



Weekly Worship



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Gather us in, Spirit of life
from all our wanderings,
with all our wonderings,
with all our joy and sorrow.

Gather us in and be present with us.
Help us to see you
through word and song and story.
So that we might be people
who shine with your glory,
bearing your image
in the world that you love, Amen.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

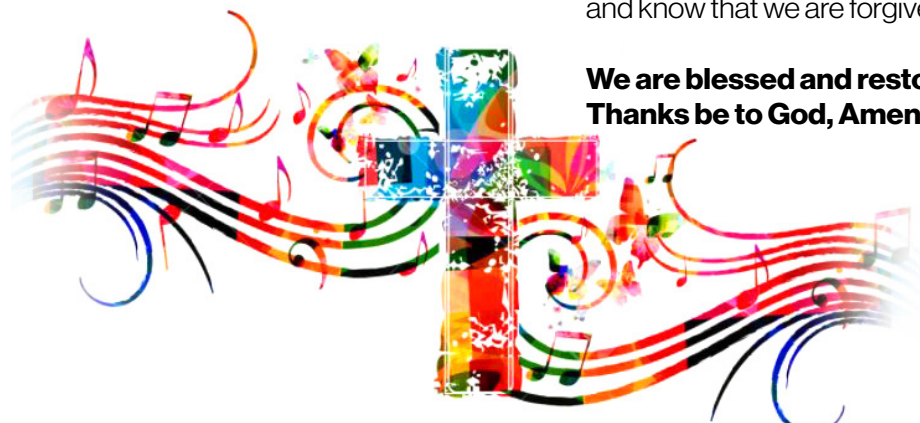
Acknowledging

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: Holy, holy, holy TiS 132

OR: *Immortal, invisible* TiS 143



Prayer

Thank you God,
for all the ways we see you
in the world around us:
rainbows, sunsets, howling winds,
penguins, shearwater, cape barren geese,
wombats, koalas, ants and flies,
manna gums, ti-tree, pigface
and our faces.

Help us to remember to dance with delight
at the gift of life and your constant presence.
We pause to give you gratitude
from deep in our hearts
for all of life, and our small part in it.

(pause)

When we forget to look for you
and get lost in the shadows of fear,
Forgive us, **forgive us.**

When we lose our sense of wonder,
and see only harm and hate,
Forgive us, **forgive us.**

When we fail to be your people
and bear your image always,
Forgive us, **forgive us.**

Siblings in Christ,
we glimpse God's glory
shining through our muddled messes
and know that we are forgiven.

**We are blessed and restored.
Thanks be to God, Amen!**



Weekly Worship



Sunday October 22, 2023

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Exodus: 33:12-23
Matthew 22: 15-22

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

Reflecting

Rev. Arnie Wierenga

The Uniting Church was among the advocates for a YES vote at last weekend's Voice referendum. Many sporting clubs and corporate businesses took a similar stance, all drawing the ire of those who believe that they should have stayed out of 'politics'.

It's a common theme. How many times have politicians told the church to butt out of the issue of the day? I'm sure our Synod's Justice Cluster would have many stories to tell of push-back from those in power when it comes to issues like gambling, advertising or asylum seeker policy.

It's an old tactic for power to say, "stick to your own business – politics belongs to politicians, the things of God belong to the church and the two shouldn't mix." It's a retelling of the parable Jesus shares in Matthew 22 – render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

Simple enough, isn't it? Some might say it's perfectly clear, but often those who say so have an interest in belittling the voice of the church, especially when it shines the light on uncomfortable truths.

We hear that Jesus is being set up. And it's a clever trap. Jesus sees the trap and gives them no room to move with his response. But tempting as it is for some, the short response doesn't justify a separation of church and state.

Jesus says: Give to God all that is God's.

So, what is it that belongs to God? Does what was once Caesar's belong to God? Isn't it everything that belongs to God? It seems that Jesus is delightfully subversive in his answer. He calls us towards the realisation that God has authority over all principalities and powers!

As all things are God's, then surely it follows that as we follow Jesus Christ, we are to seek God's will in all things. So rather than justifying the might and power of Rome (or any present-day power), the vision that Jesus offers is of God's rule or kingdom. Love, compassion, justice, mercy – perhaps the greatest response possible against oppressive human powers. If we use our faithful voices to speak God's love, compassion, justice and mercy into public policy, then surely we are living into the kingdom of God. If we speak the same into our relationships, our community, our environment, our conversation as First and Second peoples in this land, then surely we are living into the kingdom of God. While that may irritate politicians and family members alike, it is no reason to call for anything less than for love to be known.

There is one last piece of this parable worth looking out. The image of Caesar was imprinted onto the coin, with Jesus concluding the coin belonged to Caesar. In the Exodus passage we find that Moses is imprinted with God's glory, or perhaps God's image. If we as Christians bear the image of God, there is a powerful realisation that in all we do, we live and bear the image of God to others.

Reflecting continues

Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2023. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource



Uniting Church in Australia
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Weekly Worship



Reflecting continues

There is a lovely hymn, *Baited, the Question Rose*, written by Carl P. Daw Jr¹ that includes these words:

May we discern, O God,
your daily gifts of grace;
show us your image freshly coined
in every heart and face.
Help us fit tribute yield
through prayers and hymns we raise,
but most of all by deeds of love
to give you thanks and praise.

(tune DIADEMATA)

¹From *Singing the New Testament*, #62, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, 2008, ISBN 978-1-59255-416-4

Singing: Lord Jesus we belong to you **TIS 686**

OR: *This little light of mine (find it online)*



Offering

God of all, may these gifts and our lives be used to shine your glory, to show your face and to share your love. **In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Notices

A symbol of hope for global unity

United Nations Day, on 24 October, marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. www.un.org/en/observances/un-day

October 24-30 is Disarmament Week
www.un.org/en/observances/disarmament-week

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

We pray today for global unity,
God of constant presence.

Across our world people are in pain,
families torn apart, homes and hope destroyed.
Atrocities committed,
one human against another.
People used as pawns
as rulers play for power.

When will we see your image
in the face of the other?

How long can we go on fighting in disputes that have occupied generations?

When will our greed for more and more
give way to feeding each other,
regardless of creed or race?

Show us your face.

We pray today for global unity,
God of constant presence.

We know that peace begins at home.
Bless this nation as we seek to heal
from all that the referendum has cost
in the vast measure of human lives and hope,
as we continue to walk together into tomorrow.

When will we see your image in the face of the other?

How long can we go on fighting
in disputes that have occupied generations?

When will our greed for more and more give way to feeding each other, regardless of creed or race?

Show us your face.

We pray today for global unity,
God of constant presence.

Prayer continues

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Pentecost 21

Sunday October 22, 2023

Prayer continues

And we pray for our families,
neighbours, friends and strangers.
We hold before you all who are broken,
hurt, lost, lonely and struggling.

**Help us to reach out
with your healing, holding hands,
uniting us for the common good.**

**Help us to bear your image,
Help us to show your face.
Help us to know your face
in the life around us.**

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: Made in God's likeness

TiS 671

OR: Lord Jesus, we belong to you TiS 686

Blessing

Go into the world in peace
and shine with God's glory,

Boldly bear the image of love,
radiate hope, preach peace,
kindle connection and be kind
in all that you are and all that you do.

And may the Source, Son and Spirit of life
accompany you, waking and sleeping,
always and ever, Amen.

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