



**Weekly Worship**

**15th Sunday  
in Pentecost**  
**Sunday September 21, 2025**

### Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

This house of prayer is a house of grace.  
We gather here to learn our needs:

not to justify ourselves  
**but to say we are sorry,**  
not to cling to the familiar  
**but to risk the untested,**  
not to enjoy our own decency  
**but to worship a holy God,**  
not to practice positive thinking  
**but to be caught up in God's joy.**

*(from UIW2)*

We light the candle,  
**The light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

*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.

### Singing: Joyful joyful we adore you TiS 152

OR: Lord of earth and all creation TiS 672  
OR: Praise our God the great creator TiS 165



### Prayer

Holy One, Holy Three,  
**You are sung in the song of the dawn  
lifted in the laugh of the kookaburra.**  
You are heard on the breath of the morning,  
laden with wattle and ti-tree blossom.

**You are glimpsed in the bright clear light of day,  
reflected in the moon when night falls.**

You are present in the darkness,  
mysterious realm of the quiet night creatures.  
**You are life, through generation upon  
generation, spanning aeons, beyond our  
imagining, knowing and loving each one of us.**

In the quiet we bring our hearts full of gratitude,

*(generous time of quiet)*

And yet, we confess: **sometimes we forget  
that you are the source of life and love.**

*(pause)*

And yet, we confess: **sometimes we forget  
that you meet us on the road.**

*(pause)*

And yet, we confess: **sometimes we forget  
who it is that we serve.**

*(pause)*

**Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of  
your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for  
your name's sake. (Psalm 79:9)**

Siblings in Christ, just as sure as our breathing out  
and our breathing in, we can be confident that we are  
forgiven and set free to live fully and joyfully in the gifts  
of love and grace. **Thank you God! Amen.**

### Passing the peace

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





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## Listening

**Read:** Luke 16:1-13

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

## Reflecting

**Rev. Karen Eller**

How annoying when the schmuck schmoozes his way into the good graces of the very people he ripped off, and gets praised by the owner. It pricks our sense of self-righteousness – the righteous shall have their reward – not the cheats...

This is perhaps the most puzzling parable we read in the three year lectionary cycle. Perhaps that is because it jars our sense of fairness. We expect the shoddy manager to be harangued for easing off on the farm tenants, and further diddling the owner - the manager is sleazily currying favour for himself further down the track. But that's not what happens in the story Jesus tells. We hear that the farm owner, whom we translate to represent Divine Justice, commends the soon-to-be-dismissed farm manager for his shrewdness. Whaaaaaaat?

It comes as a jolt to any self-respecting, law-abiding citizen, that a weasel manager, who has only looked after his own interests, when he finally does a half-decent thing in reducing the debts of the tenants, would receive plaudits. Which prompts the question – why do we want to see him punished or even humiliated. Is it to prop up our own sense of self-righteousness? Why does it matter to us how the self-serving manager is regarded by the owner? It gives pause for reflection.

Oh that's right, this is the reflection!

The response of indignant self-righteousness that many of us will experience with this text does not stand in isolation in Luke's gospel. Had we been reading Luke's Gospel all the way through we would have just finished reading what we know as the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32).

(I recommend reading Luke right through, so that you can make this sort of connection for yourself.)

In the Parable where the young foolish son grovels back to his family, we very often side with the hard-working older son who is very put out when the squandering son returns and is received with a lavish celebration. What about me? Where are the accolades for me? Why haven't I been the special guest to a fatted calf feast? Why should he get all the attention? What about meeeeeee?

Can you see what's happening? When the attention is inward, on me, me, and only me, our heart for God's generosity is severely diminished. Jesus, as remembered in Luke's Gospel, was teaching about God's radical hospitality to all, even the cheats and squanderers when they wake up to themselves. If our attention is on our own self-justification, we have missed the point altogether. How exciting though, that if the self-serving manager of the parable does the right thing by the tenants, if only for his own future benefit, how much more will God bless the righteous!

The parable of the dodgy steward is one that calls us back to the upside-down nature of God's reign, not to puff ourselves up with self-righteousness, but to live with God's generosity to all, even people who have squandered their opportunities. Our God welcomes all who centre our lives on Christ Jesus, the One who saves.

## Singing: Christ be my leader

**TiS 624**

*OR: I want to walk as a child of the light TiS 643*

*OR: God of freedom, God of justice TiS 657*





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## Offering

Knowing that each member of Christ's body contributes to the whole, we bring our gifts to share in the unity and diversity of Christ.

*(from UjW2)*

Bless these gifts and use them, and us, for the sake of the world, in Jesus' name, Amen.

## Notices

**Today** is the International Day of Peace.  
**Next Sunday** will be the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

## Prayers for World & Community

These prayers are in the form of lament, using the reading from **Jeremiah 8:18-9:1** - you may choose to have one person read the biblical text and another speak the prayer response.

***My joy is gone, grief is upon me,  
my heart is sick.***

Holy One, whose children are of all creeds and colours, in prayer we bring to you the people in our world who do not know peace and we lament the heartbreak, brokenness and grief: the countries at war, the nations divided and the communities and families in crisis.

*(pause)*

***Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" ("Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?")***

Holy One, whose children are of all creeds and colours, in prayer we bring to you those people who feel abandoned, lost and isolated through the devastation of disaster, global or personal.

*(pause)*

***"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."***

Holy One, whose children are of all creeds and colours, in prayer we bring to you all the broken hopes and dreams, the devastating sense that we may have missed our many opportunities to heal and hold the planet, to feed the hungry and to show love to each other, the big regrets and countless disappointments of our time.

*(pause)*

***For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.***

Holy One, whose children are of all creeds and colours, in prayer we bring to you our pain and grief, from things deep inside us, and through empathy with others, as we sometimes struggle to hold on to hope.

*(pause)*

***Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?***

Holy One, whose children are of all creeds and colours, in prayer we bring to you our plea for peace. Why is it so hard to bring justice to our land? Where is healing to be found? Why does it take so long to hear the stories that need to be heard?

*(pause)*

***O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!***

Our tears fall night and day, springing from the wells of compassion within us, pouring together, small tributaries forming a great river of lament, surging onwards to the deep sea of your indwelling.

*(pause)*

*Prayer continues*

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*Prayer continues*

**We join our voices together, knowing that you hear us. Seeking comfort, assurance and peace for all the world in the words that 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: Inspired by love and anger TiS 674**

*OR: God of Jeremiah TiS 679*

### **Blessing**

**Through song and scripture, prayer and pauses, we worship you, Holy One, Holy Three. Send us out as peacemakers, and let our lives continue to be an expression of worship, an outpouring of your loving kindness.**

Go knowing that you are not alone.  
We are bound together in kinship  
from the unending source of love.  
Go in peace,  
Amen.

#### **Contributors this week:**

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