



**Weekly Worship**



**Pentecost 6**  
**Sunday July 17, 2021**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

We have come to sit at the feet of Christ and learn **like a green olive tree in the house of God.**

God convenes this gathering and by God's Spirit, is among us.

**By Christ's grace we joyfully worship the God of glory**

who will always stretch far beyond our comprehension, yet whose love is as simple and present as the air we breathe.

**We will trust the steadfast love of God forever.**

We light a candle as we remember 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, to stand up, show up and speak up, seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

## Singing: 'Come as you are' TIS 693



## Prayer

We begin our day, O God, in praise,  
For the day is yours and we are yours;  
We could not live without depending on you,  
without your gifts, without your grace and love.

We begin with praise for the gift of life,  
For the gifts of our life together  
in your beautiful world,  
For the gift of life in your church,  
for the witness to hope.

You alone make and remake heaven,  
earth and us too.  
You give justice, liberty  
and extravagant mercy.

You are over all and in all – Over the big picture  
beyond our comprehension  
and in all the smallest details,  
so with us too.

We praise you, we are grateful,  
we open ourselves to you.

..... Lord Jesus, we confess that the busyness of  
our lives often makes it difficult to listen deeply to  
your voice.

**Transform our priorities  
so that we make space in our lives  
to be quiet and listen to you.**

Jesus, seeker of the lost, we recognise that your call  
on our lives is not always easy to hear.

*Prayer continues*





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*Prayer continues*

**Transform our values  
so that they are shaped by your concern  
for the unloved and unlovely, and  
for the weak and powerless in our society.**

Jesus, friend of the poor,  
we know that too often our response to you  
in service, mission and outreach  
is weighed against economic cost.

**Transform our thinking  
so that we risk believing that all things  
are held together,  
not by the financial bottom line,  
but by you.**

Jesus, you call us to follow  
your way of reconciliation  
but all too often in our faith communities,  
we harbour hurts,  
we bear hostility towards one another.

**Transform our hearts  
so that we are filled with the desire  
to forgive one another  
and to make peace.**

Loving Jesus,  
**may the posture of our lives  
be shaped by listening to you;**

the goodness of our actions  
be shaped by love for you;  
**and the service of our lives  
be shaped by a humility like yours.**

This we pray in your name.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

“In Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through Jesus all things, whether on earth or in  
heaven, have been reconciled to God.”

Friends, believe the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are  
forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

## **Passing the peace**

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

## **Listening**

Read: **Colossians 1:15-28**  
**Luke 10:38-42**

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

## **Singing: ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God’ TIS 745**





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## Reflecting

**Rev. Arnie Wierenga**

At our recent Uniting Church Synod meeting (Victoria & Tasmania), many of us enjoyed a Korean meal in a local church. We were fed with startling efficiency. While walking there, I was 'slowed down' by some Tongan friends delighting in meeting again and cherishing their time together. What we value shapes our response to the gospel story of Jesus at Mary and Martha's place. There we find Martha busy with the tasks at hand while Mary seems content to slow and cherish the moment.

While Jesus commends Mary on choosing to sit and listen, I suspect we are not called to value one sister over the other, or indeed one cultural approach over another. It is tempting to judge from our own point of view but these verses are from a larger narrative of Jesus and these sisters; and Jesus was at times efficient and focused on attending to tasks while at other times he slowed and cherished the moment.

Many of us are shaped by ideas of what it means to be disciples without even realising. Centuries ago, John Calvin thought our eternal destiny must be determined in advance. If God is aware of all we do even before we are born, then whether we go to heaven or hell must be predestined. A long story short, this causes many to be anxious about something we cannot change. Anxiety drives people to be doers in the name of Christ. If faith without works is dead, then some work will express a pulse. More work will be better. Even more work must show a strong faith...

Many of us are biased to see Martha as doing the right thing. How comfortable are you in slowing down to sit idly with friends when there is work to be



done? Both sisters are both sharing in the household economy. Mary and Martha both contribute as they attend to their guest, expressing different forms of hospitality.

In recent weeks I've been wintering. It's not a term I knew until I was given the book by Katherine May of that title. It essentially unpicks a cultural inability to winter, that is, to slow down for a season to emerge at some point stronger for the slowing. When we found easy ways to light up our evenings and keep warm at night, we began to push back against seasonal variations. Living through winter requires more energy and effort than other seasons. Fighting the dark and cold comes at a cost. If we no longer winter, we can deplete our reserves and consequently not bounce back so well when the sun begins to warm our bones again.

Our lived experiences and cultural understandings and practices will shape how we respond to the actions of Mary and Martha, and therefore perhaps invite confusion about Jesus chiding one sister over the other. Through wintering, I see their household in a new way. I see them as a whole, two sisters as two necessary parts, both needed for a healthy household. For them to be their best, there will need to be seasonal biases, sometimes doing, sometimes resting, often both. In this gospel moment Mary is commended but it is also just a moment. Jesus has insight into their needs and his own in a way we do not. It reminds us we need to be nourished at the feet of Jesus, to be fed for the journey, to draw deeply from the wellspring of life, to be renewed before being sent out again in Christ's name.

Becoming aware of our preferences allows us to attend to that which makes us whole and strong. For me in this moment, the better part is to spend more time like Mary at Jesus' feet because that is what I need. I may be more comfortable being like Martha, but right now being busy can wait until the Spring calls me out with renewed vigour.

Whatever your better part in this moment and all moments in Christ's name, may it not be taken from you.





**Singing: 'Faith will not grow from words alone' TiS 691**

**Offering**

Lord Jesus Christ, we rest at your feet to be nourished by your words. We rise to respond in your name as we are ready. All that we are is yours, and we bring both our need to be fed and our capacity to respond to you. Bless all that we are and all that we offer that it may feed your world in the name of Christ. Amen.

**Notices**

This week is the Sixth Sunday of Pentecost. The season of Pentecost continues through to November.

July 18 is Nelson Mandela International Day.

**Responding: Prayers for the World and Community**

God for all your marvellous, diverse creation we are so thankful.

For your generosity of giving that we see in Jesus, we are awed and have no words good enough to express our gratitude. We acknowledge our debt to you and look for your grace in helping us to respond to your love in our living.

We thank you for a free and fair land, for the blessings of an accountable democracy and the gracious opportunity to look back at past actions with new understanding, to review and rebuild relationships.

We listen for your voice in the voices of those in need;

For those we know sick, sad or lonely, for others we know who have lost friends, family, for all who miss loved ones today and for the many ill now, surround them with your love, healing and peace.



Lord in your loving mercy  
**Hear our heartfelt prayer**

We pray for all who face challenges and tough choices. Out of the habits of the past, and the comfort of the familiar, make us good candidates for your newness; ready to embrace challenges, make changes and rise to new heights in loving;

Lord in your loving mercy  
Hear our heartfelt prayer

We want to go on being part of your giving to others, to live as your people, eager to see a world where everyone has a chance, is valued and able to find their place.

We pray for help to be your people, not aspiring to be able to love everyone adequately ourselves, but as part of a loving community, able to reach out with your love and share what we have with the same generosity we've been shown;

Lord in your loving mercy  
**Hear our heartfelt prayer**

We pray for the many who have great needs and no voice. In these days of cash being lavished on weapons and military defence, may the will to shoot and bomb run out faster than the desire to feed the hungry, shelter the destitute and aid the oppressed. We pray for all suffering in dependency,... unemployment,... poverty,... with chronic conditions,... and from violence,...;

Lord in your loving mercy  
**Hear our heartfelt prayer**

in the name of Jesus, who taught his disciples to pray together:





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## 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: 657 'God of Freedom,  
God of justice' TiS 657**

## Blessing

Go your way with thanksgiving.  
Enjoy those who love you most  
and pray for those who dislike you most.  
Be compassionate in the face of human need.  
Listen for the whispers of the Spirit in creation.

The gentle grace of Jesus,  
the always present love of God,  
and the warm fellowship of the Spirit,  
be with you now and always,  
enticing, enabling and nudging you on.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**in the name of Christ. Amen**

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