



Gathering & Lighting the Candle

As we gather we pause and remember -
Jesus is the light of the world.
As we light a candle,
the flame brings light to us.
Jesus is the light of the world
who overcomes darkness.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays.
Stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain
call to praise you joyfully.

Call to Worship

These words come from the apostle Paul:
*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able
to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask
or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ
Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever.*

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest.
You our Father, Christ our brother,
all are yours who live in love;
teach us how to love each other;
lift us to your joy above.

Come, let us worship God.

¹ CCLI 206 729

Acknowledging

We acknowledge that in and through Christ we are called to reconciliation and justice. The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania calls us as church on a covenantal journey - first and second peoples together. As part of this, we acknowledge the traditional custodians, their elders past, present and emerging, and give thanks to God for all who care for creation.



Singing: Joyful, joyful (TiS 152)

Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.





Weekly Worship

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday July 25, 2021

Prayer

God of abundance and grace,
we offer our thanks for the many blessings
that come through your love for us.
In our seeming scarcity,
you feed and nourish us with plenty.
We offer our thanks and praise
in joyful adoration,
God of glory, God of love.

But we remember too
that often we struggle
to see or accept the love you give.
When we can only see meagre offerings
despite an abundance of blessing,
forgive us.
When we keep finding reasons
to doubt what you bring to us,
open our eyes to what grace and love can do.

We hear again through Paul
that Jesus is able to accomplish
far more than we can ask or imagine.
It is through Jesus Christ
that we filled with all the fullness of God.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Listening

Read: Ephesians 3:14-21 & John 6:1-21
For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting

Rev. Barbara Strickland

We are very familiar with the story of the feeding of the multitude in the Gospel text for this week in John 6:1-21. It is the only miracle story told in all four Gospels and it holds an important place in our collective faith memory.

While each Gospel includes this story, and each tells it distinctively, only John makes clear to us that this event takes place near the festival of Passover (John 6:4). This turns out to be a clue to what the whole chapter claims about Jesus. In chapters 5 and 6,

we are reminded of God's faithfulness and saving acts with God's people through the Passover and the Exodus. God fed the people of Israel through all their wilderness wanderings. In the long history of the people of God, Jesus is now recognised as the fulfilment of the ancient promise that God will raise up a prophet like Moses (John 6:14). Yet, Jesus knows that the people have the wrong idea of what that means. They are expecting a different sort of king. He knows that they don't understand who he really is.

We will spend the next five weeks in our Gospel readings digging down deep as we dwell in this Chapter 6 from John's Gospel. Jesus feeds the five thousand and in the rest of the chapter, we find out what it means that Jesus is the bread of life and our bread for life. As we take this opportunity, may the Word dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16).

First, in the story of the feeding of the 5000, we read about the pressing need of the people and the meeting of that need by Jesus.

Then, there is a further story about Jesus coming in the evening to the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea and quelling their fear.

We can picture the scene. There is a large crowd out in the wilderness, across the sea of Galilee and away from towns where food might have been found. They had been following Jesus because the signs he had done gave them hope, but they are tired and hungry.

Jesus asks Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people?' He is testing Philip, but Philip sees only an insolvable problem. Andrew, on the other hand, sees possibilities and points to the boy with five loaves and two fish.

Jesus' response is to say, 'Make the people sit down.' He then gave thanks and saw that what had been given was distributed to everyone in a way that surpassed all expectation. The disciples have to be reminded that they need to count on Jesus' presence and power in this situation and in any future time of challenge. They are weak and inadequate to meet the needs around them. With the resources of

Reflecting continues





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Reflecting continues

Jesus, they and we are enabled to meet even huge challenges with hope, rather than defeat.

Jesus is present and ready to help in any situation of need, and through John's Gospel we learn of the special promises that Jesus is Bread (6:28), Light (8:12), Gate (10:9), Good Shepherd (10:1), Resurrection and Life (11:25, Way, Truth and Life (14:6) and True Vine (15:1). The disciples are called to witness to Jesus and to spread the hope of this Good News with others.

Jesus met people where they were and gave them what they needed. This is central to who we are called to be as we seek to follow him. We are to feed the hungry. Of course, our resources are not sufficient and we are inadequate, but we are called to receive what Jesus gives and to go into the world with this gift, praising God for God's provision and knowing our dependence on God's grace.

Singing: This is the truth we hold (TIS 469)

This is the truth we hold,
source of the joy we share,
hope that can make us bold
trusting the name we bear:
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
in Christ shall all be made alive'.

This is the song of praise
echoing down the years,
true for the present days,
through all our doubts and fears:
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
in Christ shall all be made alive'.

Christ is the living bread,
Christ is the word to speak,
Christ is the way to tread,
Christ is the goal to seek;
for 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
in Christ shall all be made alive'.

One in the faith we share,
out in his name we go;
Jesus awaits us there,
longing that all should know
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
in Christ shall all be made alive'.

² CCLI206729





Weekly Worship

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Responding: Prayers for the World & Community

God of glory, God of love, we hear stories of hunger and feeding, and desire restoration and healing for our world.

We are aware of global disruption to families, to businesses, to trade and travel as the COVID pandemic continues while leaders and health professionals try to regain control towards a new normal. In that space we see confusion and contested ways of moving forward - from opening up fully as though there were no problem, to closing things down fully until the problem goes away.

We pray for governments around the world, for health leaders, for community leaders as they seek to find a way through many discordant voices. We pray for communities and families in grief. We pray for places impacted through unequal access to health, information and protection.

We pray for our own leaders - national and state - as they navigate both local and country-wide challenges due to the coronavirus.

We think of those closer to us who face difficulties of their own and pray that they may find comfort within the storms. Help us to be bringers of love and blessing where possible.

(silent prayer)

We pray for our church, as we seek to follow the call of Jesus Christ in a rapidly changing world. Bless our newly inducted president of the Uniting Church, Rev. Sharon Hollis, and bless members of churches all across Australia as we gather to hear stories of Jesus and as we are sent out again to share his light in the world.

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 for ever.
Amen.**

Passing the peace

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

Offering

It is through Jesus Christ that we are filled with all the fullness of God. As we have been filled, what will we offer that the world may be filled?

Notices

What happened at the meeting of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia last weekend? Did you join the opening worship online for the installation of our new President - Rev. Sharon Hollis? Have you read the updates or checked out the clips?

<https://uniting.church/>



Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2021. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Weekly Worship

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

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Singing: Let us talents and tongues employ (TiS 537)

Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

*Jesus lives again;
earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

Christ is able to make us one,
at his table he set the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.

*Jesus lives again;
earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God-Immanuel everywhere!

*Jesus lives again;
earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around:
loaves abound!*

Blessing

Go now, to employ
your tongues and talents
in the name of Christ.
Go with spirits full
and well nourished
to share loaves that abound
in the name of Christ.

And a blessing as you go out:
May you be richly blessed by
our abundant God of love -
creator, redeemer and sustainer. Amen.

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