



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

We come to worship God:
here is a place of grace.
We come in need: - not self reliant,
to say we need help,

trying not to be stuck in habit
and to risk the ways of faith.

Knowing we can't achieve this
by ourselves,
**but open to be caught up
in the Spirit's joy.**

We come to you with joy and wonder;
You, God have woven a world of rich diversity into
being. You are reflected in all its pattern and ingenuity.

Through the ages people of faith and wisdom have
acknowledged your wonder, your power and your
love.

Take what we have and are
and by the mystery of your Spirit,
transform our worship into deeper reverence
and loftier praise than we know how.
In Jesus we pray, Amen.

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land and
her peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the
(please name the people on whose land you gather)
People, the Traditional Custodians, have blessed
this place through their law and customs, their care
and life. We pay respects to their Elders and leaders
past and present, and pray for the future of their
communities. May we walk gently and respectfully on
this Land.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing: Fill my whole life TiS 596

OR: Lord of earth and all creation TiS 672

OR: Lord, your almighty word TiS 447



Prayer

Gracious God, creator and giver of life to all,
by your generosity we are blessed;
we worship you, LORD God.

Your spirit of compassion is beyond measure;
we worship you, LORD God.
You plead the cause of the poor
and oppressed,
give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf,
and a song of joy to the speechless.

In worship, where we feel familiar
and do things we are accustomed to, confront us
again with your otherness,
your glory, your unfathomable mystery
and your challenge for us
to be more than we are:

Lord Jesus, you reached out
and accepted people as they were,
accepted them as loved fellow human beings.
We confess that we often fail to be as inclusive.
Forgive us.

You create us and accept us as we are, O God:
in the times when we have failed
in our relationship with you and with each other;

in the times when we have passively accepted
injustice done to others;

in the times we have enjoyed your creativity
around us, but have been afraid to ask for help.

Prayer continues





Weekly Worship

11th Sunday in Pentecost

Sunday August 24, 2025

Prayer continues

Life-giving Trinity,
raise us from our pain and brokenness;
touch us, heal us and strengthen us,
so that we may live the wholeness
you made us for; to your glory. Amen.

Friends hear the Good News:
God hears the sighs of our hearts,
and recognises our touch.
With compassion and care,
God speaks firmly to us:
'Your faith has made you whole;
Go in peace, and be healed'.
God's love is steadfast,
God's desire is great to love and make whole.
All our thanks be to God. Amen

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Luke 13: 10-17

In these stories of healing and grace
is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Reflecting

Rev. Lisa Stewart

*When Jesus laid his hand on the crippled woman,
immediately she stood up straight and began
praising God. (Luke 13: 13)*

And you would think that there would be rejoicing all around – a woman with a spirit that has crippled and bound her for eighteen long years suddenly receives healing in the encounter with Jesus we witness in our gospel reading today. Instead, we are confronted with the outrage of the synagogue leader. Why?

Because according to law and tradition this is the Sabbath day. And in fairness to the synagogue leader, this is not just a case of rules being rules. It is a sacred day, for setting aside all the work and

busyness, duties and responsibilities that mark the other six days. A day for stopping and shifting focus from all those manifold distractions that grasp and grab at our attention, putting them aside to be rested and renewed in what is the wellspring of our lives: the creative love of the God in whom we receive our being. Not just a holiday, but a holy day, and one not only commanded by God but observed by God, no less: *Honour the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath day to the Lord your God.. you shall not do any work... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and sea and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day. (Exodus 20: verses 8-11)*

So, if its good enough for God, then forget corporate bottom lines, the GDP, or the habits and norms of our work-obsessed, shop to you drop, open all day every day 24hr culture. Rest! Ok, so that last bit might be a bit of a gloss on Exodus, but you get my drift, and hopefully get the point that is perhaps pressing the buttons of the synagogue leader.

There are big things at stake here. For those of us who live in a society where any sense of Sabbath observance is just a fond distant memory of boring Sunday afternoons with nothing much to do but sleep, read, meet, eat, maybe sleep some more (the good old days!) we know now what it is we've lost.

So perhaps we can feel a little sympathy for our synagogue leader staking his claim to uphold, not just an arbitrary law, but a law that has at its heart our health, our well-being, the well-being of our planet: God-willed rest.

Jesus is not so sympathetic. A hypocrite, he calls him. This may well be a day for rest but in the figure of this woman who has been carrying her burden for eighteen interminable years, with no chance of rest, we are confronted with a need that simply will not and cannot wait one more day. In the face of such need, not even God's own command, despite its powerful concern for our physical and spiritual wellbeing, can excuse us from responding to the claim this woman's need makes on us.

Reflecting continues





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Reflecting continues

So, Jesus does break the holy, sacred, command of his and our God, and precisely in doing that shows us the very heart of the law, shows us not only what God requires of us, but desires for us. No law, even with all the gravitas of having been dictated from heaven and carved in stone, can obscure the compelling call and claim of compassion, of grace.

That is good news for the woman with the crippled spirit, as it is for our synagogue leader who shows his spirit to be just as crippled by his own rigid legalism. It is good news for all of us who stand in the freedom of a love and grace where we can discover our cramped spirits suddenly and miraculously unbound. Hopefully, still, with some time for sacred rest!

Singing: Sometimes a healing word is comfort TIS 692

OR: *Loving Spirit, Loving Spirit* TIS 417

OR: *O Christ the healer we have come* TIS 638



Offering

Living God,
we offer these gifts and our giving to be blessed.
Use our faith to proclaim your love,
our hands and voices to untie the bound
and announce your freedom in Jesus,
in whose name we pray. Amen

Notices

Rev Lisa Stewart is the first of our guest contributors that you'll hear from over the coming months. Thanks Lisa.

Next week, from **Aug 30 - September 2nd**, the UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania will be meeting. Our Fig Tree Worship Resource reflection for **Sunday August 31st**. will be written by the incoming Moderator Rev. Salesi Faupula.

August 26, 2001: Tampa affair and the rescue of 433 refugees.

August 30 International Day of the Victims of Forced Disappearances.

Prayers for World & Community

Read: Jeremiah 1: 4-10

God, like you did with Jeremiah,
you call us into your service,
to do things we feel ill-equipped for.
And you offer us a solid place of refuge
when we are in need.

So, we pray today for the many
who need refuge and cannot find any.

We hear your call for compassion
for the hungry and thirsty;
help us to sit light to our things,
so we might not be so encumbered with our stuff and
more open
to the generosity of your Spirit
sweeping us up in your love.

Spirit who calls us to hospitality,
we pray for people
who struggle to find shelter
in these cold winter nights.
For those who long to be gathered
in the warmth and safety of decent housing
and good company.
We ask your blessing on organisations
who are making a difference,
offering care, comfort and compassion.

Spirit who calls us to justice,
we pray for those experiencing degrading work
in poor conditions with inadequate payment,
and those in slavery.
Bless the ones
who are challenging the greed of corporations that
put profits before people,
exposing the human cost
of our unrestrained consumerism.

Prayer continues





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Prayer continues

Spirit who gifts us lives and work and worship,
we pray for Indigenous Peoples across the world.
May authentic wisdom and knowledge
be preserved and passed on,
enabling us all to be more carefully connected with
each other, with all of creation and with you.

Spirit of grace, we pray for those places
and people on our hearts,
in the quiet we name them...

We hold them
and pray for your holding care
and gracious blessing... through Jesus
who invites us to use these words together:

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: Amazing Grace TIS 129

OR: Lord of all hopefulness TIS 613

Blessing

Go knowing that God who holds all things
will be with us in the desert times,
that Christ who calls us friend
will walk the track with us,
and that the Spirit who nudges us along
will mark our way with light and hope.

May the blessing of God;
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer
surround you now and always
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
in the name of Christ. Amen

Blessing song: Lord Jesus Christ, lover of all TIS 737 *(sing it three times)*

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