



**Weekly Worship**



**Pentecost 23**  
**Sunday October 27, 2024**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

*O taste and see that the Lord is good. (Ps 34:8)*

We gather in blessing and praise towards God.  
For God is present to deliver us from our fears.

As we find ways to seek and to be found,  
we discover and understand  
that God has already found us.

O taste and see that the Lord is good.

Come, let us worship God.

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

## Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians (please name the people where you are) 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: O for a thousand tongues TiS 210

*OR: Sing praise to God who reigns above TiS 109*

*OR: Come down, O love divine TiS 398*



## Prayer

As the spring deepens  
we come before you in awe, creating God.  
The earth warms, the rains come,  
the growing crops remind us of fruitful seasons  
and the promise of harvest.  
For the beauty of the earth,  
we offer our thanks and praise.

We pray our blessing towards you Lord;  
with praise  
continuously coming from our mouths  
because you never fail to be with us,  
to comfort and deliver us,  
to guide and protect us from our fears.

For the way you reach out  
even when we cannot perceive it,  
we offer our thanks and praise.

Forgive our blindness to your love for us.  
How often do we speak without understanding?  
How often are things too wonderful  
for us to know.

Forgive our complaints,  
our restless hunger  
for things that never satisfy.

Forgive our destruction of your order,  
messing with rhythms and seasons of creation,  
so that promised harvests diminish  
as things change.

Forgive us  
when we act without understanding.

Forgive us  
when we act without consideration  
despite our knowing.

*(pause to reflect)*

As Job is broken,  
he discovers that God is present.  
*"I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,  
but now my eye sees you;*

*Prayer continues*

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*Prayer continues*

*therefore I despise myself  
and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:5-5)*

As we seek God, God finds us.  
From mere hearsay we come to see deeply.  
In the three in one and one in three  
we are blessed and restored.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** Psalm 34: 1-8 (19-22)  
Mark 10:46-52

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

## Reflecting

**Rev. Amanda Nicholas**

The scriptures this week create an inexplicable paradox of reconciliation for us that is just plain difficult to encounter.

For me, this collection of lectionary readings is some of the hardest to engage with. On the one hand, we have the words of the Psalmist beautifully proclaiming the blessings of the Lord at all times, the deliverance from evil and redemption that the Lord brings, followed by the healing of Bartimaeus in Mark’s gospel, a short simple good news story. A man comes to Jesus seeking to be healed, Jesus hears his plea and speaks, and the power of God moves through him and the man is healed. No challenge here, no debate, just a simple request followed by a simple (or not so simple) response. And then...

Then we find ourselves confronted with the offering from the Wisdom literature this week from Job.

A writing that is so confusing at times that it is far easier to overlook and not give any attention to at all, or we just be content to “live with the mystery” of the divine instead of trying to make sense of the challenges it presents for us. We don’t want to sit with the discomfort that readings such as these create for us, as we hold the tension between them. We want our understanding of God to be neat, clean and simple. So then how do we place these readings alongside one another? How do we make sense of them and how do they together help to shape our understanding of God?

In a world currently straining on a global scale under the weight of so much pain, suffering and sorrow it would be remiss to gloss over the challenges this reading presents. I don’t have all the answers and certainly don’t feel qualified to take on the challenges of Job for everyone, so let me instead share with you what I do see in encountering these readings together afresh in this season.

We can be forgiven for thinking that the repentance Job seeks here is linked to his own sin or wrongdoings as that is the nature of repentance. This appears contrary to what we come to understand of Job’s character in chapter one. So, what then is Job seeking repentance for? It would seem Job’s request for repentance comes from that moment of deeper revelation of God’s incomprehensible wisdom. Job acknowledges that he spoke of things he was incapable of understanding. This is challenging in itself as the suffering Job endures is never fully explained. Does the restoration of his fortune then justify all that came before? How do we experience divine justice when for many who are suffering there is no restoration or “fairytale ending”? How do we live in the hope of the resurrection when reality shows us that, for many who are suffering, there may never be an explanation or restoration in this life.

How do we affirm the faithfulness of God as read in today’s Psalm alongside the challenges of what we hear in Job’s words of pain and anguish. When there is no clear answer and when there seems to be no deliverance how do we wrestle with God who

*Reflecting continues*

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*Reflecting continues*

is the hope-bringer? There are no easy answers to this question. No clean or sanitary solutions for our faith. What I see in the readings for us this week is the invitation to hold together both the present reality of pain and the promise of God's ultimate salvation.

The invitation calls us into a deeper faith that trusts in God's wisdom, seeks divine mercy and acknowledges the reality of suffering. The invitation is to a faith that is messy and painful and into a relationship that endures questions and ambiguity, yet continues to hope and rest in the assurance of God's love even when life remains difficult. Just as God dwelt with Job in suffering, God dwells with us in Jesus Christ.

**Singing: All my hope on God is founded TiS 560**

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

**Offering**

God who seeks and finds  
and shows yourself to us:  
    bless what we offer as you call and guide us.

Guide us that we may understand  
how to bear your love to a weary world. Amen.

**Notices**

We are in the middle of Disarmament Week  
**October 24-30.**

**Responding: Prayers for World & Community**

God who finds those who are lost, we bring to you  
our prayers for the world and community.

We pray for places where hatred and violence threaten nations, towns, families and those who cannot defend themselves. We pray for those offering peace and support in warzones, for those who work for change through lobbying and diplomacy, for those with an understanding of what it takes to bear your love to the world.

We pray for those who experience gender-based violence, for children who witness things that are difficult to understand or see. We pray for those who offer love and support, shelter, and practical assistance despite risks and challenges. We think of those who understand how to bear your love to those who are broken.

We pray for those who are excluded from family, community, and love. We pray for those who find themselves without a home or safe place to sleep at night. We pray that we do not forget the hardship of sleeping rough through the winter just because the weather has brightened. We pray for vulnerable adults and children alike. We think of those who show your love in this challenging space and wonder how we might understand how to bear your love.

*Prayer continues*



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*Prayer continues*

We pray for our churches, for the changing seasons and wondering about fruitfulness. We pray that your love might touch us and equip us in a changing climate to bear the love and renewal of your story upon 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 forever. Amen.**

### **Singing: God has spoken ... TiS 158**

*OR: O thou who camest from above TiS 572*

### **Blessing**

As we have tasted and seen  
that the Lord is good,  
we are directed outwards;

to speak where understanding lacks,  
and to show the goodness of our God,  
especially where people struggle to see it.

Go to bless and be blessed  
in the name of God:  
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen.

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