



**Weekly Worship**



**Sunday October 1, 2023**

## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

If then there is any encouragement in Christ,  
any consolation from love,  
any sharing in the Spirit,  
any compassion and sympathy,  
make my joy complete:

be of the same mind,  
having the same love,  
being in full accord and of one mind.

*Phillippians 2:1-2*

**Spirit of life, you call us together as one,  
sharing the common life,  
taking the common cup,  
breaking the common bread,**

**Draw us closer  
in the commonwealth  
of your extravagant and abundant love,  
flowing freely from the source of all.**

**We come to worship you**

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

### 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: Praise to the Lord, TiS 111

*OR: Sing praise to God who reigns above, TiS 110*



## Prayer

Companion God,  
You lead us on journeys  
that take us way beyond our small imagining,  
You place before us an abundance of wonder.  
We are filled with awe at your glory.

We praise you for the circle of death and birth,  
for new growth that springs from decay,  
for life that emerges in barren places  
for water in the wilderness  
and hope in despair.

(pause)

Forgive our grumbling, our discontent,  
our apathy and our ignorance.

(pause)

Forgive our wasteful use of your gifts  
and our lack of gratitude for your provision.

(pause)

Forgive our failing to see you  
within, beside, around and amongst us.

(pause)

*Prayer continues*

*Weekly Worship. Season of Pentecost 2023. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource*



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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*Prayer continues*

**Companion God,  
As you reach your arms out to us  
in an embrace of forgiveness and  
reconciliation,  
remind us again to seek your face  
in the faces of each other,  
in the strangers that we encounter,  
in the wild-ness of life around us.**

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

**Read:** Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

**I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings from of old,  
things that we have heard and known,  
that our ancestors have told us.**

We will not hide them from their children;  
we will tell to the coming generation  
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,  
and the wonders that he has done.

**In the sight of their ancestors  
he worked marvels in the land of Egypt,  
in the fields of Zoan.**

He divided the sea and let them pass through it,  
and made the waters stand like a heap.

**In the daytime he led them with a cloud,  
and all night long with a fiery light.**

He split rocks open in the wilderness,  
and gave them drink abundantly  
as from the deep.

He made streams come out of the rock,  
and caused waters to flow down like rivers.

Philippians 2:1-13  
Matthew 21:23-32

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

## Reflecting

**Rev. Moira Dodsworth**

### Authority

I think we have all at times challenged authority, I imagine it starts with the first "no" to our parents. However, most of us realise the need for authority and accept the laws of our country and law keepers as necessary for the good functioning of society. I admit that I have challenged these but usually because I consider the particular laws unjust, or they conflict with my faith and integrity, or out of compassion for others.

The people challenge Moses' authority: "why did you bring us out of Egypt?" (Exodus 17:3) Moses asks God for help, his authority. He acts out of compassion for his thirsty people, and he's had his time of questioning God.

The chief priests and elders ask Jesus "By what authority are you doing these things?" (Matt 21:23) Jesus, in rabbinic tradition, asks a question in reply. Matthew deliberately has Jesus asking a question about John the Baptist, a prophet, part of the line of prophets, sent by God leading to Jesus. We hear the leaders answer out of their need to hold to their position and power, unlike Moses they do not refer to

*Reflecting continues*

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### *Reflecting continues*

God for help but act rather out of fear for the crowds. They want to keep their authority. They were not seeking information but seeking to trap Jesus, they show their deceit in choosing not to answer the question.

“We don’t know” can be an acceptable answer. Not the disciples or Paul or religious leaders through history or any person of faith can claim to have all the answers. We should not know all the answers because many questions of faith require discernment, questioning, thought and prayers. Even with deep discernment, we are human and can be wrong, it is better to acknowledge this and seek change or solutions to problems rather than holding emphatically to a position. Through history, we have seen great leaders change their minds or the position they held – Paul, Martin Luther, John Newton for some dramatic ones.

“I don’t know” can be a powerful statement of faith if it comes from the heart and hands the power and authority to God. But Jesus knows this is not what the chief priests and leaders are intending. They want to get out of a tricky situation, and they fear the crowds. So often, it can be fear and insecurity that makes us hold to a belief, forgetting God’s love and mercy which includes even tax collectors and prostitutes, the despised and outcasts of society.

Jesus then tells a parable, two sons, one does not do what he says he will. The other considers his first response and does what he has declined to do. Here is a message, we have heard before in Matthew’s gospel, God requires deeds not empty words. It is our behaviour which speaks most clearly, I think we have all known “once a week Christians”. The chief priests and leaders must answer this question because it is about a story, but in doing so, they condemn themselves. Matthew has told us that Pharisees and Sadducees went to hear John the Baptist but did not follow his call.

Under whose authority do we live? Do our words and deeds match? Do we follow those we believe God has called, listening and discerning in decisions in our personal faith, in our church and our community?

### **Singing: Faith will not grow from ... TiS 691**

*OR: Jesus’ hands were kind hands, TiS 236*



### **Offering**

God of love outpouring,  
what we have may seem like riches  
and what we bring may not seem like much,  
but we bring it with our persistent praise  
and our deep gratitude,  
asking you to bless these gifts and use them,  
asking you to bless us and use us,  
as life-giving springs of water in a thirsty land,  
**Amen.**

### **Notices**

**Today** is the International Day for Older Persons. **October 2** is the International Day of non-violence and also World Habitat Day and **October 4** is the Feast Day of St Francis (see suggestion following blessing).

#### **‘Voice to Parliament’ Referendum**

**Resources Synod of Vic/Tas:** Hear the voices of First Nations people and our UCA President and Moderator talk about why this upcoming referendum matters to us. [victas.uca.org.au/voices-of-reason-speak](https://victas.uca.org.au/voices-of-reason-speak)

*Notices continues*







## Weekly Worship



*Notices continues*

### **Preaching from the Heart:**

The UCA's Creative Ministries Network Congregation has a downloadable book of sermons from various writers, available to help resource your congregation with regards to the upcoming 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum. It's available here: [creative.unitingchurch.org.au](https://creative.unitingchurch.org.au)

### **Responding: Prayers for World & Community**

*Take a generous time of quiet for people to bring their prayers - you may choose to light taper candles in a bowl, or simply sit in the stillness.*

*On the International Day for Older Persons you may choose to invite an older person to pray this prayer from a free online Jesuit resource, on behalf of all the older people in your community:*

#### **Prayer for Aging**

All Gracious God,  
you have given me all I am and have,  
and now I give it back to you  
to stand under Your will alone.

In a special way  
I give You these later years of my life.  
I am one of those called by You into old age,  
a call not given to all,  
not given to Jesus,  
not given to most in our world today.  
I humbly ask You, grace me deeply  
in each aspect of the struggle.

As my physical eyesight weakens,  
may the eyes of my faith strengthen,  
that I may see You and Your love in everything.  
As my hearing fails, may the ears of my heart  
be more attentive  
to the whisper of Your gentle voice,  
As my legs weaken

and walking becomes more difficult,  
may I walk more truly in Your paths,  
knowing all the while  
that I am held in the embrace of your love.

As my mind becomes less alert  
and memory fades  
may I remain peaceful in You,  
aware that with You  
there is no need for thought or word.  
You ask simply that I be there, with you.

And should sickness overtake me  
and I be confined in bed,  
may I know myself as one with Your Son  
as he offers his life for the salvation of the world.

Finally, as my heart slows a little  
after the work of the years,  
may it expand in love for You and all people.  
May it rest secure and grateful  
in Your loving Heart  
until I am lost in You, completely and forever.  
Amen.

- Sr. Moya Hanlen

[xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-for-aging](https://xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-for-aging)

We pray together then, as 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 for ever. Amen.**





**Weekly Worship**



**Singing: Amongs us and before us ... TiS 259**

*OR: Amazing Grace, (how sweet the sound), TiS 129*



**Blessing**

**Spirit of life,  
you have called us together as one,  
sharing the common life,  
taking the common cup,  
breaking the common bread,**

**Send us out to live as your people  
in the commonwealth  
of your extravagant and abundant love,  
flowing freely from the source of all.**

And may the blessing of God,  
Source, Son and Spirit,  
rest on you this day and always,  
Amen.

**To honour World Habitat Day on October 2  
and St Francis Day coming up on October  
4 - you may want to play this as a blessing song:  
(please dance!)**

"All God's creatures got a place in the choir"  
performed by Celtic Thunder Heritage  
[youtube.com/watch?v=aqm-S9J1s\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqm-S9J1s_k)

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**2 October 2023**

**World  
Habitat  
Day** | **Resilient  
urban  
economies**

