

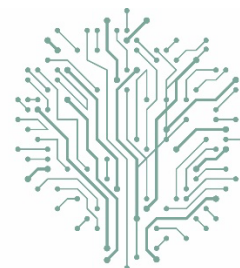
Closing Responses & Blessing

Whatever lies ahead this week, Christ goes before you, walks beside you, and never leaves you.

May the God of hope fill you with courage.
May Christ be your companion in every storm.
May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide you each day.

Amen.

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SALT BUSH

UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

Worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 14: 22-33
Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid.

Welcome

Welcome to worship. We are glad you are here.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves of God's grace, which serves as the illuminating light of the world.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of these lands and waters where we meet, the _____ Nation (of the _____ peoples).

We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and to all descendants of this/these nations who have cared for this place since creation.

We also honour all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples here today.

Stuart McMillan

Assembly Consultant Covenanting Assembly Resourcing Unit

Music for Reflection

Suggested song:

Do Not Fear

Relaxing Prayer Jazz

<https://open.spotify.com/album/3S3Djjiv5xqHQnu213JBYu>

Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Word around the Bush

Matthew 14: 22-33

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Jesus Walks on the Water

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

Questions for conversation

- What is something that stood out to you in the reading or message?
- Which of Jesus' three words speaks most deeply to you today: "Take heart," "It is I," or "Do not be afraid"? Why?
- What fear has been taking up too much space in your congregation/ faith community,

and how does Jesus' presence begin to change that fear?

Silence

Please take a moment to find a comfortable position and prepare yourself for five minutes of complete silence. Gently close your eyes and allow yourself to relax, while remaining fully present and aware of your surroundings.

Prayers of Confession and For Others

Gracious God,

We confess that we often let fear overcome us. We place our trust in our own strength instead of your presence. We become overwhelmed by the storms around us and forget that you are always near.

Forgive us.

We pray for all who are facing storms in their lives: for those who are grieving, anxious, unwell and isolated.

We pray for our families, our neighbours, and our communities. Strengthen those who care for others, encourage those who are weary, and guide those making difficult decisions.

We pray for your Church throughout the world.

Give us the courage to follow Jesus with faith, so that others may know your love through us.

Amen.