if we have food
and clothing we might be content with these. The
reality is we struggle with a desire for much

more. We know the love of money is a root of all
kinds of evil and yet often money is a god we
desire.

Forgive us for consuming the earth's resources at
an unsustainable rate, for when we cannot see or
acknowledge the link that our comfort is often at
the expense of people who are vulnerable...

Time for silent reflection

Even as we have much, free us from being
haughty; guide us when we are in danger of
putting our faith in riches, rather than using your
plenty to share, to be rich in good works.

Time for silent reflection

Siblings in Christ, Jesus reminds us that the words
of Moses and the prophets are worth listening to.
As we heed their words and listen intently to
Jesus, we find ourselves renewed and encouraged
in the way of Christ. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Passing the peace

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

Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

Assurance of God's Protection

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
**will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust.'**

For he will deliver you from the snare of the
fowler and from the deadly pestilence;
**he will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.**

You will not fear the terror of the night,
or the arrow that flies by day,
**or the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
or the destruction that wastes at noonday.**

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Presbytery of Gippsland, Uniting Church in Australia
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Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honour them.

**With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

Listening

Read: 1 Timothy 6:6-19 &
Luke 16:19-31

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

Reflecting - Rev. Deacon Marian Bisset

Psalm 91 reminds me of 'Pig Face' flowers and Spinifex grasses found in Australian coastal regions. Spinifex Grass is native to Australia and clings on and thrives despite varied, harsh and often extreme weather and climatic events. The roots of the plants are shallow, extensive and sprawling in a concerted effort to ensure the stability of the sand dune, or sand area. Spinifex is spiky underfoot, yet at the same time provides cooling relief from the blistering hot sand underfoot. Spinifex gives food and shelter as well as protection from predators or the crashing waves of the endless and overwhelming expanse of water to many little sand insects and creatures.

There is a relationship of harmony and balance between the elements and the Spinifex which can only happen one relies on the other or requires the other to survive. There is a delicate balance between the shelter and the wild, between the strength and the vulnerability which needs to be maintained for it all to coexist and flourish.

We in Australia are in a position of privilege because our land and waterways are not being eroded away by climate change at the same rate as those of our Pacific neighbours, or where flooding from endless torrential rain washes away great hunks of land, towns, landscape and

people. Jeremiah appeared to want the best for the land and listened to the voice of God spoken through the land to guide the decision to purchase the land.

In this Season of Creation, it seems appropriate to reflect on the planet, the fragility we see, the changing and destructive patterns of our behaviour and on the climate catastrophe which faces us all. In this overwhelming situation do we ask ourselves what are the ways we can better work with and through creation rather than fighting it? I wonder whether it is possible to address climate issues when we also have an increasing disregard for who our weak and vulnerable are, and where they dwell.

Think for a moment, when one millionaire celebrity slaps another millionaire celebrity, we know who they are, or the billionaire touted to buy Twitter, we know their name, or the millionaire celebrity couple debating their relationship in the court system, we know who they are too. But the thousands of people left without homes in flood ravaged Pakistan or the Madagascans who have lost homes for 2 years in succession because of super charged hurricanes remain nameless to us.

Lazarus and Jesus upend the norm of naming the rich and dehumanising the poor. Lazarus had a name, and the rich person was unnamed. It would be impossible for the unnamed rich person to not have noticed Lazarus at the front gate, day after day, night after night. So too for us with climate change. We are bombarded everywhere daily about the effects global warming is having on the planet, the science supports the bombarding and yet like the rich person we walk by. I read this story recently:

My neighbour is called Nonhlanhla who lives in Durban. She went to study at Uni but couldn't afford the residence fees so stayed in a shack with a family member. They couldn't find land so built on the banks of the river. Just before Easter a year's worth of rain fell in two days. Durban was hit with a rain bomb. Her home was washed away, and she drowned in a wall of mud.

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We have to make changes to how we live and how we act, fight to change climate policies so we know our global neighbour.

Singing

TiS 679 God of Jeremiah grieving

Offering

God of all, receive the gifts we offer in the name of Christ. As we share of the plenty you have given us, may they be used towards righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. We pray our sharing brings healing to your good creation, and that our living reflects these things. We pray this in the name of Christ. Amen.

Notices

Today the Uniting Church observes Social Justice Sunday. The prayers for the World reflect this.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

God of peace and reconciliation, you call us to be the body of Christ, active in our world and engaged in just and Godly action as part of our living the way of Christ.

We note today as Social Justice Sunday, that it coincides with the International Day of Peace (Sep 21). While we set aside a day to focus, we know that each and every day you call us to be people of peace and reconciliation.

We note the world needs both of these as much as ever. We continue hearing of the war in Ukraine and even as the situation changes, war continues to hurt those who are vulnerable. Many have lost houses and livelihoods. Many have been displaced. Many grieve loved ones who have died. We struggle to know how we can be active towards peace and reconciliation from such a distance. Encourage us in our prayers, that they may in turn encourage others who need to know they are remembered, loved and cared for.

Inspire our leaders to act to their full capacity towards peace and justice.

We hear of dramatic weather events such as drought, fire, and flood and yet feel powerless to work against the forces changing earth's climate. Inspire us to listen, to learn, to know the names of people such as Nonhalanhlhla in Durban. In hearing her story and those replicated in places like Madagascar, Pakistan and low lying pacific islands, may we remember that each one is precious to you. May that inspire us to act positively for changes needed for the sake of your creation.

A few days ago we witnessed the funeral for Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. As the world mourns for her, and as we anticipate the reign of King Charles III, we know that empires are built through colonisation. As we hear the story of the British crown, we listen intently to stories of impact on our First Peoples in Australia. We recognise that empire building was justified by the *Doctrine of Discovery* and given the blessing of the Christian church. While we cannot undo much of its impact, we can deepen our understanding of why an Indigenous Voice to Parliament may provide a way forward towards justice and reconciliation in this land.

Grant us gracious and open hearts, God of peace, that we may listen, learn, and discover better ways to be your church, to live as your people, to bear your light through justice and right living in all we do.

And grant us the conviction and courage to act upon what we learn for the sake of all your name. We pray this as we join together in the prayer you offered us, and we pray it in the language of our heart:



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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

TiS 687 God gives us a future

Blessing

Siblings in Christ:
Fight the good fight of the faith;
take hold of the eternal life,
to which you are called.

Be quick and ready to do good,
to be rich in good works,
to be generous,
and ready to share.
As you leave this time of gathering, the blessing
of God be upon you:
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen.

Other Song Suggestions

TiS 143 Immortal invisible God only wise
TiS 611 God of Grace and God of Glory
TiS 560 All my hope on God is founded
TiS 690 Beauty for brokenness hope for despair
TiS 629 When I needed a neighbour
TiS 640 Kneels at the feet of his friends
TiS 650 Brother, sister, let me serve you
TiS 370 Christ the Lord is risen today
TiS 547 Be thou my vision O Lord of my heart

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