



**Sunday June 18th, 2023**  
**The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

**Call to worship & Lighting the Candle**

Each day and every day God hears our voice and listens to our cry for mercy. How can we repay the Lord for all his goodness to us?

**Let us lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the Lord**  
**Let us fulfil our promise to the Lord  
and sacrifice a thank offering to Him**  
**Let us call on the name of our God.  
in the court of the house of the Lord.**  
*Psalm 116:13-18*

*Light the candle - Christ is with 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- God of many names TiS 180**

OR: Praise to the living God TiS 102

**Prayer**



Thank you, Lord, for the free gift of salvation. We come to you with a heart full of confidence,  
with the knowledge of your presence in our life;  
with a cry for your mercy.

As Abraham cried for mercy,

O Lord, "if we have found favour in your eyes,  
do not pass your servants by." *Genesis 18:3*  
We, the undeserving sinners, are seeking your mercy for ourselves and for our people.  
May your love surround us.

Thank you, Lord, for your Son Jesus Christ, who set us free from all condemnation. Help us to set our mind and live our lives according to the desire of the Holy Spirit who indwells in us.

As you said to your disciples in the first century,  
"the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few,  
ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers to the harvest field," *Matthew 9:37-38*

O Lord, we, the forgiven people, are pleading your mercy to continue showering your blessings upon those who are serving you in helping the helpless, providing for those in need, caring for the sick and listening to those who call.

We ask your blessings and strength for those who are being trained, and those in the stage of discernment; We seek your inspiration to touch the heart of young people to commit their lives to work in the harvest field.

**O Lord,  
we are the helpless and the helpers who  
need your blessing.  
We are the sheep and shepherds who need  
your leading.  
We are your servants in the harvest field  
who need your empowering.**

**Amen.**



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***Passing the peace***

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

***Listening***

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Readings:      Genesis 18: 1-15  
                    Matthew 9:35 - 10:8

***Reflecting - Rev. Jennie Gordon***

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Have you ever been expected to perform a task, hired to do a job or sent on a mission that you felt totally unprepared for, and ill-equipped to begin, let alone to complete?

There had been a serious car accident involving young members of the local sporting club late on Saturday night. With my phone on silent, I noticed the message after finishing the first of two services that Sunday morning. An urgent call from the Club President. Please come to the rooms. We need you now. I walked into the building with a prayer in my heart, nothing in my hands, and no plan about what to do, but I walked in, and stayed a while. I came back after the second service and stayed for weeks that merged into months. I never once felt that I was enough, but I was there, listening, caring, calming, crying, standing alongside.

Just pause a minute – have you been in a similar situation? Did you wonder why it was you and not someone else a bit more skilled or wiser, or more courageous, clever, or faithful?

In Matthew's gospel we hear that Jesus calls these twelve disciples, but who are they, and what are their qualifications? Are

they the best of the best; the smartest, toughest, coolest, most attractive people he could find? I don't think so. All we know about them is their names, some of their family connections, one with a dubious occupation and we know he was despised, and one who was bound to be the betrayer. Were they the best that Jesus could find? They'll get it wrong frequently, they'll fall asleep when Jesus needs them to keep awake and, in the end, they'll be nowhere to be found, hiding behind locked doors and walking away in the other direction.

Yet Jesus sends these people on what appears to be a 'mission impossible'; tell everyone, well, tell the people of Israel, that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, and don't just tell them, show them like this – cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, oh and by the way, don't get paid to do it. No need to pack. Off you go now. Can you imagine...

What I see in this reading, and what I know in my life is that Jesus sends ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and somehow, along the way, we are encouraged and equipped, the kingdom of heaven comes near and it looks a lot like love.

Sarah laughs at the thought of bearing a child in her old age. Abraham, who has followed God's leading with deep faithfulness, has now entertained the holy three / holy one, with abundant and impeccable hospitality. The promise of generations of descendants flows from this meal by the oaks of Mamre. Sarah's laughter ripples like a river of joy when the promise is fulfilled, and Isaac is born. It's a story of ordinary people, laughing, doubting people believing God's promise and having



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the courage and faith to do extraordinary things.

So here we are, not the toughest, the richest, the most talented, or the brightest, but a rag-tag bunch of companions walking in the way of Jesus. And there is Jesus, looking on us with compassion and asking us to put our big boots back on and keep walking together. We are exactly the right people for this time and this place because we are here together, called and sent to proclaim the good news and show it in abundant love.

Siblings in Christ, maybe we should travel light, and encourage each other along the way, and I believe that God will continue to make possible what currently seems outrageously impossible. May it be so, Amen.

#### ***Singing- In the presence of your people TiS 727***

OR: All my hope on God is founded TiS 560

#### ***Offering***

God, shower of blessing,  
Bless these gifts of love we bring as a token  
of our thankful hearts, life and our soul.

**May the blessings we share reach the needy**  
**May the care we give comfort the crying**  
**May the pain we bear heal the broken**  
**with your abundant love and blessing.**  
**Amen.**

#### ***Notices***

It's Refugee Week - June 18-24, **2023 – 2025**  
**Theme – Finding Freedom** What does it mean to be free? To live without the fear of war, to have your basic human rights upheld, to live in equality and without the fear of persecution are just some of the examples of what freedom can entail. Every day millions of

people across the world embark on dangerous journeys for the sole purpose of finding safety and freedom. From Australia to nations across the globe, settling into a new environment after experiencing the perils of a refugee's journey can also provide the opportunity to live, to love and to dream. [Refugee Week 2023 Theme: Finding Freedom](#)

June 20th is World Refugee Day. [World Refugee Day 2023 | UNHCR](#)

June 22nd is the Uniting Church in Australia's birthday - Happy 46th Birthday to us!

#### ***Prayers for World & Community***

In this Refugee week, we pray for those who have left their families, homes and friends due to war, persecution and killing. We ask that they will find helpers and resettlement and new friends and families, show us how we can be those people of hospitality.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

**Silence**

We pray for your servants who are serving you in different harvest fields, in churches, schools, aged care, hospitals ... that they will be strengthened each day in meeting the need of the needy and the helpless with your unfailing love of abundant blessings. We pray that we will see our daily lives as places where we can serve you, workplaces, shopping centres, libraries, on the street...

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

**Silence**



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We pray for the church, that our leaders may be wise and compassionate in their decision making. We pray that all in your church today, may hear the call of Jesus to go and use their gifts in service, leaving the possessions and ideas that burden them, trusting in your provision.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

**Silence**

We pray for those who have lost their loved ones, those who are undergoing medical treatment, those whose lives seem so dim and without hope that their exhausted lives will be re-energised with your grace.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

**Silence**

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

***The Lord's Prayer***

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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 - The great love of God TiS 164***

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OR: Amazing Grace TiS 129

***Blessing***

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Friends,  
As you go out into the harvest field of the Lord,  
may the favour of God find you  
may the abundant love of God enfold you  
may the power of God empower you  
and may the peace of God indwell in you  
each day.

**Amen.**

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