



Sunday August 27th, 2023 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Today we say,
If the Lord had not been on our side,
when ocean of troubles attacked us,
they would have swallowed us alive

And again we say,
If the Lord had not been on our side,
when the sea of sorrow attacked us,
the flood of anxiety would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us.

Praise be to the LORD,
who has not let us alone to suffer

Instead, we have escaped like a bird
from the fowler's snare;
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped.

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
Our God is worthy to be worshipped.
So let us draw near to our loving God.
(Based on Ps 124)

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

PRAYER:

O Lord,
We come to you with a heart, full of thanks and praise.
We bow down before you with a heart, full of humility and freedom.
We seek your face,
We lift our hands
May our desire for you lead us to the throne of grace.
That one day we may see you face to face.
Amen.

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- Thankyou for giving me... , TiS 162

OR: Come, O God of all the earth, TiS 181



Prayer

O LORD,
If you had not been on our side,

The snares of life would have overpowered us,
The struggle of life would have entangled us,
The crisis of life would have entrapped us.

O LORD,
If you had not been on our side,

The spirit of oneness would not have drawn us together,
The spirit of the ecumenical heart would have left us
The spirit of forgiveness would have gone far far away from us.

O LORD,
If you are not here with us today,

Day and night shall pass without meaning,
The Sun will rise without the true light
The Sun will set without the real life,
And we will be gone without the assurance of deliverance.

O LORD
Because you are here with us today,



Sunday August 27th, 2023 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

The whole creation has experienced your eternal deliverance which has been offered freely to everyone through your Son Jesus Christ,

Indeed, O LORD,

We ourselves will experience the deliverance that you provided to the people of Israel from the bondage of slavery starting with a hidden child, Moses.

Surely, O LORD,

Because of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,

**We are loved and forgiven people
Thanks to be God. Amen.**

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Exodus 1:8-2:10
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

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

Reflecting -

What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you have great expectations of who you were supposed to be? A dream that you wanted to follow.

People can have great expectations placed upon them by their families. They are expected to grow up to be doctors, lawyers, take over the family business. We have expectations that children will follow their parents into supporting football teams, enjoying a particular music style or an expression of faith. There are so many more options in life today, the world can be a never-ending list of choices. Who would choose to follow Paul's exhortations?

Do you want to be a living sacrifice to God, as Paul encouraged his listeners? What is a living sacrifice? Don't all human sacrifices mean death?

Paul asked us to die to what we are made into by the world.

The world is not always helpful in encouraging us to be ourselves. It can be difficult not to lose ourselves to the pressures of what other people think of us. People who feel vulnerable can also be people who are overwhelmed by the lure of fame, notoriety, conformity, money, and power, and have no room left to be themselves. How can they find God's peace when they are no longer listening to the Holy Spirit? We become overloaded by other people's ideas of success, by expectations that we put upon ourselves at all stages of living. We think that we are always limited to being as others perceive us. What if God has other expectations of us and has given us gifts that we are supposed to use? All of us have something to contribute to God's world.

When we are young our need is to fit in with friends and to be loved by our parents, when we are older it is to make our way in the world as we experience it. Powerful incentives to conform! But in doing so we can end up sacrificing our gifts and our callings, our individuality, and our identity.

Paul is asking us to give ourselves daily to God. To live each day as if our relationship with God was more important to us than our selfish desires or self-imposed limitations. We are encouraged by Paul to not give in to the outside pressures of the world, but to have faith in God to help us be all that we were made to be.

Through baptism we die to the expectations of the world and are reborn in the Spirit of God.

Two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, thousands of years ago, made a brave decision to do their best to save a generation of male newborns. They decided to defy the expectations of their time by stepping out in love of God. What amazing changes that made to the history of an entire people! It was part of God's answer to a prayer of salvation.



Sunday August 27th, 2023 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Making choices moment by moment to change bad habits, live a better life, pay attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit in prayer and in life, can help us make the most of the gifts that God has given to us; it can help us to experience the bounty of God's creation and God's mercy. And we do not have to do it alone! We are here as the body of Christ to uphold and support one another. To be the children of God.

Whatever you choose to be when you grow up, don't be afraid to be your authentic self, live your life well, and choose to live each day for God.

Singing

- TIS 163 God, who stretched the spangled heavens

OR: Inspired by love and anger TIS 674

OR: When I needed a neighbour, TIS 629

Affirmation of faith

Jesus Christ is Lord (UiW People's Book - page 128)

**We believe in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.**

**And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth
and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
to the glory of God: Jesus Christ is Lord!
Amen.**

(Philippians 2:5-11)

Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation,
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever. Amen

(PBA p.27)

Notices

August 30th - International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.

Enforced disappearance has frequently been used as a strategy to spread terror within the society. The feeling of insecurity generated by this practice is not limited to the close relatives of the disappeared, but also affects their communities and society as a whole. Enforced disappearance has become a global problem and is not restricted to a specific region of the world. [ICMP 30 August – International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearance](#)

September 1st is the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation and the beginning of National Biodiversity Month.

Prayers for World & Community

We come before God with our prayers for ourselves and one another.

We pray for our world, where there is war and violence, **may there be peace.**

Where there is anger and strife, **may there be peace.**

Where there is destruction of creation, through our behaviours and greed, **May there be rebuilding and generosity.**

We pray for all who grieve, who are in pain, lonely or despair, we ask that you will surround them with your love.

We pray that we may have the courage to be ourselves, we may find peace listening to the



Sunday August 27th, 2023 **The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

Holy Spirit in this sometimes difficult journey of life.

We pray that we may hear what God is calling us to be
as the Uniting Church,
as our congregation, (*name*),
as individuals called to use our gifts in God's service.

Lead us, O Lord, to become the communities of oneness that seek your will, live a life of offering our bodies as holy and acceptable, pleasing to you in worship and action.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

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 - O God of every nation, TiS 621

OR: What shall I do my God to love TiS 122

Blessing

Let us go:
To live out our calling to be the people of God, holy and acceptable to Him..
-finding the true and divine nature of God incarnate in our humble daily living
-growing in peace and unity, belonging to the other of us in Christ
-enjoying the presence of the Holy Spirit each day. **Amen.**

Song of peace: Shalom to you now TiS 778

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.

Reflection: Rev. Annetia Goldsmith

Liturgy: Rev. Gospel Ralte

*Editor: Moira Dodsworth
Wattlebird Ministry Team
Presbytery of Gippsland
mdods1@gmail.com*

