



**Weekly Worship**

# Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Sunday September 26, 2021**

## \* **Gathering & Lighting the Candle**

Jesus Christ, we assemble with all your creatures in this circle of life.

**We ask you to join our circle and celebrate with us.**

Jesus Christ, as we join in celebration with you and all creation,

**We ask for your blessing, your shalom, on the creatures present here that we love, and all creatures celebrating in the wild.**

In the name of God, who creates all life,  
In the name of Jesus Christ, who redeems all life,  
and the name of the Spirit, who renews all life,  
we cry with all in the circle of life:

**Shalom! Shalom! Shalom!  
May your blessing come!**

*We light a candle as a sign that the light of Christ shines among us and all of creation.*

*\* from the Season of Creation material.*

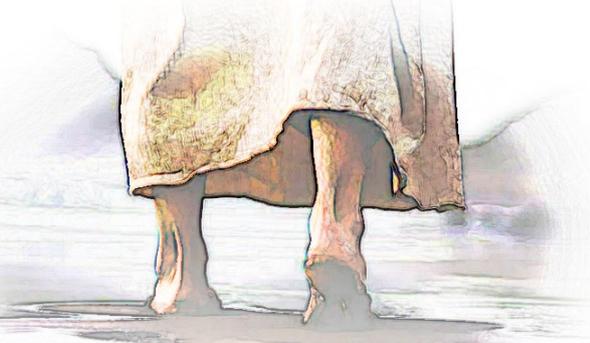
[seasonofcreation.com](http://seasonofcreation.com)

## **Call to worship**

We hear the call of Jesus not to stumble over ourselves or get in the way of others.

We are here to listen, to reflect, to consider where we stumble and how Christ lifts us.

Let us worship God.



## **Acknowledging**

The Uniting Church understands that God has been revealing the very nature of God to the first peoples of this land over tens of thousands of years. We listen and journey in Christian faith together. We listen to the wisdom of elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that we gather on lands of traditional custodians and that Jesus Christ continues to reveal the nature of God to us in this unique continent and through our relationships together.



## **Singing: God of grace TiS 611**

*Used with permission CCLI 206 729*

God of grace and God of glory,  
on your people pour your power;  
now fulfil your Church's story;  
Bring the bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour.

See the hosts of evil round us  
scorn your Christ, assail his ways.  
Fears and doubts too long have bound us;  
Free our hearts to work and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;  
Bend our pride to your control;  
Shame our wanton selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss Your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
Let the gift of your salvation  
be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
serving You whom we adore.





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## Prayer

God of grace and God of glory,  
we give our thanks and praise  
for the many blessings you offer.  
We wonder about the web of life of  
our amazing planet earth,  
and give thanks for all her creatures.  
We pause to consider the blessing of the animals,  
and the call of St. Francis of Assisi to remember  
and thank you for them.

And so we thank you, God of creation,  
for the wonderful animals that inhabit our homes,  
for loyal companionship and unconditional love.

We offer thanks for diverse creatures and the  
incredible balance of ecosystems that you have  
created. We wonder at the barred bandicoot coming  
back from the edge of extinction.

But we confess the havoc of human destruction on  
your good creation - of habitats, through pollution,  
and unsustainable actions ...

As you call us not to be stumbling blocks to others,  
forgive us, we pray...

*Friends, as we heed the call of Christ and seek to be  
realigned as his followers, we find that in his name we  
are renewed, and made whole.*

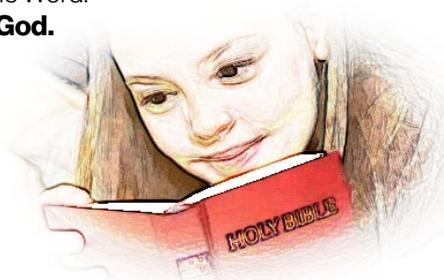
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## Listening

**Read:** Psalm 19:7-14 & Mark 9:38-50

For these words of faith  
and for Jesus the Word:

**Thanks be to God.**



## Reflecting

**Rev. Moira Dodsworth**

### Saltiness

Last week, we became the least, today we become salt. I find it fascinating how when we read two of the lectionary readings together, we find a gem, something to remember and hold on to. In our servanthood, however small the part we play, we are salt. Salt, which is needed in such tiny amounts, the least of the ingredients but so important. I've never thought about it before, but it fits together. The work of salt in the food is unseen but we notice if it isn't there. Curry for instance can be almost tasteless, however much spice you use, if you don't add a little salt.

Salt in Bible times was essential and valuable, not only as flavouring but also as a preservative and purifier. We are the preservers of the body of Christ and as we read the whole reading, also the purifiers. If salt is left too long it can lose its flavour and not be as useful. We must keep the salt alive in ourselves, the work in our community to use our gifts and serve those around us in any way we can, keeping God's work going and the light of Christ in the work. I believe the salt can be the quality of our discipleship and this is how this saying relates to the rest of the passage which can be confronting.

Is Christ really telling us to amputate bits of body? It is important to note that none of the body parts mentioned are essential and in an agrarian community that worked with tools, there would have been accidents so many of his listeners may have been aware of individuals missing fingers and toes, even eyes, if not hands and feet. The metaphor could be used in our community. If we as the church are the body of Christ are there parts of the church that could be causing us to stumble? Programs that are no longer filling their purpose and draining workers from other activities, even buildings that are no longer used or fit for purpose? We are called to let go of these for the good of the body, grieving and accepting the pain that may be involved.

*Reflecting continues*





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*Reflecting continues*

In the first few verses, Jesus affirms that good can come from outside before saying to incise the “bad”. “Whoever is not against us is for us.” (Mark 9:40) Perhaps cooperation with other nearby churches or denominations and organisations is in order, so that we share the load and don’t duplicate services. We could then be salt in those wider communities too.

Jesus, using this analogy of salt reminds of the essential nature of our work in the community and caring for others. Salt cannot be left out and our faith and work as a disciple cannot be left out of our lives, it is what makes the body of Christ seen in the world. Salt is an everyday commodity in many foods and so our work for each other is an everyday thing, not just in crises. In our present COVID pandemic it is the phone call, the smile, the encouragement to a neighbour that becomes their salt, what makes their day tastier, and worth living.

I end with verse 50 and the reminder: “Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another”.

## **Responding: Prayers for the World and Community**

Creator God, we bring before you a world that groans through profound stresses and challenges. Through these stresses and challenges, help us be salt, and be at peace with one another.

While we celebrate the barred bandicoot’s move towards a strong recovery in our grassy plains, we know that too many species have already reached extinction due to human behaviour. We pray for leaders, policy-makers, and environmental experts that together we attend to the needs of creation. We pray for those who offer sanctuary to wildlife, for those in landcare groups, and for those working to improve the health of waterways. We pray for the many small voices, that they may encourage and equip others to act for the sake of your good creation.

This is the time of year where we begin to prepare for another summer fire season, and so we are reminded of the changing climate of the earth and the need to take rapid action for the sake of flora and fauna and even the future of humanity. We pray for leaders preparing for another summit about global actions to mitigate against a warming planet. May there be grace, wisdom and a shared vision for a sustainable future.

We pray as we have prayed often in the last 18 months for those impacted by COVID 19. We recognise that we are tired - of fear, of restrictions, of complying with changing rules, of isolation, of loneliness, of masks, of being denied simple pleasures. We pray for those who face deeper troubles than being tired - those who grieve alone, those who struggle with poor mental health, those impacted greatly due to vulnerabilities to the virus, those who struggle to make ends meet, those unable to be vaccinated and those conflicted about them.

We pray for our country, fractured as states and territories take different paths and fight different battles with the federal government.

*Prayer continues*





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*Prayer continues*

We pray for our churches, that we may continue to offer welcome, care and nourishment under circumstances that test us all.

Bless us, and encourage us, as we join together to pray as you 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 for ever. Amen.**

## Passing the peace

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

## Offering

God of grace and God of glory, take the things we offer and bless them to your service. May they be a sign that we love you with the whole of our heart, mind, soul and strength. Amen.



## Notices

This is the last Sunday of the Season of Creation for 2021. St. Francis of Assisi was known for an annual 'blessing of the animals' celebrated on October 1st.

## Singing: Because we bear your name **TiS 686** *Used with permission CCLI 206 729*

Lord Jesus, we belong to you,  
you live in us, we live in you;  
we live and work for you --  
*because we bear your name.*

Help us receive each other, Lord,  
for you receive the least of us  
and come to us in them --  
*because we bear your name.*

Bless those who give us any gift  
because they know that we are yours;  
reward them with your grace --  
*because we bear your name.*

Let us acknowledge those as friends  
who use your name to right a wrong,  
but have not joined us yet --  
*because we bear your name.*

Let nothing that we do or say  
offend the weak so that they fall  
and lose their faith in you --  
*because we bear your name.*

Keep us from missing out on life;  
give hands that help, and single sight,  
and feet that walk your way --  
*because we bear your name.*

You are the salt that cleanses us,  
so clean us out, and make us fit  
for common life with you --  
*because we bear your name.*





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## **Blessing**

Go to celebrate all that God has given us.  
Give thanks for this earth  
and the way it sustains us.  
Give thanks for animals, domestic and wild.  
Give thanks for earth, sky, water and mountain.  
May all these things come as blessing  
as you celebrate all God has given us.

The blessing of God be with you,  
in the name of the creator, redeemer and sustainer.  
Amen.

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