

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Come to worship;  
like Abraham, Sarah and Hannah,  
**people of tested faith.**  
Come like Job, Thomas,  
and the Samaritan woman,  
**people wrestling with questions.**  
Come like Moses, Jeremiah and Mary,  
**people honest about their self-doubt.**  
Come like Peter, Mary Magdalene and Paul,  
**people with deep regrets.**  
Come, like Ruth, Simeon, Mark and Priscilla,  
**people of courage,**  
**ready to take a role by faith.**  
We come in openness, to play our part,  
**and to worship you with joy.**

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

You, gracious God,  
provide the foundations and the spring of all life.  
You confront us with the openness of your grace  
and take our breath away  
with the generosity of your love.  
You warmly invite us to join you,  
included as part of your family,  
held close and loved dearly.

So we ask, bless this time of worship and us in it.  
Enrich us by the mystery of your Spirit,  
so we might be generous too,  
with all you have given us; through Christ. Amen

### 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 - Love divine, TIS 217

OR: *Come O God of all the earth TIS 181*  
Or: *Awake, awake to love and work*  
*It's an oldie, if you don't have them, the words are here: [https://hymnary.org/text/awake\\_away\\_to\\_love\\_and\\_work](https://hymnary.org/text/awake_away_to_love_and_work)*



### Prayer

We thank you, gracious God, for our inheritance in faith; for the guidance, teaching and examples you provide - you are generous and wise beyond our grasp. In the brightness of your love, we bask, but then are aware of our shadows.

In our understanding and in our practice there are gaping holes, we have space for growth, often with good intentions, but an even better security against change.

Help us to prepare for your newness, to look carefully at the signs around us and then to know what they mean for our way ahead with you. Then, compassionate God, wherever we are, help us to see the needs clearly, to embrace healthy change gladly, and with support, to rebuild, renew and reform, we pray.





**Weekly Worship**

**23rd Sunday  
in Pentecost  
Sunday November 16, 2025**

Give our faith solid structure, understanding to support us and a framework to hold us. Take our often rickety faith and reinforce it by your Spirit, take our undisciplined thinking and give it new shape to fit this time.

There are many things that divert us, God; we often follow lines of least resistance, the familiar habits of our past seem to direct us more firmly than your good news, so give us a vibrancy of spirit that always looks for your way and gets over the obstacles of our habits.

...God of Love, in the wrong we have done  
**and in the good we have not done;**  
we have often not known our weakness or have indulged our own fault.

**We are sorry.**

We turn away from these  
and turn to you for help.

**Forgive us and renew us in your mercy.**

Hear the Good News of grace:

**In Christ, we are forgiven.**

Amen. Thanks be to God!

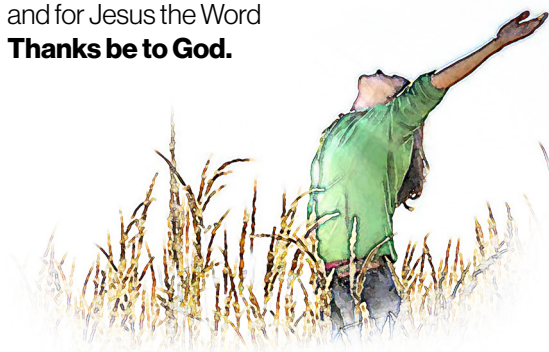
## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13  
Luke 21:5-19

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



## Reflecting Rev Jennie Gordon

Finish this sentence...

*If, at first, you don't succeed...*

You're right,...

*try, try again.*

Somewhere deep in my memory I am learning to tie shoelaces, ride a bicycle, play the guitar, knit, pass a chemistry exam, or a thousand other things, not all at once, and this is what I hear. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. It's from a poem by an unknown author and the words encouraging perseverance usually came from a parent or a mentor. Perseverance can be described simply as the ability to keep doing something difficult. The goal might be that by keeping on trying, we succeed, and we learn to do it well.

Being a disciple of Jesus can be difficult and requires perseverance.

The reading from the gospel of Luke was written after the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the second temple, and may explain the utter devastation that remained of the once majestic and beautiful building. Not one stone left upon another. In this apocalyptic discourse, Jesus is preparing the first disciples for what is to come, by teaching them to be discerning, to have courage and to persevere. This is not going to be an easy road. Not for them, and not for us.

Be discerning; *"beware that you are not led astray"*. Sometimes it's hard to find the quiet word of truth amongst the many, many voices shouting to be heard and be believed, not just in the village square these days, but everywhere. Who are your mentors in the faith? Whose voice has rung true for you and helped you to grow and be discerning? Are there new voices that you might consider and learn from? Do you have trusted and faithful friends who will talk openly about discipleship, and discern and grow with you?

Have courage; *"do not be terrified"*. It's hard not to be terrified as nation constantly rises against nation, and kingdom building, at the expense of the poor and

*Reflecting continues*

*Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2025. A Worship Resource from Friends of the Fig Tree.*



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## Weekly Worship

## 23rd Sunday in Pentecost Sunday November 16, 2025

### Reflecting continues

marginal, seems to be the theme of the day. Have courage amid these dreadful portents. Easy to say, hard to do. Yet, as followers of Jesus, we are called to do just that. Fear is immobilising. Courage allows action. We are called, just as the first disciples were called, to testify. While that may not be before Kings and Governors, it might well be before neighbours and family. We are called to be strong and testify to the power of loving-kindness in words and actions. That takes courage. Jesus tells the disciples that he will give them words and wisdom, even in the face of harsh opposition by those who are closest. Do we have that sort of courage?

Persevere; *“by your endurance you will gain your souls”*. In the epistle reading today Paul tells the Thessalonians who are obviously having some trouble in the church; *“do not be weary in doing what is right.”* Sometimes it is totally exhausting trying to keep on doing what is right. It’s often easier to give up and harder to persevere. Dogged determination seems to be a family trait where I come from, but it’s not always for the best. You can hang on to something, persisting while it causes harm to you or to others, just out of sheer bloody-mindedness. Perseverance needs to know her goal. For the disciples, it seems, the goal was *“to gain your souls.”* That’s worth pausing for a moment of reflection. What does it mean to *‘gain your soul.’*

Maybe it’s easier to know what it is that is soul-destroying, what it is that leads you to seemingly gain the world and lose your soul. Of course we live in different times to the first disciples, and the struggles we endure for the sake of our faith are different now and different depending on where we live. What is the goal of our perseverance in the faith? For me, it’s living a life of love, inclusion, acceptance, hospitality and humility, while glimpsing heaven in the here and now. What is it for you?



## Singing - O Jesus I have promised **TiS 595**

OR: *Be still my soul* TiS 123

OR: *Lord, keep us in your steadfast word* TiS 437

(Can be sung to tune: OLD 100TH - TiS 59)



## Offering

God of outrageous abundance,  
We bring these gifts out of love and hope.  
Bless them, and bless us  
So that together we may testify  
to your loving-kindness for all creation.  
In Jesus’ name,  
Amen.

## Notices

**November 20** World Children’s Day

## Prayers for World & Community

We take a deep breath  
And turn to you again,  
the God who makes such extravagant promises  
and limits them to no-one.  
- a new heaven and new earth!

We relish the promise of your presence, your solidarity, your justice and love. Only to recognize then, that your promise comes in the midst of a challenging call to obedience.

We live in a world of promises, pledges and commitments, and too often are let down by unrealistic aspirations.

Today we pray for those whose only promise is of an end, whose only hope is for relief and for whom there are no hopes offered.

For those close to death, through illness, age or violence, for those in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan.

*Prayer continues*

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*Prayer continues*

May we who are lavished with freedoms and hopes uphold the rights of all who are excluded, all who are disenfranchised and all who are oppressed.

We pray for enough of your promise of grace and mercy that we may be among those who respond to your call and to bring the same to others.

Gracious God, we live in a world of pushing and shoving, sometimes in the contest of ideas, but all too often helped by aggression, lies and violence, wound up by anxiety and ideology and acted out with brutality. From the appalling workhouses of Bangladesh to the torture centres of repressive states, and so many places of suffering; we pray for your coming amongst us to make a difference in our families, in our community and in our world. Be present, curb our anxiety, restrain our brutality and overcome our alienation.

Renew and recreate where there is weariness, heal and restore where there is division, reform and reshape the parts of our lives and our society that are out of shape.

Bless leaders undertaking wholesome reform, and to all who govern, give compassion and wisdom. For those in need who are close to our hearts we pray in the quiet, ...

... we ask for your blessing, through Jesus who taught us to pray together saying:

### 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 - Loving Spirit **TiS 417**

*OR: We are marching TiS 666 Or: Forth in they name TiS 471*



### Blessing

Let us give thanks for the past,  
but not live pining for it.  
Let us seize our day and the hope of the new,  
living by love and faith,  
but not only for the moment.  
Let us look forward with vision and hope,  
for a world transformed

And the blessing of the loving Father  
The blessing of Jesus, who calls us together  
The blessing of the empowering Spirit  
be with us as we go, now & always:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**All: in the name of Christ. Amen**

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