



First Sunday in Epiphany

Sunday January 07, 2024

Weekly Worship



Singing: All things bright and beautiful TiS 135

OR: She sits like a bird brooding on the waters TiS 418

OR: Morning has broken TiS 156

OR: Let all creation dance TiS 187



Prayer

Creating God, as your Spirit moves over the lands and waters of this place, we wonder at the glory of all you have made.

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small...
For these we offer you our wonder and praise.

For the glory of light and warmth;
for the twinkling majesty of the heavens,
for the wonderful reflected light of the moon we offer our thanks.

As we ponder the wonder of creation,
we are also aware we do not tread lightly
on your gift of the earth. As your Spirit moved to order
the chaos, we have done much to bring chaos that
undoes the order of things.

As much as we protest fire and droughts, flood and
pestilence, we have become the architects of our
own undoing.

Forgive our desire to be masters over all rather than
good stewards of all you have given us.

Forgive our addiction to easy wealth and easy
power and the way mining and deforestation has
devastated the waterways and lungs of our planet.

Introit: You are holy TiS 753

OR: Come o Holy Spirit TiS 711

If you do not usually begin with an introit, either of these could be fun and engaging, especially for young ones.

Call to Worship & Lighting the Candle

Then God said, "Let there be light";
and there was light. (*Genesis 1:3*)

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

Prayer continues

Weekly Worship. Season of Epiphany 2024. Presbytery of Gippsland, Fig Tree Worship Resource



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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Forgive us for the systems we create where enough has become never enough and we burden creation beyond her breaking point.

(time for silent reflection)

The psalmist (Ps 29) reminds us of the power of God's voice over the waters, and in the thunder. May this glorious voice realign us to the glory of God, may it reestablish us in right-relationship to the whole created order.

In our seeking restoration and renewal, we can confidently claim in the name of Jesus Christ, that we are forgiven, **thanks be to God. Amen.**

Passing the peace

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

Listening

Read: Genesis 1:1-5 &
Mark 1:4-11

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

Reflecting

Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

Let there be LIGHT.

A man wakes, remembers that there are still 3 days until his next payment comes into his account. He knows that there are 3 payments to come out of that, one of them rent, two of them owed to payday lenders. Since his account is currently overdrawn, he knows that there will also be a large bank fee. And there are 3 days with empty food cupboards to get through first. A bleak festive season.

Come Lord Jesus, Let there be LIGHT.

A baby cries in the night. A weary mum goes to the cot and soothes her baby, brushes his hair back

from his face. She looks across the room to check her other children. Daylight will be here before she knows it and the day will start with preparing school lunches and a phone call to other mums to ask for a lift. Her car is broken down again and she almost wishes there was another adult in her life to share the stresses. She hopes it will be a smooth start to the day with no tantrums, theirs or hers.

Come Lord Jesus, Let there be LIGHT.

An elderly neighbour calls from behind the fence. I stop to check she is OK. It has been a tough year for her, losing her husband and struggling with her own health battle. I have asked for her daughter's number because I am afraid one day I will realise she has not called out in a while. She has showed me her spare key to do a welfare check if I ever need to go in. I worry about her wellbeing because she is clearly struggling to get around. Is there more I need to do here?

Come Lord Jesus, Let there be LIGHT.

A young man hides his head under the pillow, he lives in a home funded by the NDIS and is afraid of the coming day. He likes the staff but only a few of them really know him and can tend adequately to his complex needs. The casual staff come and go with very little opportunity to get to know each other and they don't understand him. He is worried about the other residents who get very angry. The raised voices are filling his ears and he is just not going to get out of bed again today. "I just want it to feel like home", he mutters.

Come Lord Jesus, Let there be LIGHT.

There was darkness and a broody chaos and, in the wonderful creative process of bringing into being, there was the Spirit hovering. Wind of the Spirit blow through us this day and always, and Let us be LIGHT. It is this LIGHT into which we are baptised.

Pass around a bowl of water and sprinkle it on each other, paint the cross on each other's foreheads. Share this LIGHT. There is no darkness that can hold

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out against the faintest spark. Into your world and the lives of those around you. Bring LIGHT. LIGHT candles all around your church today. The LIGHT shines and no darkness can overcome it!

May the Lord give strength to his people!

May the Lord bless his people with Peace!

Singing: Lord your almighty word TIS 447

OR: I Danced In The Morning TIS 242

OR: Father in heaven TIS 465



Covenant Prayer: John Wesley

Many churches begin the calendar year by renewing a commitment to faith. One way to do that is by using the covenant prayer by John Wesley.

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you
or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticised for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things
to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven.

Amen.

Offering

God of the light that overcomes darkness, bless all that we offer. May these gifts belong to your glory and renewal. As we have known baptism of water, may your Spirit move among us and the created order to enliven us in your ways.

Responding: Prayers for World & Community

God of the Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Syria and all corners of our globe, we pray for places in need of light and life this year. We pray for places that know war, violence and destruction. We pray for places where people are hungry and without clean water to drink. We pray for those who live in fear, and those who struggle to imagine a better tomorrow.

God of our country of many nations and diverse peoples, we pray for First Nations people who have the lived experience of being on the wrong side of life-expectancy statistics. We pray for the many in communities who experience overcrowding and subsequent health issues. We pray for those who long to be home on country, but cannot do so for many reasons.

We pray for our nation that we may find ways to respect diverse views and engage in meaningful conversation towards a brighter future, that all, (and especially those without) find a voice that is life-giving and fulfilling.

We pray for our delicate web of life, mindful of extinctions and species that are endangered. We think of introduced flora and fauna that have become weeds and pests. We pray for the courage and will to reverse, repair and restore the web of creation.

We pray for our churches, as we journey together as followers of Jesus Christ for a new year. Help us to be light and life to all in your name.

Prayer continues

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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: On Jordan's bank **TiS 270**

OR: Touch the earth lightly TiS 668

OR: Guide me o thou great redeemer TiS 569

OR: Christ when for us you were baptised TiS 250

Blessing

We have been blessed by God's glorious light and been aware of the wild and Holy Spirit moving over creation.

We have begun a new year reminded of the baptism of Jesus, the Beloved.

We have committed ourselves to journey with him to the glory and service of our God.

Let's now go out, into a new year of expectation, hope and blessing; a year that will challenge and test us as well. Let's go out knowing that God sends us out and travels by our side.

The blessing of God almighty,
Creator
Redeemer
Sustainer,
be with us now and always. Amen.

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