



Weekly Worship



Sunday October 15, 2023

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Here we are! Can you believe it!
Invited to celebrate with the giver of life!
You made it! Are you ready?
What will happen as we gather together?

Come, dancing Spirit.
Come, host of the banquet.
Come, lover of all.
Be present with us as we praise you.

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.

As this is the Sunday after the voting closes for the Voice to Parliament Referendum, it would be appropriate to hold a space of silent reflection here. Once the outcome is known, there will be resources for congregations offered on the UCA Synod of Vic/Tas website.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Here in this place TIS 474

OR: *Morning has broken* TIS 156



Prayer

Psalm 106:1

Praise the LORD!

*O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.*

God of steadfast love,
We give you thanks for your constant beckoning,
inviting us into life,
calling us to be connected.
We pause and bring into our minds
all that we are grateful for at this time:

(pause)

Jesus, Word incarnate,
We give thanks for your teaching;
your strange parables, your inclusive actions,
your love and compassion.
We pause and bring into our minds
a gospel story that we know and cherish:

(pause)

Spirit of life and truth,
We give thanks for your creative power,
working within, around and despite us,
to bring about the reign of love.
We pause and bring into our minds
a memory of your uplifting grace:

(pause)

Holy One, Holy Three,
we have not always responded with joy
to your invitation to life.

When we have not listened,

Forgive us

When we have listened but not understood,

Forgive us

When we have understood but not accepted,

Forgive us

(pause)

Prayer continues





Weekly Worship



Prayer continues

Continue to tell us, over and over again, because we need to hear the assurance and the reassurance:

We are forgiven, healed, made new, and invited to the banquet of heaven, here in this place, right now, where we are. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Exodus 32:1-14
Matthew 22:1-14

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

Reflecting

Rev. Moira Dodsworth

Today's parable of the Kingdom of heaven is probably the trickiest for many of us, particularly if we try to make God the king, so my suggestion is that we instead put the Pharisees or religious leaders as the ones who wrote the guest list, the message can then be seen differently.

The religious leaders have decided who is invited to the wedding. They are the people who can bring gifts. They will be well dressed. They may have influence which will be useful. They will know people who are important for the kingdom to do well. But these guests don't turn up to the banquet, they have other things to do and they know they have influence and wealth anyway, so they don't need to go when called. The king then calls others who are his subjects, they have shown this by being good citizens by preparing in their actions but they don't display this in their wealth or appearance, so they are welcomed

to the banquet. One who has not done the preparing, donning the wedding garment in his actions is still turned away. Many are called, all can be the king's subjects, but few do what is required to be chosen. Chosen as God's people, recognised by what they do.

The message for us, in this understanding of the story, is that God is aware of every person. All are made in God's image, all have the chance to belong, no-one is excluded from the community. But all who are loved need to respond by loving. God's love is available to all, but not all respond, not all feel the call to respond by loving and caring for others.

This is a challenging message, it makes the parable subversive as it tells us, in a way, that the church, the institution as we know it, is not essential to God's work. The institution of the church is something that we have built, in some ways it does amazing work, it can be a community that offers love and care and demonstrates God's presence in the world. But the religious leaders may try to write the guest list, yet they themselves are not prepared, not hearing the call, not modelling in their lives the behaviour of God's people and trying to fill the church with people just like them. Not all leaders are like this, not all ministers or pastors or priests, but the parable is a warning. We have received the invitation, the call, but are we turning up? Are we the one who is not wearing wedding clothes?

Matthew's gospel tells us frequently that we can't just say we believe, we must show we believe by actions. Jesus' call is challenging; it is about our everyday lives, not our attendance at church or donations to charities. In our Basis of Union, we say we are a pilgrim people. Pilgrims must travel light, and they must expect the unexpected. They have to work on relationships and caring for others, living lightly on the earth and seeking God in the unlikely other; other person, other place.





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Sunday October 15, 2023

Singing: Take my life and let it be. TiS 599

OR: What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590



Offering

Take these gifts, giver of all, and use them for your good purpose. Take our lives, lover of all and use us to invite others into the community of your loving embrace. In Jesus' name, **Amen**

Notices

Today begins **Anti Poverty Week - Oct 15-21**

The purpose of this week is to increase our understanding of poverty and encourage Australians to collectively act to end it. Our theme for 2023 is 'your path to wellbeing' More info here: antipovertyweek.org.au

Oct. 16th is World Food Day: World Food Day 2023 will focus on the theme, 'Water is Life, Water is Food. Leave No One Behind'. The theme aims to highlight the critical role of water for life on earth and water as the foundation of our food. It also seeks to raise global awareness about the importance of managing water

wisely as rapid population growth, economic development, urbanisation, and climate change threaten water availability. sdg.iisd.org/events/world-food-day-2023

Oct. 19 Marks the sinking of the SIEV-X and the drowning of 353 people seeking asylum.

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

We pray today for our world: May empty tables be filled. May dry wells overflow. May the lost be reconnected and the outcast be invited to the feast. May wars end and peace prevail.

We pray today for our nation: Whatever the outcome of the referendum, bless our First Nations siblings who have worked so hard to speak out for a Voice and to be heard in the cacophony of this democracy. Bless them with rest, bless them with knowing that they have allies alongside them, bless them with hope.

We pray for those impacted by fire and flood, signs of a changing climate, and we pray for all those who put their lives at risk to assist others in emergency situations.

We pray today for our church: For our leaders in every denomination. May they find ways of raising up what we hold in common, so that together we may be the church in action.

We pray today for ourselves and each other: In the quiet we bring the names of those most dear who need help and holding:

(time of quiet)

Guide us, Source of Love, to wear your garment of grace: to see the face of Jesus in the people we meet and to participate in the work of the Spirit as she brings wholeness and hope.

Prayer continues





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Prayer continues

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 for ever. Amen.**

Singing: Forth in your name

TiS 571

*OR: We are marching in the light of God
TiS 666*

Blessing

adapted from UIW2

*Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak; help the afflicted;
honour all people; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And the blessing of the Holy Three-in-One,
Source, Son and Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.*

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