



**Weekly Worship**



**Sunday September 15, 2024**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Wisdom cries out in the street;  
in the squares she raises her voice.

*Proverbs 1:20*

We gather seeking wisdom,  
to listen to the offerings  
of our creator God.  
Do we hear hearing the sweetness  
of God's commands,  
sweeter than honey,  
so much sweeter than honey!

Come, let us taste and see  
seek and find  
the goodness of 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.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress

## Singing: Lord of creation TiS 626

OR: Let all creation dance TiS 187

*Prayer continues*



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



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Forgive our desire for mastery  
to subdue rather than steward  
creation beyond what she can bear.

Forgive us for failing to work with our neighbours  
where we need each other and your wisdom  
to restore and renew the earth.

Forgive us when wisdom has  
cried out in the street  
and we have failed to hear or act.

May wisdom move us,  
as the love of God renews us.

**Let the words of our mouths  
and the meditations of our hearts,  
be acceptable to you, O Lord,  
our rock and our redeemer. Amen**

## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** Psalm 19,  
James 3:1-10 &  
Mark 8: 27-38

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



## Reflecting Rev. Ian Brown

“May the words of my mouth and the meditations of  
our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and  
our redeemer.”

Words, words, words! Like any tool, words have so  
much potential for good and for ill. James warns  
about the power of the tongue with vivid, chilling  
effect. The Psalmist uses words majestically, for  
praise and instruction. Words have much power.  
Words have been used to bring about more real  
change than anything else.

Words can cause doing; words create action.  
In the language of Genesis, when God said, “Let there  
be light,” there was light.

In the poetry of Psalm 19, the heavens tell of the glory  
of God, day to day pours forth speech, the night  
declares, the voice goes out, words - to the end of the  
world.”

What effect do these words have?

- the law revives the soul
- the decrees make wise the simple
- the commandments of the Lord  
enlighten the eyes.

These words have effect. Full of power, these words  
of God are “more to be desired are they than gold,  
sweeter also than honey.” God never seems to  
weary of speaking such words to us.

James begins his new train of thought with the  
confronting words, “let not many of you become  
teachers.” Teachers trade with words. Teachers  
communicate and pass on wisdom and instruction  
with words; lives are shaped, thinking is developed,  
attitudes informed and prejudices passed on.

Yes, we all make mistakes, we all have tongues that  
slip sometimes. So, watching your tongue, says  
James is like bridling a horse or controlling the rudder  
of a boat. He means more than the physical tongue.  
I think if James were writing today, the category  
“shock jock” would have been at the top of James’ list  
of examples for how not to use the tongue.

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The issue at stake here is not making errors in the way we put words together, stumbling over our grammar, but what we communicate. If we use speech to attack and abuse, to gossip, James has us in his sights. James focuses on the effect of the tongue. How many fights start just with a few words? It's about how we relate and our attitudes. It's a spirituality based on getting these basic things right.

Taming our tongue is more than learning to be tactful. It's a core part of who we really are. We are, in a sense, what we communicate. James' intention becomes clearer as we read on into the final verses. Do we bless God and curse people? The problem with cursing is not so much that we are all made in the image of God - as if only the God aspect matters - but that to curse people runs contrary to God's command to love.

James is quite pessimistic about the chances of people being healthy communicators. He is realistic enough to say that we all make mistakes. It's another way of saying we are in process, not that we are doomed to always make the same mistakes. There is good news; we can bridle the tongue. The wisdom here is as relevant today as it was then. It's good to be reminded that communication does things to people, the givers and the receivers. Words have real effect. Wisdom is about getting this together, seeing how they connect, and becoming more of a whole person.

Advice like this is good, but it's more than a set of morals, more than sage advice for living a happy, well-adjusted life. These words are part of a larger reminder. The way we speak, the way we act, the things our words bring into being, or that our tongues cut down, are our part of being a signpost pointing to the way of God's kingdom, or away from it.

It's a reminder that my tongue and yours can point others to, or away from the way of Jesus. Our words will bear fruit, they may be signs of hope, of healing and of heaven. They might start fires of the Spirit that enliven or inspire, or destructive fires that damage and consume.

What words and whose words direct us? James' words are hopeful. Hopeful that we, as Jesus' followers, can be in control of our words, that we can speak and live the things of God's realm into being around us. I'm hopeful that we too might join with the heavens and all of creation in telling the glory of God. Amen

### Singing: Make me a channel of your peace **TiS 607**

OR: *Father in heaven* **TiS 465**



### Offering

Creator God, bless these offerings given in the name of Jesus, named by Peter as the Messiah. As we recognise Messiah, help us to journey as pilgrims on the way. Amen.

### Notices

Today is the *International Day of Democracy*.  
**September 21** International Day of Peace.

### Responding: Prayers for World & Community

God in whom we wonder in the majesty of creation, we offer our prayers for a world gasping under the strain and burden of many conflicts and challenges.

We note the pressures upon democracy in countries that have once been flag-bearers for the cause. As people polarise and nations forget how to hold meaningful public conversations, we pray for new flag-bearers of love and compassion to show us the way.





As we near the International Day of Peace, we wonder at the places where peace is longed for but seems too far away. For places of conflict, war, violence and threats we pray that peace may be known. May brave souls act with your peace for the sake of the world.

We pray for churches that struggle with governance, through distraction or loss of capacity. May all groups of faith find renewed vision in your wisdom proclaimed on the streets, in the squares, and through creation.

We pray for ourselves and those we know or have heard about who struggle in different ways. Open hearts to love, to see truth, to care for flora and fauna and the whole of creation as you do.

We offer prayers of our own ...

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: Community of Christ

**TiS 473**

*OR: We are your people TiS 468*

## Blessing

Wisdom cries out in the street;  
in the squares she raises her voice.

May wisdom guide us and bless us  
as we move beyond this time together.

May our understanding of Messiah  
touch and enliven us,  
in the way of Christ.

The blessing of God be with you:  
Creator, Redeemer & Sustainer. Amen.

Reflection: Rev. Ian Brown  
Warragul - Wattlebird Ministry Team

Liturgy: Rev. Arnie Wierenga  
Leongatha, Korumburra, Loch-Poowong  
Kookaburra Ministry Team

Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga  
[revjenniegordon@gmail.com](mailto:revjenniegordon@gmail.com)

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