



## **Sunday June 25th, 2023**

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

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

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;  
save your servant who trusts in you. (Ps 86)

Come, let us worship God.

*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 - How great thou art TiS 155**

OR: Great is your faithfulness TiS 154

#### **Prayer**



Our Lord and our God,  
When we look to the stars  
or see lightning and hear thunder  
we cannot help but wonder in awe  
and praise at your creative work.

We come before you with our  
love and devotion, and ask that  
you preserve us and lift us  
as disciples of Jesus Christ.

We know that despite our best efforts  
we struggle to remain in awe;

we struggle to keep praising you;  
we fall short of love and devotion  
and commitment to follow Jesus.

As Sarah was confronted by Hager and Ishmael,  
so we wish to rid ourselves of troubles,  
or things we cannot undo.

When we want justice,  
we often invoke violence and destruction  
in your name.

#### *Time for quiet reflection*

Followers of Jesus Christ,  
death has no power over him,  
and as we have given ourselves to him,  
so also we live.

In the name of Christ  
we can boldly declare  
we are made restored,  
we are made new!  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

#### **Passing the peace**

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

#### **Listening**

Readings:           Genesis 21: 8-21  
                          Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17  
                          Matthew 10: 24-39

#### **Reflecting -**

The call to discipleship is higher than all other claims upon one's identity and allegiance; and whatever fate awaits teachers or masters also awaits their disciples and slaves. These two ideas are clear in today's gospel reading and as we read the whole exposition of Matthew, an outside



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observer might wonder why anyone would become a disciple. But the instruction of Jesus is “Do not fear”, yes, these things are to be expected, it is not easy to be a disciple but in the call to discipleship there is the promise of each one’s importance to God, even the hairs of your head are counted. If God notices each sparrow, worth less than a penny, that falls, God also notices every disciple.

But do not think that you can be a disciple in secret, there is “nothing secret that will not become known”. (Matthew 10:26) This may worry those who don’t want to be known as disciples, but it is also encouraging, it reassures us that God knows everything that happens, the lies told will be found out, we can stand in confidence on God’s side, declaring the gospel. If we tell the gospel in the light, it will be “shouted from the rooftops”.(Matthew 10:27) The darkness Matthew refers to is about the meetings that the community had at night because they were a community that was persecuted.

Do not fear, God is on our side even when it does not feel like it and it does not look like it as our congregations are small and battling to survive in today’s society. God is always present; however it takes courage to announce our beliefs. Giving of self is self-fulfilment, it is what God requires and rewards even if there are no rewards in this life. Simplicity, vulnerability, and dependence on God demonstrate the reality of God’s presence and character in the face of the world’s claims to possess real power. This is hard stuff to understand and to consider putting into practice. Even as laws change and there are court cases around the bad behaviour of those with power, who use it inappropriately, there still seem to be plenty of people who get away with it and gain power and wealth while bending or ignoring the

law. We see this as the war in Ukraine continues, young first nations people are still targeted by police, a million-dollar stadium is proposed in Tasmania while aged-care and hospitals cry out for money.

What are we called to do? How are we to be disciples in 2023? If we look at the big picture, there were few disciples in the beginning, but Christianity is now a world-wide religion. In small towns and city suburbs there are still groups of disciples doing what God calls them to do. We know that buildings close, but the people are still there, still caring, offering love and mercy, providing what people need. Our role is to be there, not to fear, to recognise what human power is and to call on God’s power, knowing that this may involve conflict and division but sure of God’s power to provide mercy and compassion. We must keep connecting to the source of this power, trusting that God is present in every situation however tough or messy as conflict so often is. Keep working, believing, and trusting all you disciples out there!

Amen

#### ***Singing - What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590***

OR: Lord Jesus, we belong to you TiS 686

#### ***Offering***

As we belong to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
so we offer these gifts in your name.  
Bless them and use them to your will that others  
may find life and belonging in you. Amen.



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### **Notices**

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June 26th is the International Day in support of victims of torture.

NAIDOC week is coming up (July 2-9) - what will you get involved in?

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

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O Lord our God,  
You hear our prayers before we speak,  
And answer before we know our need.  
Although we cannot pray as we ought,  
May your Spirit pray in us,  
Drawing us to you and towards our neighbours. <sup>[1]</sup>

We pray for our world, her land and waters, the air we breathe, her peoples, first and second nations, her flora and fauna. As we see your hand in everything, equip us with wisdom and grace to care for the whole of creation.

We recall things that threaten to overwhelm:

A warming climate;  
Wars amongst nations;  
Wars amongst communities;  
Reduced capacity in churches;  
Conflict within families ...

We pray for those who struggle:

Those who feel alone or orphaned;  
Those who feel forgotten or unloved;  
Those who face grief and loss...

O Lord our God,  
You hear our prayers before we speak,  
And answer before we know our need.  
Although we cannot pray as we ought,  
May your Spirit pray in us,  
Drawing us to you and towards our neighbours.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

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<sup>[1]</sup> Uniting in Worship II p 281

### **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- Faith will not grow from words .. TiS 691**

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OR: Make me a channel of your peace TiS 607

### **Blessing**

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Siblings in Christ,  
As we have been nourished in him,  
we are now sent out in his name.  
To be a channel of peace,  
to bear the marks of Christ  
to a world in need of hope.

Go to bless and be blessed,  
in the name of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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