



Weekly Worship

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday October 3, 2021

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Tomorrow, October 4th is the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. In some churches, this is the time for the blessing of the animals.

As you come to worship, bring your animal friends to mind, bless them and give thanks for their lives and companionship.

Light the candle

Christ is the light of the world.

Call to worship

Psalm 26:12 My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the LORD.

God of goodness, we bless you as we stand
alone or together, in the great congregation,

Jesus who welcomes children, we bless you
for gathering us all into your embracing love,

Spirit of life, we bless you with each breath,
**be present with us as we worship,
as we pray, sing and listen,
invite us into wonder, stir us into silence,
nudge us into connection
with the whole of your creation. Amen.**

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and these waters. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress



Singing: All things bright and beautiful Tis 135

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful -
the Lord God made them all*

The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call,
All things bright and beautiful ...

The cold wind in the winter,
the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden -
he made them every one.
All things bright and beautiful ...

The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum trees green and tall,
the rocks and pools and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall.
All things bright and beautiful ...

The many coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of bushland, field or desert,
on farms or roaming free,
All things bright and beautiful ...

He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty,
who has made all things well,
All things bright and beautiful ...

¹Cecil Frances Alexander





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Prayer

Mark 10:13 & 14. People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs".

Emmanuel, God with us, we praise you,
delighting in the absurdity of your presence
enfleshed amongst us in Jesus,
the child born of Mary,
entirely vulnerable and dependent.

We pause in prayer to sink into the mystery
of the incarnation of your love.

(pause)

Emmanuel, God with us, we praise you,
celebrating the children around us,
the ones whose names we know,
who belong in our family circles,
and the ones whose faces we see
in our daily lives.

We pause in prayer to thank you
and to bring them to you for blessing

(pause)

Emmanuel, God with us, we praise you,
for the gifts brought to us by the young ones;
for their energy and wonder,
for their innocence and trust,
for their eagerness to learn and to love.

We pause in prayerful gratitude
for the presence of children in our lives

(pause)

God of all creatures, great and small, we confess that
we have not always cared for the little and the least.
We tend to tune our ears to loud voices, gravitate
towards powerful leaders, and associate with
important people. We place them in the centre of our
thinking and our doing.

Forgive us, God of grace, forgive us.

Help us to be like Jesus. To honour and cherish the
children, the ones who feel small, the vulnerable, the
people on the edges. Let your indignation and anger
rise in us and prompt us to act when children are
abused, excluded or prevented from coming closer
to you.

Teach us, God of mercy, teach us.

Give us courage to be open and honest with each
other and with you; building up, developing and
cherishing our relationships. Let your love be the
thread that binds us together and that holds us as
we reach out to others. Help us to move beyond our
small mindedness and fear into a generous posture
of loving kindness, a channel for peace.

Restore us, God of love, restore us.

Amen.

Listening

Read: Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12.

Mark 10:2-16

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word:

Thanks be to God.





Reflecting

Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

I was always a little unsure of those magician types who used to perform at events. I would think one thing was going to happen and was always puzzled when surprised by something else entirely. Things disappeared one place and popped out another. A string of coloured scarves emerged instead of a white rabbit.....you get the gist!

Expect the unexpected! The disciples have just asked one of those big questions and Jesus has reminded them that the question is really a much deeper one than points of Law. They are asked to look at a closer level to the heart of the matter. Then Jesus blows the whole hierarchy thing out of the water by holding up a child as the example of what the Kingdom of God looks like. In this household it is the kids that matter. Our priorities are again upended. Jesus talks about the nurturing and sustaining and honouring of the littlest and least. They were not expecting that! In the arguments about who is great and important and the importance of Law and Doctrine, Jesus stuns them again by taking it right back to topsy turvy basics.

The focus here is on right relationships, about what it means to show faithfulness to God and each other. The importance of being in 'right relationship' is made very clear. The Job passage (Job 1:1, 2:1-10) tells us that he is a model of integrity in his relationships with God and with all of those around him. The Psalmist (Psalm 26) calls for justice to be established while advocating for unwavering integrity in motivation and behaviour. Emphasis is given in these readings to maintaining integrity in relationships, particularly familial relationships, and we are encouraged to look outside our own small view of how things should operate. One-dimensional and narrow images of what relationships should look like have no place here.

Walking in truth and in relationship with God is re-defined in the relationship between Jesus and God. Jesus is "the imprint of God's being" and the light of God's glory. This powerful message maintains and sustains all things. Faithfulness is about loving and

honouring each other. It is also about loving and honouring, in our relationship with Creation.

The Hebrews passage talks about the status of Jesus and the angels, and us. Our privilege is made clear! The message for us is a powerful one and it comes direct to us, from Jesus. We all share the one source, the faithful love relationship in God. We are all in the one family, and Jesus relates to us as brothers and sisters. This is all a bit mystical but it is also a reminder that we matter. We belong in the household of God.

There is a word here about suffering also. Sometimes we do it tough and like Job we can't see the reason. The Hebrews reading tells us that there is grace in our suffering and that Jesus experiences suffering right alongside us. We are held in our pain and suffering through the steadfast love of God, through the faithful one who is gracious and merciful.

We are called to stand on level ground in the great congregation, to walk in trust and integrity in God's steadfast and faithful love. And to share it with each and every other created thing. Nothing surprising or unexpected about that!





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Responding: Prayers for the World and Community

Scan the headlines of the news, where do children feature? Spend some time praying for children in difficult and distressing circumstances around the world.

Parent God, calling us with open arms,
we pray for the children;
for tiny refugees without help or homes,
for young ones orphaned through violence,
for starving children in this world of greed,

**bring shelter, bring comfort,
bring food, health and hope**

for children who are lost to their families
for those in hospitals and institutions
and for children in situations of violence or abuse

**bring rescue, reunite them,
bring healing, tenderness and care**

for children struggling with lockdowns
missing milestones in life and social skills
and for little ones who are full of fear

**bring release, fun and laughter
bring courage, kindness and love**

Parent God, calling us with open arms
we pray for parents and grandparents
for aunts, uncles, cousins and kin,
for teachers, health and welfare staff
for social workers and police.

Give them eyes to see the value
of what they do each day,
Give them hearts ready to reach out
to welcome children and to keep them safe.

In the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

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

Bless what we bring, God of abundant welcome.
Use these gifts and use our lives to multiply your
goodness, reaching into places of hurt and harm
with your tender, inclusive embrace.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notices

If you belong to a rural congregation (*which applies to almost all of us in Gippsland where The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes from*), have you thought about writing to a city congregation with messages of hope and connection? Go to victas.uca.org.au and Find a Church. These days of extended lockdown are hard and uncertain. What can we do to support each other?





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Singing: All creatures of our God most high **TiS 100**

Based on *The Canticle of the Sun* of St Francis of Assisi 1182-1226.
Alternate words from *Lutheran Hymn Book*. Used with permission
CCLI 206 729

All creatures, worship God most high!
Sound every voice in earth and sky:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Sing, brother sun, in splendor bright,
sing, sister moon and stars of night:

Chorus

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia!*

Sing, brother wind; with clouds and rain
you grow the gifts of fruit and grain:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Dear sister water, useful, clear,
make music for your Lord to hear:

(chorus)

Sing, brother fire, so mirthful, strong;
drive far the shadows, join the throng:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Dear mother earth, so rich in care,
praise God in colours bright and rare:

(chorus)

All who for love of God forgive,
all who in pain or sorrow grieve:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ bears your burdens and your fears;
still make your song amid the tears:

(chorus)

And you, most gentle sister death,
waiting to hush our final breath:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Since Christ our light has pierced your gloom,
fair is the night that leads us home.

(chorus)

O sisters, brothers, take your part,
and worship God with humble heart:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit Three in One:

(chorus)

Blessing

God of goodness, we bless you as we stand
alone or together, in the great congregation,

Jesus who welcomes children, we bless you
for gathering us all into your embracing love,

Spirit of life, we bless you with each breath,
**be present with us as we go about our days
as we pray, sing and listen,
invite us into wonder, stir us into silence,
nudge us into connection
with the whole of your creation.**

You are loved and cherished as a child of God.
Go in peace to love and serve your God,
In the name of Christ, Amen.

Contributors this week:

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