

## Concluding Prayer.

Prayer of Hope

Lord,

When a darkened sky surrounds us  
and sets upon our lives  
and the greying mist still lingers  
and haunts the coming night,  
let us find hope.

When the cry of hurts and sorrows  
still echoes in our hearts  
and we cannot face the evening  
and tomorrow is too far  
let us find hope in the smallest, simplest ways:  
in the changing of the seasons  
In the birthing of the clay  
in the dew that cleanses morning  
in dusk that calms the day.

Let us find hope  
when children sleep contented  
far from fear and dread  
and peace is no illusion  
but spins a silver thread.

When you are waiting  
not far from heaven's edge  
Let us find hope-  
Faith, love and hope  
your gift  
to every human heart.

*Liam Lawton*



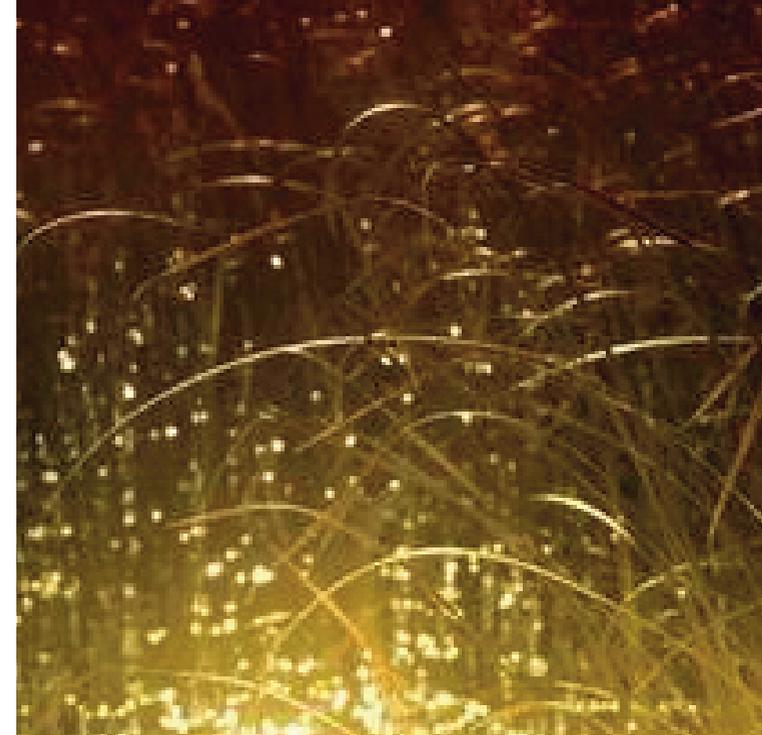
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**Catching Slivers of Light**  
Third Sunday of Lent 2019



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## 1. Welcome and opening prayer

O breath of God, transforming breath,  
rise up out of the earth.  
surround us with your liberating power.

Free us from the things that keep us  
tied only to what we know.  
Show us the things that stop us  
from being a blessing in the lives of others.

Take away our resentment, fear, apathy,  
indifference, greed.  
Empty us that there may be a  
beautiful space in us for new things  
to happen,  
Shower us with your creating love.

## 2. Gospel text: Luke 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time  
who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood  
Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.  
Jesus answered; “Do you think that these  
Galileans were worse sinners than all the other  
Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell  
you, No.

But unless you repent, you too will all perish.  
Or those eighteen who died when the tower in  
Siloam fell on them – do you think they were  
more guilty than all the others living in  
Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent  
you too will perish.”

Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree  
growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for  
fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the  
man who took care of the vineyard, “For three  
years now I have been coming to look for fruit

on this figtree and haven’t found any. Cut it  
down! Why should it use up the soil?”

“Sir,” the man replied, “leave it alone for one  
more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilise it. If  
it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it  
down.”

## 3. Quiet Moment

*People can read over the story again and pick out  
a word or short phrase that strikes them and say it  
out loud. When everyone has had a chance to  
speak, people can silently listen to what God is  
saying to them in their hearts linking it with  
themselves, their community, society/world. Then  
some sharing.*

*NB Not a time for argument.*

## 4. Reflection questions for Luke 13:1-9

1. When a bad situation is slow to change,  
how do you cope?
2. Recall a time when a choice you made  
brought you great freedom/joy.

## 5. Prayers

*Mentioning the people/situations we want to  
pray for....*

## 6. Background Notes to Luke 13: 1-9

The people asking questions of Jesus had their  
own agenda, to draw Jesus into confirming that  
what happened to the people killed was God’s  
judgement and punishment. He doesn’t answer  
their question. He counters them with the story  
of the disappointing figtree. The figtree has  
exhausted the soil, absorbed oxygen, used up  
lots of precious water yet had yielded nothing.  
The owner wants to destroy it. But the man  
caring for the figtree staves off the drastic  
response. Instead he recommends more  
patience, forbearance, trust in the capacity of  
the tree to rehabilitate itself. The story  
illustrates what the attitude of God towards us  
really is. Not judging, not threatening. Love  
finds a way.

The statement: ‘Unless you repent, you will all  
perish’ is not to be taken as a threat. We have  
the choice to make our lives fruitful and happy;  
or we can choose to continue to live in a way  
that is self-destructive.



Fig Tree