



Weekly Worship



Pentecost 26
Sunday November 26, 2023



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

**Know that the LORD is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people,
and the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

**For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.**

(Psalm 100 NRSV)

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: Here in this place new light is streaming (TIS 474)

OR: Bring many names (TIS 182)

OR: Halle, halle, hallelujah (TIS 720)

OR: Come all you people

(All together whatever 419 or As one Voice for Kids 30)



Prayer

God who feeds the hungry
and offers life-giving waters to those who thirst,
we offer thanks and praise for all
your gifts - for us and the whole of creation.

We hear from the prophet, Ezekiel,
that you search and seek
those who are scattered and lost.

Which leads us to wonder:
Are we lost needing to be found?
Do we join in as Jesus reminds
to feed those hungry, to offer drink,
welcome, clothing, compassion...

In our wondering lift us where we stumble,
for when we have not shown love to others,
we have stumbled in our love towards Jesus.

(silent reflection)

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

“As you did it to one of the least who belong to me, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

Restore us to your vision of love for the world, shepherd God, a vision of hands and feet caring and gathering all who are scattered or in need of care. Restore us and renew us in the way of Christ. Amen.

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Ephesians 1:15-23 &
Matthew 25:31-46

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

Reflecting

Rev. Jennie Gordon

Reign of Christ

The opening lines of the gospel reading from the book of Matthew lead us into fantastic images of the eschaton, the end time; “when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.” Judgement Day, as depicted in many movies, songs and writings, has a symphonic soundtrack, an unbearably brilliant light show, and is spectacular, grand and glorious. But here, in Jesus’ final teaching to his disciples before he is anointed and arrested, the conditions for judgement couldn’t be more humble or ordinary.



His eyes were shining, and he couldn’t wait to share the story. For most of the day he had sat at the local community health centre with a neighbour who was struggling with addiction. At the end of her capacity and coping, she had met him in the street and told him that she just wanted to live like everyone else, a normal life, but it seemed out of reach, so she planned to end it. Caregivers came and went, gentle and encouraging, and all the time he sat beside her, until the paramedics took her to a rehabilitation facility. She would not have walked in on her own, or stayed through the day, but he was able to be there beside her, and now she had a chance to live. His eyes were shining. “How great is God!”, he said. The joy in him was profound. Blessed are those who care for the least and the last and the lost.

Feed the hungry, give the thirsty some water, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those who are imprisoned. There is so much pain in the world, so much hunger and loneliness. How can we begin to respond? We are reminded in this text that ‘just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Just one, not everyone. One small act of care at a time, that’s our core business as followers of Jesus.

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminds them that the church is Christ’s body, ‘the fullness of him who fills all in all.’ As an organisation, there are necessary rules and regulations about how we conduct our life as the church, we need committees and meetings and rosters and such, but how much of our energy and time is spent on the core business of care? Are we joyful, lit up, blessed, to be part of this subversive, counter-cultural movement of divine love that looks out for the least and the lost and lifts them up into life?

Reflecting continues





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Reflecting continues

The writer of Matthew's gospel includes 'all the nations', not just the chosen people, but all people. The ones who are selected for blessing, included in the inheritance, have no idea that they have been engaged in the work of divine love, but they have. There are so many people and groups in our communities who are doing Spirit-work, so many wonderful expressions of care for the least and the last and the lost, that are not connected in any way to 'the church'. Sometimes I wonder if they are more joyful in that work because they are less encumbered.

Jesus reigns over a realm of loving-kindness, of simple acts towards those in need. How does our church reflect that realm? Where else can you see it around you? What does that look like in our ordinary days?

Singing: When I needed a neighbour TIS 629

OR: Lord hear my praying (TIS 689)

OR: All the sleepy should have a place to sleep (TIS 697)



Offering

Bless these offerings, shepherd God, that all who are hungry for you, thirsty for life, lonely, naked or sick may know the abundance of your love. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Notices

November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

November 29 is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

As we consider how the reign of Christ might shape our world, we pray for places where people remain hungry and thirsty, where people go without the basics of life, where hatred or violence tears community apart and people are shunned rather than welcomed.

This year as the world marks a day of solidarity with Palestinian people, we pray for Israelis and Palestinians alike, and pray that your love is known in those and all dark and difficult places.

We pray for our country of many nations. Rising costs and scarce housing impacts on many people. We can no longer believe myths of a lucky country when so many are finding themselves without a voice, or are hungry, thirsty and discarded by society. We pray that your love is known and that we will find tangible ways to show the reign of Christ in our towns and villages.

We pray for our church: our Synod that met a few days ago; and our Assembly as we are discerning faithful ways to shape the Uniting Church in a changing world.

Prayer continues

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We pray for congregations in every place as we seek to be faithful to the call of Christ upon us, and love all as Christ loves us.

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.**

Singing: The great love of God (TIS 164)

OR: This is a day of new beginnings (TIS 653)

Blessing

We are a pilgrim people,
sent to bear the light of Christ
along the paths we walk.

As you go, the blessing of our
shepherd God be upon you
may Christ reign in your hearts
and the Spirit bring life to all you do.

Go to bless and be blessed.
In the name of Christ. Amen

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