



**Weekly Worship**



**Sunday November 17, 2024**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Amidst the chaos of a broken world,  
we come.  
Knowing unfulfilled longings deep within,  
we come.  
Full of hopes and dreams, heartache and joy,  
we come.

We come seeking light,  
we come in need of light.

As we light a candle,  
come, Lord Jesus, shine among us.

*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: Let all creation dance

**TiS 187**

*OR: Let us build a house (More Voices 001)*

## Prayer

God of Hannah and Samuel,  
God who encourages and provokes us  
through Jesus Christ,  
we come offering our thanks and praise  
that you are a rock amidst the chaos,  
that you are life amidst despair,  
that you are hope and promise  
when we come to the end  
of feeling hopeful about anything.  
As we pray we acknowledge the way that chaos of  
the world unhinges us; the way that our own chaos  
does the same.

When we cannot see or hear or imagine that you  
journey with us in all our days, gently remind and  
encourage us that you are near.

When we cannot admit to the chaos we cause  
ourselves and others, help us open up until we find  
our grounding in you.

When we are so fixated on a happy outcome that  
may or may not come, remind us that Hannah's joy  
was not simple and neither are our own hopes or  
longings. Help us be the change we long for, in your  
name.

Friends in Christ, we are reminded that often we  
invest in things that amaze us, rather than that which  
is life. In Christ, through Christ, because of Christ, we  
are loved and renewed, we are made whole.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**



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## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** 1 Samuel 1:4-20, 1 Samuel 2:1-10 & Mark 13:1-8

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

## Singing: Beauty for brokenness (TiS 690)

*OR: I am the church TiS 467*



## Reflecting

**Rev. Heather den Houting**

### Change is upon us

When reading biblical texts we often find a character we most identify with, and journey with them as the story unfolds. We would love our character to come out in a good light and be redeemed by good fortune or good behaviour. But what happens if we find the character we identify is shown to be just as broken and human as we are? Who is the hero in the story then?

This week's readings offer us this complicated mix of joyful and disturbing images, which might leave us in a space where the comfort of a safe and happy resolution for all is not achievable. I wonder how you might feel about that? Be reassured that the path of discipleship invites us to ask questions and find a path that might allow us to find a bigger and deeper understanding about what is going on.

So, let's start by journeying with the protagonist in the Samuel readings. Hannah was unable to have children, yet after a redemptive encounter in the temple, God's creative power overcomes her infertility. Her child Samuel is conceived and we know that he will usher in a new prosperous paradigm for the people of God. Hannah's song is a song of triumph and praise, a celebration of the reversal of the misfortune of the people. Through this personal redemption will unfold the redemption of the people of God.

So far so good ... except, this story holds the worms of jealousy, contempt and revenge. Hannah was despised and at risk of destruction. A barren woman was regarded as "less than" and she would have been at great risk if she became a childless widow. Her plight is made more poignant in the taunting of her community and the lack of reassurance she finds in words of comfort offered to her. Then, when her fortunes are reversed, her song of praise moves into triumphalism and promises of retribution.

Wait a minute, we've followed the story of the underdog, but this might be taking things way too far. We often move out of theological discomfort by explaining to ourselves and others that this is the Old Testament which has been overcome by the abundant love and grace to be found in the New Testament.

So, let's look at the reassurances to be found in this week's epistle and gospel. All starts well, the Hebrew reading reassures us that redemptive encounter is available to all of us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. By following the one we call Christ, we are liberated from the concept that any of us are "less than". In response we reminded and encouraged to love each other and do good.

*Reflecting continues*

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*Reflecting continues*

Then we join Jesus and the disciples in the Mark reading. (We probably identify with the disciples, a little bit unsure of what's going on, but knowing that we journey with the one who transforms the world.) We comment on the beauty and magnificence of the temple. "Well," says Jesus, "that will be disappearing. Don't trust that".

And all of a sudden, we find ourselves identifying again with the rag tag bunch of rebels who begin to sing a song of triumph over that which seems solid and indestructible. The birth pangs of the new creation will involve the usurping of the powerful. That which was sacred and holy is shown to be folly in the face of the unrelenting creativity of God. It's the same story that is told in the song of Hannah.

A challenge then... what might our song of praise sound like today as we let go of our own temples?

**Singing: The church's one foundation TIS 457**

*OR: All my hope on God is founded TIS 560*

**Offering**

God of hope, bless what we offer that it may be an offering of light, life and hope amidst places of struggle.

**Notices**

**November 20** World Children's Day.



**Responding: Prayers for World & Community**

God of hope, we pray for a world broken and chaotic.

We pray for countries that invest too much hope in leaders or institutions that are broken and chaotic within themselves.

We pray for countries that seek to escape chaos and destruction but are caught in forces beyond them.

We pray for all who have reasonable longings and hopes that are not fulfilled - such as food for their children, a roof over their heads, safety from violence, basic freedoms we take for granted.

*Prayer continues*



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*Prayer continues*

We pray for those who have unfulfilled longings and hopes within our own country - like those who cannot find a house to rent; those who are challenged through economic pressures; those whose voice is dismissed or not heard; those who are unwelcome in their communities...

We pray for our church and her leaders as we navigate the chaos of change and have hopes and longings of our own. May your light and life be our guide in the journey before 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: Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613**

*OR: Christ be my leader TiS 624*

### **Blessing**

As we move beyond our time of worship we go in the hope and life of Jesus Christ. Let us carry the light of Christ wherever we go, especially amidst the hopes and longings of this world of chaos and change.

As you carry Christ's light may you bless and be blessed:

In the name of the  
Creator,  
Redeemer and  
Sustainer. Amen.

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