



**Weekly Worship**



**Pentecost 15**  
**Sunday September 1, 2024**



## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

*My beloved speaks and says to me:  
'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;  
for now the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtle-dove  
is heard in our land.*

*(Song of Solomon 10-13 NRSV)*

O God, we praise you for the changing seasons,  
part of your beautiful Creation.  
We rejoice in the coming of Spring  
with all the beauty that it brings.  
The golden wattle, the beautiful blossom,  
and emerging wildflowers,  
the singing of the birds as they  
seek mates and build nests,  
the baby animals in the paddocks,  
and the warming weather.

As we gather to worship,  
we praise you for your creativity,  
your goodness and your love.  
We come to sing, to pray and to worship you,  
For you are the One who has  
made us and our world,  
And who loves and redeems us.

**Come let us worship our God.**

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

## Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded land and 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: Praise with joy the world's creator TiS 179

*OR: Lord of creation to you be all praise TiS 626*

*OR: Here in this place new light is streaming TiS 474*



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## Prayer

You, O God, are truly the God of justice, love and peace.  
You are the One who teaches us and shows us how to live.  
Open our hearts to what you want us to hear today.  
Help us apply these teachings to our lives.

As we come before you, O God, we are conscious that we often fail to fully live out our faith.  
We get impatient, we get angry, we say things we shouldn't say, we end up in conflict and in need of reconciliation.

**Help us to be doers of your word, and not merely hearers.**

We want to be faithful and obedient, but we get seduced by consumerism and greed, and fail to support the vulnerable and disadvantaged,

**Help us to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.**

We see so much wickedness and sordidness in our world, that it risks becoming something that we don't really notice unless it impinges on us.  
If we tolerate bad behaviour without calling it out, or let our standards slip, remind us of our calling to live lives worthy of the Gospel.

**Help us to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.**

Forgive us, loving God, for the many ways we fail to be faithful in word and action.  
Create in us a clean heart, and renew our minds and spirits, that we may go forth to honour your name.

**Thanks be to God, for undeserved forgiveness and lovingkindness.**

## Optional Song: Create in us a clean heart **TiS 712**



## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

Your word is a lamp to our feet  
**And a light to our path.**

**Read:** James 1:17-27 &  
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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

## Reflecting Rev. Moira Dodsworth

Did any of you have "food rules" as you grew up? Only butter or jam on bread? Only tea at breakfast? One lolly after dinner? I'm sure some of you did. These are some I remember and I remember being horrified when children of a friend shared an apple bite by bite! I realise that some came from a household where food had to go a long way and others, as for the apple from a fear of sharing "germs".

These were good reasons to those who made them and the reasons for God's people as defined in the Old Testament were to help God's people to remember that they were different. They were setting them apart as God's people, preserving their faith in God, true creator and living God. They were a people set apart. We find this in other religious groups, they need something to make themselves different. Jesus told his disciples that they did not need these rules

*Reflecting continues*

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*Reflecting continues*

and that some of the rules that the Pharisees were keeping were tradition and not God's rules.

We like to hold onto traditions. The familiarity provides comfort, a hot shower before bed, even picking the first daffodils for my house to remind me of my mum. Traditions give us identity, but we must be careful in our church traditions that they do not become laws, like the ones Jesus is talking about in this passage. We have recently sold the pews in a congregation and moved furniture so that it is a friendlier atmosphere for strangers. We have more groups using our properties and have had to ask people not to park in some areas. All these things have required consultation, discussion and firmness but gradually they happen. Some members feel that we are asking us to change what makes us who we are. Churches have pews, TV sets have no place in this "sacred space", and what about the place where they have always sat?

How much more Jesus is asking of us? Jesus is asking us to change our hearts. Jesus is asking us to forget about all those traditions and to think what really makes us God's people, the faith that brought us all here in the first place. The faith that offers us love and a place in a community of love and relationship with God. Jesus sees through any pretence that we think makes us look like God's people and so do many in the community who have left the church or do not see the point of our practices.

One of the difficulties is that the church is made up of people and Jesus points out that people do not have clean hearts if we look at the list written in Mark:

*"It is what comes out of a person that defiles.<sup>21</sup> For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder,<sup>22</sup> adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly.*

I think we all hope that most of these things are not within ourselves, they belong in other people but if we look at history, we will find all these in our institution called the church. We have work to do communally so we do not label some as unacceptable as unclean and not worthy of a place in God's kingdom but even more in our own hearts. There is no hierarchy of sin, pride and greed stand alongside murder. My hope for the church is that we can be honest, hear what Jesus is saying to us, examine our hearts and seek God's guidance and help to change not an easy task. But a community of love is something special, a place where all are welcome, not judged but accepted, not required to follow traditions or rules but simply to be themselves, all are worthy of love. May it be so.

**Singing: I want to walk as a child of the light TiS 643**

*OR: Create in us a clean heart (if not sung earlier) TiS 712  
OR: Rejoice in God's saints TiS 470  
OR: All the sleepy should have a place to sleep TiS 697*





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*Prayer continues*

### Offering

Accept these gifts and with them  
the offering of our lives.  
We seek to be your people, O God.  
Help us to share your love in this world  
that you love so much. Amen.

### Notices

**Today** is the *World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation*. It is also the start of the *Season of Creation*, see: [victas.uca.org.au/weekly-worship/](http://victas.uca.org.au/weekly-worship/) (scroll down to Season of Creation)



### Responding: Prayers for World & Community

Loving God, we give you thanks for your guidance,  
your love and your goodness.  
Help us to recognise your presence within and  
around us.  
Thank you for the freedoms we share and the  
opportunities we have.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We pray for all who work to bring healing and health  
in our world.  
For doctors, nurses, paramedics, mental health  
workers  
and other health professionals, carers and  
volunteers.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We pray for our leaders-  
for our Prime Minister, Premier, politicians,  
councillors, and business leaders.

May they seek justice and care for the vulnerable.  
May they be peacemakers, builders of community  
and cohesion,  
and be granted wisdom and courage as they make  
difficult decisions.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We pray for those who suffer.  
For those caught in war zones  
in The Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Gaza and Israel, South  
Sudan and other parts of the world.  
We pray for those seeking to help the afflicted -  
for rescuers and aid workers,  
and reporters risking their lives to ensure that victims  
are not forgotten.  
We pray for an end to the fighting and restoration of  
communities.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We pray for your Church and its leaders.  
We pray for our Uniting Church President Rev  
Charissa Suli, Moderator Rev David Fotheringham,  
Presbytery Chairperson Rev Fiona Morrison,  
Presbytery Minister Deb Bye, ministers, lay preachers  
and lay leaders, church councillors and elders. We  
pray that they may be faithful, strong, and wise.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We pray for those for all who are on our hearts today,  
for the sick, the bereaved, the sad, the lonely and lost.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

We understand that you call each one of us to use our  
gifts faithfully to undertake your great work of healing  
and transformation. We pray that we may be faithful  
to this calling.

Giver of every perfect gift,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

*Prayer continues*

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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: Christ be my leader TiS 624**

*OR: Community of Christ TiS 473*

### **Blessing**

May we be led by Christ as we journey through this week.

May Christ our Saviour strengthen and uphold us as we seek to live faithfully.

**For we are children of the Living God, blessed by God the Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit.**

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