



**Weekly Worship**



**Sunday September 8, 2024**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

*(from Psalm 125:1-2)*

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever.

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people from this time on and forevermore.

In the comfort of these words  
**Let us praise 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.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

## Singing: O for a thousand tongues to sing TIS 210

*You may wish to change the words 'ye dumb' and instead use the line from Voices United: 'Hear him you deaf, you voiceless ones, your tongues again employ'.*

OR: **Praise the one who breaks the darkness**

OR: *I'll praise my maker while I've breath TIS 90*



## Prayer

Loving Lord, we praise you for the circle of life. We are so grateful for the signs of spring, the green shoots, bright flowers and blossoms, for the warmer days, the rains that encourage our seedlings and our hearts.

We thank you for all the promises we find in the renewal that the season offers, the joy of new life.

In James we read:

My brothers and sisters, do not claim the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory while showing partiality.

*James 2:1*

We confess that we have not always been impartial. We have favoured our friends - those who look like us, our families, those who might favour us in return.

We have not always noticed those who are most in need:

the hungry  
the homeless,  
the dirty, unattractive, mentally ill or old.

Forgive us for our lack of generosity, of openness, our shortsightedness, caring for ourselves before others and seeing our country as more important than others and the values we hold as right.

The LORD surrounds his people with forgiveness and love. Let us be thankful and rest in our faith and God's love. **Amen.**

## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** James 2: 1-17 &  
Mark 7: 24-37

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

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SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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**Reflecting:**

**Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson**

Maybe this should have an agenda warning because I am passionate about this story!

Mark's narrative is rather confronting and leaves us with a rather contentious image of Jesus. Jesus is basically saying here, that the bread is for the people of privilege and he uses the reference of 'dogs' which would have been culturally highly insulting. How very brave this woman is, to make this a teachable moment for Jesus who grants her the healing she has been seeking for her daughter.

This is a pivotal and emotional story for me because I have been this woman (tradition names her Justa). I have lobbied long and hard for a loved child who has suffered. I have been told before that funding and resources are for those privileged elite as they will make more use of them. There are many people around who believe that the NDIS is not money well targeted. There are certainly issues of rort, and it is a hard and onerous process to access it, but it changes the lives of many of our sons and daughters.

Justa reminds Jesus that all are deserving of the gift of the Kingdom, of the gift of wholeness and life. Jesus agrees and heals her daughter. As I sit with this story, I am reminded of the time we acted it out at College and I had realised that I am Justa, pleading for services and fair treatment of my child. And then the sudden dawning that the true marginalised one here is the daughter, Berenice as tradition calls her. It is likely that her condition was something like seizures from a medical condition and her mother was advocating on her behalf because her suffering was severe. It is Berenice who is truly ostracised by society and marginalised in every way, particularly by her condition.

Straight away the narrative goes to another person with disability, this time a sensory, hearing/speech problem. And Jesus doesn't question the request here, he just heals the man (modern medicine may be horrified at swapping saliva but it seems to do the trick!).

The James reading puts this passage into further perspective. The Kingdom is upside down and it is those on the bottom rungs of society who hold privileged place. Those who are not heard, not really present in the narratives of society, the props in the story, are given prime places amongst us. It is the "poor" who are rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which is promised to them. They have been so dishonoured by society and often by the church. There is no point in us as individuals and as church, keeping the Law and obeying the 'rules', without translating it into mercy and into action.

How are we as church doing on all of this? Have we looked at the Synod Disability Action Plan and how to implement it? Are we up with the findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation? Are we being Justa and advocating, even standing up to the authorities, on behalf of those who need us? All of us are only 'temporarily able', ageing and accidents and medical conditions remind us of our fragility. Are we walking with those who have disability and their carers? Are we seeking ways to include them in more than just physical access? And what of mercy to those society leaves at the bottom in other ways? What about the homeless and the addicted?

I leave you with a poem by Andy Jackson.

**Listen:** (for everyone who testified to the Royal Commission and everyone who wasn't able to)

*Enough of the blunt, stretched-out hours without touch or an ear*

*Enough with the intrusive hands of those workers aroused by power*

*Enough with the specialists who know chromosomes but not people*

*Enough with the walls of clinics which absorb cries of pain but do nothing about it*

*Enough of the stories of tragedy and compensation wrapped around our bodies so tight it is hard to breathe*

*Poem continues*

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*Reflecting Poem*

*And enough with the applause for simply breathing*

*Enough with the slurs and insults, then telling us  
we're too sensitive*

*And enough with the closed doors adorned with  
diversity and inclusion statements*

*Enough of testimonies gathering dust while the  
media moves on*

*Enough, enough with these lists*

*We are not victims of our own bodies*

*We are survivors of how you treat us*

*We belong to an ancient lineage of resistance and  
prophecy*

*We have always been speaking, even in our  
speechlessness*

*We remind you of the earth we are all born from*

*And to which we can only return*

*Here in this awkward, sacred stillness, open*

*Your mouth, ears, hands – the air is full of seeds*

*This time, let your discomfort mean something*

*This cannot be the end of listening, but its beginning*

*So we might be able to rest, breathe, nourished*

*On this broken, luminous path we make as we  
move forward –*

*Weary and determined – carried and carrying  
each other*

- Andy Jackson

<https://amongtheregulars.com/>

**Singing: Beauty for brokenness**  
**TiS 690**

OR: *Kneels at the feet of his friends* TiS 640

OR: *Inspired by love and anger* TiS 674



**Offering**

As people of God, we bring ourselves - all that we  
have and who we are.

We ask your blessing on these offerings to be used in  
your kingdom. **Amen.**

**Notices**

**September 10** World Suicide Prevention Day

**September 12** RU OK? Day

**Responding: Prayers for  
World & Community**

Loving Lord, as you surround us and are present with  
us, we offer our prayers.

We pray for our world and all who live in it:

- People who are all different -
- help us to seek and accept difference;
- help us to be inclusive in all our behaviour;
- help us to be considerate and generous
- to demonstrate your love all the time.

We pray for leaders and bureaucrats, lawmakers and  
those who apply the laws:

- Let them consider the spirit of the law
- and be thoughtful and generous of difference
- in culture and understanding.

*Prayer continues*

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*Prayer continues*

For all of creation, help all people to be wise in using your and sharing your gifts.

We pray for our country:

May all value democracy  
and not abuse its loopholes;  
may our leaders value diversity  
and see its wonder and value.

We pray for our church:

May we see diversity in all our people  
and use their gifts;  
may we not adhere to the minutiae of regulations  
but have a spirit of generosity;  
may we work efficiently  
yet kindly considering individuals.

We pray for our communities:

Those inside and outside our buildings;  
those sick, bereaved, in care,  
frightened, in need of care;  
we pray for those we love and ourselves.

In silence we offer the prayers, so deep that we do not have the words.

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: O Christ the healer** **TiS 638**

*OR: Let us build a house Church Hymnary 4 #198*

*OR: There's a spirit in the air TiS 414*



## **Blessing**

Go out trusting God,  
loving your neighbour,  
seeking to make the world a better place.  
May God the creator, redeemer and sustainer  
be with you every step of the journey. Amen.

### **Contributors this week:**

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