



Weekly Worship

Sunday November 24, 2024

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Grace to you
and peace
from him who is
and who was
and who is to come
from Revelation 1

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: Love divine TiS 217

OR: *Immortal, invisible, God only wise* TiS 143
OR: *Morning glory, sunlit sky* TiS 174

Prayer

God who is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, we come in awe and wonder as we celebrate the reign of Jesus.

We give thanks that his reign is unlike those who use power and violence to further their own kingdoms.

We give thanks that in him we see your grace and love, your desire for reconciliation and peace.

We offer our praise for Christ's witness to the whole of creation, that love will have its way, that peace will have its day and so we look to the clouds in longing that every eye may see, even those who continue to use power in abusive and destructive ways.

When we fear that Christ's reign is not enough against the powers of this world, we pray you forgive us.

When we can no longer wait for a new heaven and a new earth and instead take power into our own hands, we pray you forgive us.

When we seek to mete out what we think of as *justice* in ways that are beyond your love and salvation, we pray you forgive us.

Draw us again to you. Draw us to your love. Draw us to your hope. Draw us to your peace shown through Jesus. Call us to be his hands and feet, to be the change we long for, for the sake of the world.

Jesus reminded Pilate that his kingdom is unlike those of this world. We are not called to war and fight, we are called to live in love.

As we hear God's word through Jesus, we are invited into a place of belonging and truth.

For faith, hope and love in his name, we say:

Thanks be to God. Amen.



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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Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Revelation 1:4b-8 &
John 18:33-37

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

Reflecting

Rev. Moira Dodsworth

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. 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".

Reflecting continues

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Reflecting continues

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: O God of every nation TiS 621*

** alternate tunes LLANGLOFFAN or PASSION
CHORALE OR: O what a gift TiS 278*

Offering

Bless what we offer to you, God of all. May our lives and all that we share be used to proclaim love and peace to a warring and broken world. In your name, may it be so. Amen.

Notices

November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

November 29 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

God who confronts our ideas of power and might, we bring before you our deep concerns for a world fixated on greed, power, and dominion. We also bring fears and concerns as many powerful people use violence and destruction across the globe.

As we hear of the call of Christ to be people of love, peace and hope, we wonder how we can possibly stand against evil powers.

And yet we pray. In words often ascribed to St. Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us bring love.
Where there is injury, let us bring your pardon.
Where there is discord, let us bring union.
Where there is error, let us bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let us bring faith.
Where there is despair, let us bring hope.
Where there is sadness, let us bring joy.***

For the sake of the world.
For the sake of our community.
For the sake of your church.

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.**



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Pentecost 27
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Singing: Be thou my vision TiS 547

OR: *Yours be the glory TiS 380*

OR: *The king of glory comes TiS 279*

Blessing

Go to bless and be blessed:
as peacemakers,
as people of justice,
hopeful and loving
in the ways of Christ.

The blessing of Alpha and Omega be with you now
and always:
Creator,
Redeemer, and
Sustainer. Amen.

Contributors this week:

Reflection: Rev. Moira Dodsworth
Wattlebird Ministry Team

Liturgy and Editor: Rev. Arnie Wierenga
Kookaburra Ministry Team

revjenniegordon@gmail.com

** wikipedia, Prayer of St. Francis, adapted

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