



### Acknowledging

\*Acknowledgement of Country  
 Blessed is the earth  
 on which we live and move and have our being  
 Blessed are the earthlings  
 that have come from the earth  
 Blessed is the earth  
 that nurtures all creatures  
 with food, water, and life.  
 Blessed are the First Persons of this land  
 and First Persons of all lands.  
 Blessed are the Traditional Custodians  
 (name them here)  
 the ancient stewards and custodians of this land.  
 Blessed are those who call for truth-telling,  
 who cry out for justice, recognition, healing  
 and peace-making in this land.  
 They shall be called children of God.

(Written by Rev Greg Crowe 2021)



\*This Sunday falls in National Reconciliation Week. Some of the liturgy in this week's resource is from the Synod of Vic/Tas. Link here: [issuu.com/ucavictas/docs/240410\\_jim\\_natreconweekresource#:~:text=The%20dates%20for%20National%20Reconciliation,27%20May%20to%203%20June.](https://issuu.com/ucavictas/docs/240410_jim_natreconweekresource#:~:text=The%20dates%20for%20National%20Reconciliation,27%20May%20to%203%20June.)

You might choose to play some appropriate reflective music as people are arriving - eg: Gurrumul and Paul Kelly singing Amazing Grace: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVORrx9jliE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVORrx9jliE)

### Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

**For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

2 Corinthians 4: 6

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

### Singing: Praise to the living God TiS 102

OR: Joyful, joyful TiS 152



Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2024. A Worship Resource from Friends of the Fig Tree.



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Weekly Worship



Sunday June 2, 2024

## A paraphrase of Psalm 139:1-6,13-18;

Source of love,  
you have seen me clearly and you know me.  
**You know my resting and my rising,  
and even the thoughts I keep at a distance.**

You look for me on the road and in my bed  
and understand how I go about things.  
**You anticipate what I'm going to say  
even before I've found the words.**

You surround me like a blanket,  
and I feel the warmth of your hand.  
**All this wonder blows my mind,  
I can't reach high enough to touch it.**

Because it was you who made me,  
**you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

Bless you,  
because you made me awesomely wonderful.  
**I know you are a maker of wonder.**

You knew what I was being made of,  
even when no one else did,  
intricately woven from earth's own fibres.  
**You saw the shape of me.  
You held the pages of my life  
before any of my story had been told.**

I feel heavy with your thoughts, Creator Spirit!  
**I can't possibly add them all up!**

I try to count them  
-they are more than the sand;  
**I come to the end - I am still with you.**

## Prayer

*\*(adapted from prayer by Rev Sani Vaeluaga,  
Leopold Uniting Church, 2024)*

Dear God, You are the creator, redeemer and  
sustainer of life, within whom the land, sea and sky  
and all that live in them, share your life and love in their  
diversity and unity.

In Christ, we see and experience the power of your  
love. Love that brings healing, forgiveness, and  
renewed life. Through the work of your Spirit, we  
share your grace to create and reconcile our life and  
relationship with our neighbour, and land, sea, and  
sky.

Now more than ever, O God, you continue to offer all  
Australians opportunities to speak and act in support  
of the First Nation peoples.

We thank you for the faith and courage of those in  
the past and those who continue to speak and act,  
inviting others to join the reconciliation journey and  
learn our shared histories, culture and achievements.

We acknowledge the pain and shame of our history.  
We acknowledge the suffering of your people,  
especially the First People of these lands, now known  
as Australia.

We pause to remember all who have lost their lives in  
the struggle for justice and peace in Australia and our  
world.

We pray for humility and empathy, for wisdom and  
understanding. We pray for your forgiveness and ask  
for courage to play our part  
to be agents of healing and reconciliation.  
Now more than ever, O God, help us and strengthen  
our hope in Christ and his love  
that bears our sins and our brokenness,  
and reconcile us to you and to each other.

And all the people say: **Amen.**







## Singing: You are before me Lord,

TiS 87



## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12,  
Mark 2:23 – 3:6

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

## Reflecting

**Rev. Sandra Houghton**

“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7

The first place I visited on a recent trip to Rome was the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls. This is a huge barn of a church situated, as the name suggests, outside the old Aurelian wall that encircled the city of Rome to try to keep the barbarians out. Pope Constantine the First began building the first basilica on this site in the 4th Century. It was built over a memorial that the Apostle Paul's followers had erected to mark the place where he had been buried. Paul was executed, probably by being beheaded, on the orders of the emperor Nero in about the year 65AD. This memorial had become a place of pilgrimage. The current basilica has huge marble pillars, a vast marble floor, an elaborately decorated

ceiling, mosaic portraits of every pope around the lintel, a huge altar, and the crypt where Paul's body is alleged to lie. Above the crypt is a glass case holding a length of ancient metal chains, reminding visitors of the many years Paul spent as a prisoner.

I could not help but think, as I looked around the splendour of it all, that Paul would have been unimpressed by all the grandeur. He was, after all, a man who sought to pay his own way by working at his trade of tent making, rather than being dependent on others. Proclamation of the gospel was his passion and his priority. To do this, he put all security aside, and lived an itinerant life. He took great risks to preach the gospel across Asia Minor and into Europe as his preaching was often greeted with hostility and opposition.

Writing about his experiences, Paul proclaimed in the reading from Second Corinthians, “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.” (2 Corinthians 4:8-10) Some of the trials that Paul faced included multiple periods of imprisonment, beatings, intimidation, being driven out of towns by mobs, and shipwrecks. I doubt that he would have wanted huge amounts of money, time and energy being devoted to buildings, let alone to one memorialising him. Rather, I believe, he would want the church to know and share their true treasure- the treasure that he describes as ‘this treasure in clay jars.’

This may sound like a strange analogy to us, but it might be helpful to know that not far from the splendid Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls is a hill called Mount Testaccio. Mount Testaccio is man made, and it is adjacent to the old river port. The hill consists of thousands, probably millions of shards of Roman amphorae. Amphorae were large clay jars used to transport olive oil, wine, and other liquids across the Roman empire. Clay jars were like the disposable containers of their day. They were cheap and easily made. So once emptied, they were often smashed (to reduce their volume) and dumped.

*Reflecting continues*

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*Reflecting continues*

Households, too, used cheap clay containers. These were much more fragile than the amphorae and often cracked and broke.

So, when Paul says we have this treasure in clay jars he is saying that we have in our fragile and impermanent bodies the great treasure which is our faith, given to us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this faith we know the love and forgiveness of God. This is a treasure that will live on beyond our human lives if we share it with others by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

Because Paul believed that he had this great treasure to share, he was prepared to endure whatever was thrown at him, and ultimately be killed, rather than not proclaim the gospel. It was, indeed, a costly ministry. But it was also wonderful. For Paul's legacy was not only in the churches he founded and guided, but it is also our treasure. For Paul's writings live on. They have taught, guided, and enriched the lives of churches and Christians ever since.

Paul wrote at least seven of the books of the New Testament, many of them written whilst he was a prisoner. He was the great early interpreter of the teachings of Jesus Christ. He helped the early Christians (and us) to see how they (and we) should live as true disciples of Jesus Christ. He made it clear that Christianity was more than an assent to beliefs, but rather that the whole of life was to be lived according to the principles laid out in the teachings of Jesus.

Becoming a Christian was life changing, as the Christian was empowered by the Holy Spirit, to devote themselves to becoming more and more Christ-like. They (and we) were to love God, love their brothers and sisters in Christ, live in harmony, and serve their community. May we, too, understand that we have been entrusted with an incredible treasure, that is not for us to hold to ourselves, but rather is our responsibility and joy to share. Amen.

### Questions to ponder:

What does it mean, in Reconciliation Week, that we are all 'treasure in clay jars' and that our bodies, regardless of race, colour or creed, are created to experience and share the wonder of the Spirit's work in the world?

How do the teachings of Jesus compel us to act towards each other as First and Second Peoples?

### Singing: Take my life and let it be, TIS 599

OR: Be thou my vision, TIS 547



### Offering

Bless these gifts, God of truth and justice,  
and bless us as together we seek to do your will.  
And all the people say: **Amen.**

### Notices

There's a song that's being sung throughout the country for National Reconciliation Week 2024 - you can find it here: [www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/voices-for-reconciliation-2024/](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/voices-for-reconciliation-2024/)

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## Responding: Prayers for World & Community

### \*Close the Gap Prayer

*(By Cameron Balcombe, a proud Olkola, Djabuguy, and Catholic man. Cameron is a First Nations Facilitator for the Pacific Australian Emerging Leaders Summit, works as a Mental Health clinician in the forensic mental health system, and is commencing a Masters of Social Work at RMIT University. From Common Grace)*

Dear Creator,  
We come before you with hearts filled with hope and determination. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this beautiful land, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we thank you for their wisdom, resilience, and knowledge.

We pray for healing in our nation as we confront the injustices and disparities that have plagued our Indigenous brothers and sisters for too long. We pray for the health professionals who work tirelessly to Close the Gap, that they may be filled with compassion and understanding.

Guide us, Lord, in our journey towards reconciliation and true friendship. Help us to bridge the gap in cultural understanding and access to health services. Show us how we can each contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

We lift up those who feel hopeless, especially the families and communities affected by suicide. Bring them comfort and peace, and help us to support and care for them in their grief. With the same hands, we also lift up the young people who are struggling, feeling lost or hopeless. May they find strength and resilience, and may we as a community offer them support and guidance towards a brighter future.

We also give thanks for the wisdom and resilience of our Elders, who have carried the stories and traditions of their people for generations. May they be filled with strength and courage as they continue to guide their communities, and may we learn from their teachings and wisdom.

May we be agents of your healing, Lord, working together to Close the Gap and build a better future for all Australians, especially our young people. Give us the wisdom to learn from the past, the courage to address the present, and the vision to create a future where all Australians stand together in equality and harmony. In your name, we pray. Amen.

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: Beauty for brokenness TiS 690

OR: Lord of earth and all creation TiS 672





## Blessing

Send us out to be your people, Spirit of truth,  
carrying your life in our bodies  
as treasure in clay jars.  
Let our lives reflect your light, now and always.  
and may the blessing of the Holy  
One-in-Three and Three-in-One,  
anoint your head  
and rest between your shoulders,  
today and in the days to come.  
And all the people say: **Amen.**

## Blessing Song

WORDS: Jennie Gordon, based on the Song of Solomon Ch 2 For  
UCA Synod of Vic/Tas 2022  
TUNE: CONVERSE 8.7.8.7.D (Charles Crozat Converse - common  
tune for - What a friend we have in Jesus)

Spirit calls, 'Arise, come with me.  
Oh, my dear ones, come away.  
Now the wattles are all blooming.  
Now the magpie greets the day.'  
We, emerging through the struggles  
seek a 'truth and justice' way,  
heed the call and walk together,  
love and listen, learn and pray.

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