

## Our song to sing or to read: Gather Us In

Here in this place new light is streaming  
Now is the darkness vanished away  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings  
Brought here to you in the light of this day  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken. Gather us in, the blind and the lame.  
Call to us now and we shall awaken. We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery  
We are the old who yearn for your face  
We have been sung throughout all of history  
Called to be light to the whole human race  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty. Gather us in, the proud and the strong.  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly. Give us the courage to enter the song.

Not in the dark of buildings confining  
Not in some heaven light years away  
But here in this place the new light is shining  
Now is the kingdom, now is the day  
Gather us in and hold us forever. Gather us in and make us your own.  
Gather us in, all peoples together. Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

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## A Blessing

May the Spirit of God  
who is above all, in all and through all  
fill you with  
the knowledge of God's presence on Earth  
and the impulse of Christ within you.  
Amen



With thanks to Shirley Colless for preparing today's reflection



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## Call to worship

Even though we worship in isolation, let us remember that  
wherever we are, whoever we are, whatever we are, God is with us.  
So, let us pray.



God, we gather in your presence.  
Father, we long for more of you.  
Jesus, we place you at the centre.  
Holy Spirit, come and fill our time  
together.  
Help us to be fully present here  
to your word, to one another  
and to the world you love.  
Amen

## Preparation

For some years now, the Uniting Church has celebrated a season of  
creation, celebrating the name of the Creator, the fountain of life, the  
name of Christ, the pulse of life, and the name of the Spirit: the breath  
of all life.

So, be still and feel the presence of God  
the presence pulsing, pulsing through Earth.  
Be still and feel the pulse of God.  
Be still and hear the Spirit of God, the Spirit breathing  
breathing through Earth.  
Be still and hear the breath of God.  
Be still, behold the glory of God, the glory filling, filling this Earth.  
Be still, behold the face of God.

## Reading Matthew 20: 1-16 Paying a Fair Wage

### Reflection

It is very hard as humans, to accept that coming last is as important as coming first. And when we look at this story, our ideas about justice can say to us, the early-comers were not given a fair go.

Our concept of justice is often influenced by our own circumstances and by our opinions about what we and others deserve. We insist justice has to do with equality, but a lot of the time it's a word we toss around to keep people and things we don't like at bay.

Jesus has other ideas; he is eager to mess with our regular attitudes about what's right or fair.



Imagine God as the landlord – a landlord setting standards that in terms of normal, economic management seem absolutely ridiculous. No well-managed society can work successfully that way. This parable alerts us to the absolute fact that God's standards are based on

God's propensity to give, to care and to be gracious. To care for those who are both first and last. In the parable, the rules are set at the beginning and the end. They are not broken. They are fulfilled without question. Each worker is given life, respect, and justice.

This parable draws all its force and illustrative potential from the dynamics of economic life. Whom, then, should we think the landowner encounters when he's looking for workers late in the afternoon? What kind of people are the last to find jobs, added to the rosters only when there are no other labourers available? Nothing suggests that those characters in the parable are irresponsible or lazy. More likely, they are unwanted.

So then, if we turn back to worshipping God as Creator, the fountain of life; Christ, as the pulse of life; and the Spirit, as the breath of all life, how then do we as landlords of the world created for us do justice to that world?



### A Prayer

Creator God, free gifter of grace, compassion, and love.  
Be with us as we seek to free the score-keepers in our world and in our hearts.  
Restore the fallen in our world and in our hearts.  
Strengthen the merciful in our world and in our hearts.  
Heal the broken in our world and in our hearts.  
Uplift the lowly in our world and in our hearts.  
Bring down the tyrants in our world and in our hearts.  
Erase the lines of division in our world and in our hearts.  
Create a Christ-guided humanity in our world and in our hearts.  
And use us to make it so.  
In Jesus Name.  
Amen

*(adapted from John van de Laar, on Sacredise.com)*