



Sunday October 2nd, 2022 ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

from Lamentations 3:22 -26:

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
God's mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

...
*It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.*
(light the candle)

**As we gather, we wait quietly,
recalling the constant river of God's love
flowing through our lives from the Source,
carrying us along, together and alone,
in the smooth, wide waters,
over rocky rapids,
through dark and narrow gorges
into billabongs of peace**
(time of quiet)

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 - Morning has broken TiS 156

Prayer



*The words of the response in the confession
prayer are from TiS 729 ... you can sing them.*

In Paul's second letter to Timothy he writes:
*I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that
lived first in your grandmother Lois and your
mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.*
Let us pray:

Today, God of our ancestors, we give thanks for the faith that has been passed on to us through blood, or choice, or chance, from your faithful people in generations past.
(pause for thanksgiving)

The steadfastness of your love is not a recent discovery. We give thanks that it has been known and held in ancient ways in this land long before the stories of Jesus arrived.
(pause for thanksgiving)

On World Communion Sunday, we give thanks that the abundant and unceasing flow of your love has been known through generations upon generations in all lands and cultures through all of time.
(pause for thanksgiving)

Paul reminds Timothy to "Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us."

God of endless grace, we confess that we forget to guard that good treasure of faith entrusted to us, and leave it languishing in a forgotten corner while we struggle to hold on to hope and go about trying to sort things out on our own.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

God of steadfast mercy, we confess that as a church we sometimes confuse the good treasure with cherished tradition. We use holy words to colonise and condemn and miss the surprising gift of the Spirit in the fresh newness of the morning.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

God of abundant love, we confess that we often do not draw from the store of good treasure in our daily living, thinking our faith is too small or too shaky. Anger, despair, apathy and pain point us in different directions. We live in ways that harm the earth and her creatures. We lash out at others and



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ourselves. We behave in ways that hurt and diminish people.

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

**Jesus Christ, son of God,
have mercy upon us.**

Siblings in Christ, know this: that our sins, failings or forgettings are not held against us, we are led into new life, as new as the morning. We are loved and set free to live as children of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: *Lamentations 3:19-26,*
Luke 17:5-10

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

Reflecting - Rev. Deacon Marian Bisset

I remember being told by a 'friend', following a health diagnosis, that I was full of sin and demons, and I needed to repent and pray. My faith was lacking, they said to me. I was both distraught and angry at the same time. How could another person, a friend, a person of faith say something so hurtful to another person. The friendship came to a screeching halt.

I wonder, though, how many of us have had similar experiences where the notion of insufficient faith drove the interaction. You know, 'the more you pray (and give), the more the blessings will come' prosperity gospel. It is unhelpful and not at all what Jesus meant in the passage from Luke. What if we were to reread the passage in a different tone and see Jesus as one who would give up everything for a friend. Perhaps Jesus answered gently, with a kind smile gesturing with thumb and finger pinched

together, "why do you need more faith, even that little is enough."

We have enough faith to dream big, to imagine doing the impossible with very little. This is what Jesus asked us to do. The civil rights movement under Martin Luther King Jr., Bishop Desmond Tutu confronting the horrors of apartheid or those who protested in the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York, Harriet Tubman who quietly rescued hundreds of slaves on the Underground Railway, or closer to home, Archie Roach weaving words of lament and challenge in *Took the Children Away*. All these activists believed they had to act, and their actions made change, massive and lasting change.

I recently read some words from Fr Richard Rohr reflecting on the idea of "ripening" and what this word can mean in different contextual uses. Rohr reflects it is more what has been accomplished in the slow process of learning, letting go, growing, rather than a moment of outstanding achievement. The goals and hopes of our youth become an "ever deepening sense of what we really desire and who we really are."^[1] The tolerance for the grey spaces and the blurry lines deepens and broadens as we step out further and deeper with the small mustard seed of faith. The church can exist in the grey spaces and be merged in with the blurry lines. Eunice and Lois showed their faith to those in their community and became an example of living the hope and promise of God.

It is World Communion Sunday on the 2nd October and around the world people will celebrate Eucharistic meals together, to remember and to hope. In our gathering we remember, not in some artificial way the joys and the sorrows we all carry, but in a way in which our small seed of faith holds hope. The tears and sorrow we bring come from the broken places of life, the grey space and blurry lines. But that is where we find God. That is the hope and promise we have now and that we grow into as we mature in our faith.

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

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The steadfast love of God never ceases,
God's mercy never comes to an end.

^[1] Richard Rohr OFM, *Oneing*, (CAC Publishing, Centre for Action and Contemplation, 2013), 12.

Singing - Have faith in God, my heart TiS 619

You're invited to change the words to more inclusive language:

verse 1 line 4:

each promise *God* has made

verse 3: Have faith in God, my soul,

the cross for ever stands;

and neither life nor death can pluck

God's children from *their* hands.

Offering

Self-giving God, bless these gifts we bring, however small or grand, and bless the hands that bring them. Through these gifts, and through us may your steadfast love be known and may we keep on offering seeds of hope into the life around us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Notices

Today October 2nd is the International Day of Non-Violence, on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. This day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness" and reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-violence-day>

Tomorrow, October 3rd is World Habitat Day

World Habitat Day (WHD 2022) under the theme "Mind the Gap. Leave No One and Place Behind" looks at the problem of growing inequality and challenges in cities and human settlements and

seeks to draw attention to the growing inequalities and vulnerabilities that have been exacerbated by the triple 'C' crises — COVID-19, climate and conflict.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/habitat-day>

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

On World Communion Sunday we pray for all our siblings in Christ across the world. May we be bound together in common bonds of love, stronger than our disputes, broader than our alliances, deeper than our divisions.

We pray that all may be one.

On the International Day of Non-Violence we give thanks for the life and legacy of Mahatma Ghandi.

In our world, where there is hatred and harm:

We pray for peace.

In our world, where there is oppression, exploitation and cruelty:

We pray for tolerance, understanding and non-violence.

As we look to World Habitat Day tomorrow, we see the growing inequalities and vulnerabilities that have been made worse by COVID-19, Climate change and conflict through war.

We pray for people who live in places that are unsafe, dangerous and far from what they know as home.

The pandemic and recent conflicts have reversed years of progress made in the fight against poverty, resulting in the emergence of newly poor people—those who would have exited poverty in the absence of the pandemic but remain poor, and those who have fallen into poverty on account of the pandemic.¹

¹<https://www.un.org/en/observances/habitat-day>

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We pray for an end to war, for a ceasing of reliance on fossil fuels and for access to adequate shelter and health care for all people.

Cities and local governments play a front-line role in responding to crises and emergencies as well as in planning for an inclusive, resilient, and green future.²

We pray for leaders, guiding their people through unimaginable horrors caused by war, disease and climate change and all leaders of our cities and nations.

God of all, help us, who hold maybe just a mustard seed of faith, to find ways of making a small and persistent contribution so that together we may move mountains in these great struggles of our time and let us never lose hope. As we pray together the words that Jesus taught us, with one voice that joins around the earth in so many different languages;

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 - Now the green blade rises TiS 382

Blessing

We take our mustard seeds of faith and go, assured that we have what we need to be bearers of hope and healing.

And may the Spirit energise and surprise you,
may Christ be your constant companion
and the great Source of love keep flowing
within, around and through you
this day and always,
Amen.

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² <https://www.un.org/en/observances/habitat-day>

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