



## ***Sunday November 20th, 2022*** ***The Fig Tree Worship Resource***

### **Call to worship & Lighting the Candle**

Protection, provision, rescue and redemption  
come from nowhere but God.  
Who is there like our God?  
Salvation belongs to our God  
who sits upon the throne.

Let us come and praise your holy name, O God,  
because you enable us to serve you  
in holiness, righteousness;  
Leaving all our anxiety, pain and struggles,  
Let us come to worship you without fear.

*Light the candle, remembering that the light of  
Christ shines among us.*

### **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 Here in this place TiS 474**

or: **O Lord of every shining constellation TiS 157**

### **Prayer**



Gracious God, forgive us our sins...  
When we do not spend enough time with you for  
the self-care of our soul.  
When we undermine the value of the other  
person and overlook those who are already  
neglected.  
When we can not cry with the crying and do not  
have empathy, tears to shed for the oppressed.  
When we fail to acknowledge the power of our  
own daily struggles.

When we let the sun set without raising a single  
word of thanks.

When we fail to see your beauty every morning.  
When we fail to shepherd your sheep in the right  
direction for food, water, shelter and security that  
they need each day.

When we hold on to the undeserved success  
bestowed upon us.

When we cannot forget the string of past hurting  
and harm done to us.

When we are not bold enough to invite the  
unchurched friends to come to your holy  
sanctuary.

When we are not aware to say, "Hello" to the  
redeemed one on the street.

Thank you God, for not counting our sins against  
us, and for forgiving us through the forgiving  
prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord.  
Amen.

### **Passing the peace**

May the everlasting peace of Christ the King  
be always with you: **And also with you.**

### **Listening**

Read: Jeremiah 23: 1-6

Colossians 1:11-20

Luke 23:33-43

For these words of faith and for the Living Word  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **Reflecting - Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson**

When you think of God as King, where  
does your mind go? What images spring to mind?  
An old man on a throne? Reflecting on reigning  
and ruling, kingdoms and monarchy, kings and  
queens and serfs and peasants, is all a bit odd in  
our day and age and lends different nuancing of  
meaning. Different parts of the world will also  
reflect on it very differently. In some ways a  
Sunday devoted to this aspect of the lectionary  
can seem triumphalist and over the top. However,  
its relevance is still very strong as it showcases a



## **Sunday November 20th, 2022**

### **The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

very different image of power. In a time where the church is really seeking to shore up its power base, at least in the west, the Kingship of Christ is a dynamic and radically subversive image.

Years ago, I had a container that opened from both ends. If you took the bottom off by accident, the top fell off too. And it had beads in it. So you can probably imagine that if I accidentally opened it the wrong way up there was a catastrophe. It happened a few times before I wised up and changed my container. This could be a metaphor for the topsy-turvy image of the kingdom of God. God's chosen image of power is the cross. This method of state sanctioned murder was reserved for the poor, for non-Roman citizens who were of the peasant class. So the jeering and mocking about Jesus being the King of the Jews was particularly poignant.

I wonder who might be overly represented in skewed justice systems in contemporary times. Always the poor, often people of colour and often the young with inadequate home lives. The 'powerless'. Where does power lie in these passages? The Jeremiah reading makes it clear that those who shepherd others must be gatherers and attenders, they must cherish and enfold. They must lead through being seekers of justice and righteousness.

The image of the cross, of the wounded bleeding Christ, is the image of vulnerable power. It is pure grace, self-giving and life offering. In the woundedness and brokenness lies the image of love. This is not what I see demonstrated by many western churches whose focus is self-preservation in the current political and social conversation. It is not what I hear in many individual voices either. It is the recognising and cherishing in the brokenness, our own brokenness and that of the 'other', that we witness the power of God's reign of love. In order to understand top-down power, we acknowledge our broken-ness and see it as a gift in ourselves and others. The church is to exercise this sort of leadership, within its councils and within its

community. As we do this, we witness in our community, to servant leadership. Out of this witness, the church can lead. It is our daily choice and our reference point, our framework.

From here, "because of the tender mercy of our God" we shine the light of God in the darkness and guide our feet in the way of Peace (Luke 1: 78,79). This King is the one who exercises Righteousness and Justice. What characteristics does Colossians describe? Strength, glorious power, first and foremost of all creation, birther of all that is visible and invisible, holder of the fullness of life. Reconciler, peacemaker. Present to us in broken-ness and vulnerability.

We are offered free gifts of redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace.

In this we find the strength for endurance, patience and great joy. Here is a reminder that skewed images of perfection have no place of the Kingdom of God. We identify right alongside those we might think get what they deserve because of poor life choices. Everyone of us is broken. What does it mean to be shepherds who round up and call into radical belonging, to gather rather than scatter? This is ours to do.

### ***Singing - Faith will not grow from words alone - TiS 691***

---

or: **Come to be our hope, O Jesus, TiS 688**  
(Can be sung to ODE TO JOY - TiS 152)

### ***Offering***

---

Loving and giving God,  
Thank you for enabling us to share what you have given to us. Enable us to enjoy the blessing of happiness in sharing for the extension of your love and salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***Notices***

---

*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 November 20th, 2022 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Today is World Children's Day - how do you celebrate the young life around you?

Nov 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. There are some ideas for taking action here on the Respect Victoria website: [https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/news/join-us-2022-16-days-activism-against-gender-based-violence?gclid=Cj0KCOiAmaibBhCAARIsAKUlaKQYDAOAeHXe9Q\\_Bh31QsX88vVKBqyWc82EzncZte1XYQxzpN4EW4xlaAsorEALw\\_wcB](https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/news/join-us-2022-16-days-activism-against-gender-based-violence?gclid=Cj0KCOiAmaibBhCAARIsAKUlaKQYDAOAeHXe9Q_Bh31QsX88vVKBqyWc82EzncZte1XYQxzpN4EW4xlaAsorEALw_wcB)

November 26th is International Buy Nothing Day. It's an international day of protest against overconsumption. It is deliberately timed around Thanksgiving (Us/Canada) and Black Friday.

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

---

*"The heavens declare the glory of God  
The skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they display knowledge.  
There is no speech or language  
where their voice is not heard.  
Their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world."  
(Psalm 19:1-4)*

Creator God, maker of all,  
We pray for the creaturely family-bond of all your handiworks that nothing more of the harmful actions be taken towards your creation.  
Instead, in that creaturely bond, we human beings will be able to listen and hear the unsounded voice of the skies and the firmaments in our inner being.  
Enable us to stay away from the greediness that causes pollution and untimely dying out of the beauty of your creation.  
Help us to understand the unspoken language of your creation in our hearts that we will see your glory and power faithfully displayed by them.  
**Lord of creation, unite us and give us peace.**

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God." (Phil 2:4-6)*

God of the living and the dead,  
We pray for your holy and universal church, that in all our living we will be able to live a life of rejoicing each day.  
Enable us to put aside anxiety and worries in order that we will present ourselves as an acceptable sacrifice to you, kind hearted, caring and gentle to the world around us. Teach us to submit our prayers with a heart of gratitude.  
**Let the church be always caring and rejoicing in you, O God.**

*"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good;  
Blessed is the person who takes refuge in him.  
Fear the Lord, you his saints,  
For those who fear him lack nothing."  
(Psalm 34:7-9)*

God of providence,  
We pray for those through all ages who have been faithful to your calling in serving the community and in loving you.  
Help us to learn to taste and experience your providential goodness. Help us to live a life of security in knowing you.  
**Let your saints live a life that lacks nothing in their lives, O God.**

*"I will pour out my Spirit on all people  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
Your old men and dream dreams  
Your young men will see visions.  
Even on my servants, both men and women  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days."  
(Joel 2:28-29)*

God of prophecy and impartiality,  
We pray for the intergenerational togetherness of all ages in the church and community. May we explore, learn and experience the equality of all



## **Sunday November 20th, 2022**

### **The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

genders and ages in serving you, through serving one another.

Strengthen us all with the message of the prophetic vision to build a strong community of faith and hope, that we will enjoy the life of a peaceful co-existence among faith-neighbours.

**Let the faith-neighbours live in peace.**

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)*

God of orphans and widows,  
We pray for all the orphans and widows around the world that they will always live in the peace and security that comes from you, through us, your people in the community.

Give us an empathised heart to patiently listen to their cry and act to meet their needs.

**Help the orphans and the widows, the lost and the lonely, O God.**

### **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 - Lord let me see, TiS 681**

or: **Lord of Creation to you be all praise TiS 626**

### **Blessing**

Gracious Father,  
You are the God who always fulfils your promise.

You are the universal and eternal model of love and forgiveness.

Your unlimited scope of forgiving prayer on the cross of Calvary has inwardly and outwardly inspired us to forgive others and ourselves.

May the blessing of your forgiving strength guide and lead us each day on our faith-journey towards our eternal home.

“Lord Jesus, remember us when you come into your kingdom.” Amen.

You may choose to close with  
**Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom TiS 730**

or:

**Worship, honour, glory, blessing TiS 772**

*Liturgy: Rev. Gospel Ralte*  
*Wattlebird Ministry Team*

*Reflection: Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson*  
*Shearwater Ministry Team*

*Presbytery of Gippsland*  
*Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon*  
[pastoral.ucaqipps@gmail.com](mailto:pastoral.ucaqipps@gmail.com)

