



Weekly Worship



*Third Sunday
in Lent*
Sunday March 23, 2025

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

Psalm 63

Let us together worship and bless the one who loves us beyond our understanding.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded lands and waters. We pay respect to Elders past and present. 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: All people that on earth

TiS 59

OR: Let us sing to the God of salvation TiS 52

OR: You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord TiS 48

OR: As the deer pants for the water TiS 703



Prayer

We are the *Fig Tree* people, planted and growing by the grace of God.

Thank you, loving God, for your care, not just for us but all people, all plants and animals and the earth, universe and beyond. We sit amazed by all creation, the intricacy and exactness in your work so that living things, including ourselves grow and develop and have all we need.

Forgive us when we do not bear fruit, when we lack the energy to do the work needed, in spite of watering and fertilising.

Forgive us when we do not bear fruit because we are tired, lazy or lack inspiration.

Thank you that you nourish us in our despair, God of second chances, that we can try again and again.

Thank you that you are a loving and forgiving God.
Amen.

We are loved and forgiven in the name of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Isaiah 55:1-9,
Ps 63: 1-8,
Luke 13:1-9,

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





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Reflecting

Rev. Fee Morrison

I am struck by the Isaiah and Psalm reading this week, by the invitation to feasting. Even though we are in the middle of Lent, a time of repentance, here we are, invited to feast on God's love.

Isaiah is set in the era of God's people in exile. Most of this reading is set in God's voice and feels very intimate with Isaiah interjecting occasionally. In Isaiah, the Psalm and Luke today, we are reminded that God does not promise that life will be smooth and easy, but what God does promise is that God is with us, and inviting us to share in the joy that God is with us, giving us hope and sustaining us. The real question for us as individuals and as a community of faith is how does our faith alter how we live our lives in the everyday things?

Isaiah 55 and Psalm 63 are an invitation to rejoice in a difficult and challenging time and that God's rule is marked by justice and peace. Isaiah leads us to God's openness and desire to bless us and we are all invited to partake in the blessing. Isaiah urges us to not delay in our RSVP to God's invitation. It's an invitation to not be stuck in our own failings, feelings or stuck in place of sin or a bad place.

This invitation acknowledges our place with God. It starts with a longing for a drink of water in the desert and is transformed into a feast later. When I read this, I am reminded of the scenes in the Harry Potter films where they have end of term feasts at the school and there are platters of all sorts of food and drinks floating above the table for all to indulge and plenty to go around. How great, lavish and free is God's feast for us all, and there is no cost to us.

Have we forgotten that we are invited to a rich and indulgent banquet? Sometimes we can become a little bit stingy about what we share as if we are on rations from God instead of a feast of love and abundance. What is holding us back, keeping us in the past, rather than stepping into the new thing that God is doing, and inviting us to be a part of? We are invited to to enjoy the feast and love of God.

How does our faith alter the way we live? Do you live a life that has the hope of joy like the people in Isaiah? Their joy was an act of defiance. We get ground down by our society, politics, expectations etc and it becomes a weight not a joy. Faith is a defiant act against society. The joy God offers us is what alters us and sustains us and gives us hope. How does your faith shape your life in the everyday?

I invite you to reflect on when you have been blessed or have received abundantly. Are we living out our faith in concrete ways in our local community (not just church community), in our neighbourhood – living out God's kin-dom?

Are you attending God's feast? Will you RSVP yes?

Singing: I the Lord of sea and sky TIS 658

OR: *In water we grow* TIS 494

OR: *Come to the banquet*

see www.faywhitemusic.com





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Offering

As people of God we bring ourselves, the fruit of our growth, the offerings of our resources.
Bless these things, use us and them as you will.

Amen.

Notices

March 24 The feast day of Oscar Romero.

Prayers for World & Community

Loving Lord, we come to you with our prayers, we come as your people, trusting that you are in control of our world, that you hear our prayers and understand our needs.

We pray for our world:

As we watch and read the media we wonder how such power hungry and violent people gain control...

We wonder how children get possession of weapons...

We wonder how the guardians of our peace and safety cannot help...

We wonder what the real stories are...

We give these concerns to you and ask for guidance for our behaviour and peace in our hearts. Help us to always respond with love.

As we see droughts and floods we pray:

for those who are frightened...

for essential workers and those who care for their families who may lose their homes, their livelihood and even their lives or loved ones...

for those who wonder how anything they do can make a difference...

We ask you to help us in our care for your creation.

We pray for our church and communities:

may we and our leaders respond appropriately in crises, give what and where we can...

for those sick and in care, grieving, sad and lacking hope and all those who care for them...

we pray for ourselves, the needs deep in our hearts that we dare not say aloud...

We join in the prayer 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: Our God, our help in ages past **TiS 47**

OR: This is a day of new beginnings TiS 653

OR: Touch the earth lightly TiS 668





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Blessing

We are your people,
planted in the places you guide us to,
watered and fed.
Let us go out to grow and produce fruit, cared for by
the very best gardener.

May God, creator, redeemer and sustainer be
with you every millimetre that you grow and every
delicious fig that you produce.

Amen.

Sung blessing: The Fig Tree Blessing

Tune: CARLISLE 66.86

Here in this space of grace
be nourished, known and blessed.
The earth below, the sky above,
be fruitful in God's love.

(Words: Rev. Jennie Gordon)



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Editors' note:

*This text from the gospel of Luke was the Spirit-led catalyst for the
The Fig Tree Project in the Presbytery of Gippsland in 2019. The
advocating for a space of grace, the tilling of soil and tending and
nurturing, the provision of essential nutrients for growth, the hope
held in fruitfulness, the watching and waiting... all elements of our
shared ministry in Christ.*

*We have now been providing a weekly worship resource for 5 years.
Beginning with the Shearwater Ministry Resource (Rev. Deacon
Wendy Elson, Rev. Ian Turnnidge & Jennie) when COVID-19 began
to impact on our gathered worship, then becoming the Fig Tree
Worship Resource. We intend to continue this ministry long after
our upcoming retirement and are grateful to our team and to our
subscribers and supporters along the way.*

Blessings, Jennie & Arnie

