



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

From Psalm 50

The mighty one, God the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

**Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.**

From Isaiah

Remember then to wash yourselves; make
yourselves clean;
remove your evil deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil;

**We will learn to do good;
seek justice;
rescue the oppressed;
defend the orphan;
plead for the widow.**

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

As we look upon the hills and valleys, we see love poured out on this land by those who have cared for this land since time before measure. We honour those who have gone before and those who are yet to come. May we be mindful of the calling God places on humanity to care for the whole of creation. May we learn from the people whose stories are entwined with the stewarding of this place. May we learn from them and walk with them in God's covenant.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Community of Christ TIS 473

OR: O Christ the healer, we have come TIS 638
OR: Let us sing to the God of salvation TIS 52



Prayer

Gracious God, we come together again, pleased to be in the company of each other and reassured by your presence with us. You are the source of all there is, and we know that this gracious nature of yours is beyond our understanding. However, here today in community, we know that you are the source of our unity. We are grateful for the gifts that you have given to us and we thank you for each other and the knowledge that we have what we need here today.

However, we acknowledge that sometimes we have taken the differences between us and have made them instruments of pride, and pain and separation. We have chosen our own paths over the clarity of your vision for us. We have failed to embrace the diversity and complexity of your creation and have sought to differentiate ourselves from others. We have ignored and demeaned others when their ways are not our ways. Today Lord, as all days, we pray that we might hold even the most fragile of relationships with your beloved people who surround us. Let us be filled with your vision of the unity of your creation, so that we are ready to respond when you call us. These things we confess in the name of Christ. **Amen**

Hear then the words of reassurance. In Christ and through Christ your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.





Passing the peace

May you find the peace of Christ today:
and may you find it also.

Listening

Read: Heb 11:1-3, 8-16 & Lk 12:32-40

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

Reflecting

Rev. Jennie Gordon

Hearth and home

What does it mean when we read the opening words of the text from Luke's gospel set for this week? We are told, "Do not be afraid". We are not to be afraid, little flock, because God delights in giving us the kingdom. What is the kingdom / kin-dom? In the reading from Hebrews, the author lists some of our obedient ancestors in the faith, and attributes to them a longing for a heavenly homeland. Is this what Luke is referring to? Is this the longing deep inside us also? This yearning to be in the presence of God, deep in the heart of things? Is this a longing for the kin-dom? Is this the longing that calls us into belonging in the community of Christ?

Just weeks after my younger sister died, I found myself amongst a group of ministers on a remote retreat. We were checking into our accommodation. On taking off my shoes at the door, I sensed a profound dislocation, horrible homesickness. I had an overwhelming desire to put my shoes back on and run. Run back to something known, run back to hearth and home; grief is a tricky companion at the best of times. Of course, I didn't. That longing for home is part of the mystery of our earthly existence. The cord is cut at birth, and we spend our lives seeking connection on so many levels; emotional, physical and spiritual. We find connection and disconnection over and over again.

I've been playing with the juxtaposition of 'heart' and 'hearth'. Stay with me. Only the final letter 'h'



distinguishes them. Sara – Sarah. Abram – Abraham. Heart – Hearth. Is the heart only fully at home when we find ourselves abiding deep in the presence of God? A dictionary definition of 'hearth' describes it as 'home; a vital or creative centre.'

We read in Luke's gospel, 'for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'. After all our searching, we find what is most valuable in life when our heart comes home to the hearth of the Creator's welcome, not as an end reward, but as a home-base of faithful living. But it's not all about us. This heart-hearth space, full of treasure, is not blind to the reality that for some people life is hell on earth. When we abide in love's house, it follows that this love is for ourselves, and for others, and for God.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus goes on to tell a story encouraging us to be vigilant, not complacent, as residents in the heart-house of love. "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit." The master/slave language is problematic for us in these times, but it reminds us of the gospel's subversive overturning of the dominant narrative of wealth and power. When the master is warmly welcomed in, with an open door, presumably carrying his wedding partner, he is the one who becomes the servant. Do we see in the master an expression of outrageous joy, abundant and overflowing, that cannot resist being shared, no matter how humbled he becomes?

Siblings in Christ, followers of Jesus, do not be afraid. Abide together in the kin-dom you are being given, in the heart-hearth of love. Be joyfully ready at the door, to offer light, welcome and hospitality to whoever you meet. In this treasured community of love and grace, in the words of Isaiah 1:17, "We will learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow."

Reflecting continues





Reflecting continues

I'm reminded of the *Celtic Rune of Hospitality*:

*I saw a stranger yester'en,
I put food in the eating place,
drink in the drinking place,
music in the listening place
and in the sacred name of the Triune
He blessed myself and my house,
my cattle and my dear ones,
and the lark sang in her song.
Often,
often,
often
goes Christ in the stranger's guise.*

Singing: When he comes back **TiS 280**

OR: *I the Lord of sea and sky* TiS 658
OR: *Jesus Christ is waiting* TiS 665



Offering

We bring ourselves again to be dedicated to you. When you call us, may we be open to responding without holding back. With these gifts we commit ourselves to be part of the community of Christ who say yes to the fullness of life in you. **Amen.**

Notices

August 10 International Youth Day.

Prayers for World & Community

Thank you O God, for the call to be your people. We are part of your great creation, understanding that we are loved and held by your faithfulness.

As we gather in prayer, we name those people and places that we hold in love today.

For those struggling for security, meaning and peace – may there be blessings of hope.

For those caught in stories of loss and grief – may there be blessings of sleep and release.

For those who are lonely and discouraged – may there be blessings of companionship and story-telling.

For those caught in bitterness and anger – may there be blessings of healthy grief and lament.

For the oppressed, the widows and the orphans – may there be blessings of bread and justice.

We pray Lord for those things where are hearts are today: (a time of silence)

We bring these prayers to you in the name of Christ who taught us to pray:

Prayer continues





Weekly Worship



Prayer continues

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: Be thou my vision **TiS 547**

OR: Have faith in God my heart TiS 619

OR: Holy Spirit, come confirm us TiS 413

Blessing

Let us go forth to live the Kingdom of God
as though it were already here.
In this way may the Kingdom of God be found
in us and all we do as the body of Christ.
In the name of the Creator,
the Redeemer
and the Sustainer.
Amen.

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*This Worship Resource comes to you from
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