



**Weekly Worship**



## Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

The season of Spring deepens,  
the air begins to warm.  
The light is changing,  
and blossoms speak  
of life and promise.

We tune into the beauty  
that surrounds us,  
just like the Psalmist  
many years before:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*

*(Ps 19:1)*

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: Let all creation dance, TiS 187

OR: Praise our God, the great creator, TiS 165  
OR: God who stretched the spangled heavens,  
TiS 163



## Prayer

Astonishing creator God,  
we are told that getting outside  
to breathe clean air  
and look to the hills  
in all their beauty  
is good for our mental health.

Why should that come as  
a surprise to us?  
For years our Scriptures have reminded:  
*The heavens tell of your glory!  
The firmament proclaims your handiwork!*

But when we are glued to our screens  
or stuck in heavy traffic;  
as we lose mobility  
or our powers of perception  
- so we are called  
to look,  
to perceive,  
to remember.

Forgive our stumbling,  
our groaning,  
our short memories.

You have blessed us with a  
creation that sustains our lives.  
You have journeyed with us  
when we were bereft or lost.  
You have been our God  
even when we have forgotten  
to be your people.

Lift us, remind us,  
strengthen and renew us  
as the heavens tell of your glory,  
and the firmament proclaims your handiwork.

Creator, redeemer, sustainer.  
We are your people,  
we seek your way. Amen.





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## Passing the peace

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

## Listening

Read: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20  
Psalm 19  
Matthew 21:33-46

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

## Reflecting

**Rev. Ian Brown**

our understanding.  
Rocks have no words, nor do cells have  
syllables,  
yet their message can be read anywhere.  
Even the fiery stars,  
racing at unimaginable speeds through  
space,  
yield their secrets to those willing to probe  
the limits of God's universe.  
And what do they find?  
An underlying harmony, a delicate  
equilibrium  
built on the value of every thing,  
living or inanimate, past, present, and future.  
There are no exceptions.  
No one is above the law of interdependence.  
Life dies and becomes new life;  
spirit and flesh are one.  
My fate is inextricably linked to yours,  
and our fate to the trees and insects.  
This is the beginning of wisdom.  
It is better than wealth, more valuable than  
possessions.

It's a delightful celebration of creation and  
reflecting on our place in it. Jim uses language  
of the current day, as the Psalmist did probably  
over two and a half thousand years earlier.

Reflecting on God's power and nature is a tall  
order, but there's a lot for us here. I love the  
opening lines of William Blake's 'Auguries of  
Innocence'

To see a World  
in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven  
in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the  
palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.

We can benefit from attending to nature. That's  
a theme often in the Psalms. The Psalmist  
speaks about nature and then expresses

*Reflecting continues*

## “Creation celebration - law and order”

A paraphrase from the Psalm to begin: it's from  
Jim Taylor, of the United Church of Canada.

Quarks and electrons, crystals and cells;  
stems and trunks and limbs and bodies-  
on the land, in the water, in the air-  
the elements of the universe wait to expand

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**Uniting Church in Australia**  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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**Sunday October 8, 2023**

*Reflecting continues*

confidence in the law of the Lord being perfect. Nature and law might seem like an odd pairing of subject matter, but it still has some currency.

From the Exodus reading that our Psalm is paired with, we have Moses on Mt Sinai. He gives the people God's law. But the right and wrong of laws have always been hotly contested among us mortals.

Just to remind us of some law debates in our community at the moment. There's the issue of a law concerning Indigenous rights, energy and environmental protection, trade laws, ... and on it goes.

My guess is that when these ten commandments were first published there could have been haggling about their content. Can you imagine the outcry now from sales-based industries if laws against coveting were proposed? But;

'The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart'

-says the Psalmist, he at least, was confident about God's law.

Rather than something to haggle over, the commandments are part of a rich conversation about life being nudged in a positive direction by God. Not a dry set of rules to debate or look for loopholes in, but a way to nurture wholeness.

The laws are given by God, not for us to use as moral weapons against others, but as a gift to direct and shape our own lives in God's ways and into wholeness. We have plenty of evidence that not all rules are wise, many are past their use by date. Biblical laws about what to do with one's slave or prohibiting the eating of

shellfish, wearing clothes of mixed fibres – we consign to the dustbin of irrelevance. Current laws that allow the rates of gambling we have, the American's insistence on bearing arms, - legalities where we might want to question their wisdom.

So, if the law of the Lord is perfect, the writer is pointing us to something broader, more underlying than this list of ten, or the laws we currently have. An 'underlying harmony' as the modern version of Psalm 19 put it.

If we think of creation and these laws, broadly as God graciously pointing the way to life for us, instead of pointing the finger of accusation at us, we might more easily see how Christ came to fulfil the law, not replace it.

Jesus is quoted saying about some laws, 'you have heard it said – 'an eye for an eye' for example, and then, 'but I say to you, love your enemies'. And these ways - laws that God points to, are characterised by simple things that you and I can do. Peacefulness and honesty in our dealing with others, honouring our elders, not taking or pining after what isn't ours, respecting our place in the created order, reflecting God's cherishing of this planet, these are means of happiness and wholeness of life.

As the Psalmist concludes then, 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.' May we, and all our world, learn more of how to live this way with revived souls, inspired by the beauty of the creation around us, wed by the immensity of space and encouraged to live with great care by the grace of God. Amen

*Jim Taylor: Woodlake Publishing, has given permission for this material to be reproduced for public worship.*





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**Sunday October 8, 2023**

**Singing: Touch the earth lightly,  
TiS 668**

*OR: God has spoken..., TiS 158  
OR: Be thou my vision, TiS 547*



**Offering**

God of harmony, connection and balance, we remember that we are connected to all you create and love; that we need and depend upon your web of creation.

Bless what we offer that it be part of restoring, recreating and blessing your vision for the world. Amen.

**Notices**

- October 10 World Mental Health Day.**
- October 11 International Day of the Girl Child.**
- October 13 International Day for Disaster Reduction.**
- October 14 Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum.**

**Responding: Prayers for  
World & Community**

We pray for places of conflict, violence and grief. We pray for places that feature often in our news but also the many places that otherwise miss our attention.

We pray for places nearer our reach - for our nation as we get close to voting in the voice referendum - that in all conversations and wonderings we may show love, grace and compassion as Christ has shown us. We pray for our local community - for those feeling the pinch of high rental costs or mortgage interest rates; for those on the edge of coping; for those living rough; for those who feel they have lost their voice. We pray for our church - for our place in the local community and within our nation; for the constancy of change and increasing pressures that come from being pushed to the edges where our voice is increasingly ignored...

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**



**Sunday October 8, 2023**

**Singing: God gives us a future,**

**TiS 687**

*OR: Now the green blade rises, TiS 382*

*OR: Forth in your name, TiS 571*



**Blessing**

Go to bless and be blessed.  
Take with you a vision for  
the interconnected  
and interdependent  
web of life that comes from God.  
Bless and be blessed as you  
bring a voice of love,  
grace and healing  
in the name of Christ,  
through the inspiration  
of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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