

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 13A

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Ordinary 13 - Year A
2nd July 2023



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here OR

435 STF – We come to you with no pretence

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

Readings: Genesis 22:1-14; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42

Hymn:

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you OR

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour were you there

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR

278 STF – O Love divine, what have you done!

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace, how sweet the sound OR

239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I

Blessing

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Call to worship

As we have gathered, Jesus is here.

As we have brought ourselves, the Spirit is amongst us.

As we have come to worship, God is in our midst.

Let us praise the Lord.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here OR

435 STF – We come to you with no pretence

Opening Prayers

Loving God, we come to worship, desperate to receive from you through this act of worship.

With our burdens and pains we come to present ourselves,
to simply touch your clothing and be changed.

Your Son made a way for those in pain and suffering,
may this way be made clear for all.

So God, let this be a transformational day like it was for the women who clung onto
your sons clothing!

In this time of worship,
open our eyes to beauty,
tune our ears to harmony.

The fragrance of your love
permeating every moment.

The touch of your hand,
the assurance of your presence
guiding all we do.

Together, we want to experience you with elation
the joy of your presence be with us here today.

So, come, worship the Lord
in the beauty of holiness.

We come with desperate hearts to receive and worship the living and inclusive God.

Amen.²

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Matthew Forsyth

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

What does 'home' look like to you? Turn to someone near you and have a chat about what words come to your mind as you think about the word home.

Do you feel welcome there? Is home a welcoming place to you?

It can be really unpleasant to feel unwelcome in a place or situation. To feel like you don't belong. To feel like others in the room are unhappy that you are there or judging you for how you look, how you are dressed, how under-prepared you were for this experience.

What sort of things make you feel welcome? In your home? At your church? Turn to someone else and share some of those things with someone near you.

After you've done that – share some of them with the rest of the congregation – just shout out a word or two!

What things can you do to extend a welcome to people who don't normally come to be a part of our church? How can you be a welcoming person, even when you don't meet people face-to-face (for example, on the phone, or when you talk to your friends)?

Jesus was always working to make sure we understand that *everyone* is welcome – no matter where they are from, what they have done, or what their background is. Jesus tests and challenges us to be more welcoming, more inclusive.

Is that something you can do this week?

How do you need to be more welcoming?³

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

Readings: Genesis 22:1-14; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42

Hymn:

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you OR

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour were you there

Reflections on the readings

Most of the systems and structures we operate in function on meritocracy – a sense that you 'earn' your place at the table, you 'get what you deserve' and you 'pay for

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

what you get'. And yet, at the heart of the gospel is this radical principle of grace. This idea that we can't earn God's love, nothing we can do is going to get us a place in God's kin-dom, and nothing we can do is going to lose us our place either.

That's what grace is – the opposite of meritocracy. Not 'you get what you deserve', but 'I love you no matter what'. It changes everything!

And yet, it is difficult for us to adapt our systems and structures to that principle, isn't it? Even though we are led by the Christian principle of grace, we operate in a world of merit and earning. So, we want to have a conversation about this now, as a church community. Let's break into groups of 3 or 4, and talk about these questions.

Before we do that, let's read again those few verses from Matthew:

Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

1. How is our church practicing the kind of welcome that Jesus describes in today's gospel reading?
2. What does it mean to welcome a prophet? How do we listen to the voices of people who can speak into the society and world we live in? How can we make space for these voices?
3. When do we make it difficult for people to have a space at the table? Who do we turn away?

Give people a few minutes to have this conversation and then invite them to feedback and share together. After the conversation, bring people back to the Roman's passage and share these closing thoughts.

Paul, writing in Romans in today's passage, does not beat around the bush in the way it talks of life and death: "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Perhaps the Message translation makes for easier reading: "Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master."

When we accept the call to join in with God's work we are walking paths of life – paths of eternal life.

In this sense, turning to God in the darkness is our way of choosing life. Of saying that death does not have the final word. Of declaring that we live in the reality that the God of life is at work, and that we want to be co-creators in this good news.

When we do so it transforms us and also our whole communities. When we demonstrate God's love to those around us we are inviting them to join us in the unending, abundant gifts that God has prepared for us all. We are, as the Romans passage puts it, inviting our neighbours to experience "real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus".

This day, even in darkness, let us pray that each of us may turn to God and experience God's good gift of life, so that paths that seem to lead only to death may become places in which the Kingdom of God might break through.

That is what grace looks like. Not that we earn our place, but that in the midst of all that is difficult, Kingdom love breaks out. As Paul Tillich writes about grace in *Shaking the Foundations*:

"Sometimes...a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!" If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed."

May that be so for you, and for each of us.⁴

Hymn:

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR

278 STF – O Love divine, what have you done!

Prayers of intercession

Oh Lord, we know that you hear us when we cry out to you.

We know that each of your children is precious to you, and loved beyond measure.

Oh Lord, hear the prayers of your people

Hear us and set us free

Lord, we know that you hear the cries that must be made in silence,

Those who live in fear of an abuser,

Those who are persecuted for their faith,

Those who are lonely or isolated.

Oh Lord, hear the prayers of your people

Hear us and set us free.

Lord, we know that you hear the cries of those living in the midst of conflict

Those trying to protect their children in war-torn nations

Those whose domestic situation is marred by constant tension and fear

Those who work or live in hostile environments.

Oh Lord, hear the prayers of your people

Hear us and set us free.

Lord, we know that you hear the cries of the hungry and thirsty,

Those families who have to make the choice between heating the house and cooking a hot meal.

Those experiencing the worst effects of the climate crisis, and facing drought or crop failure.

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Oh Lord, hear the prayers of your people
Hear us and set us free.

Lord, we know that you hear the cries of those who spend their days putting on a brave face,
Those who hide their pain from others,
Those who feel the need to be strong for someone else.

Help us to stand alongside all who cry out for you
Not to speak for them, or to assume we understand, but to remind them they are not alone
Help us to share a little of your love at the times when it's hard to feel your presence
In Jesus name, we pray,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Even as we realise that we have received so much, we are challenged to meet generosity with generosity. Stamp out the selfish streak in us, O God, that we might freely give of all that we have received in order that justice may be done, and the world may see your love.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace, how sweet the sound OR

239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I

Blessing

Jesus the Christ is restoring the whole of creation,
Holding all things together.
Today, as we go from this place, we choose to play our part in that restoration.
And may the peace of God go with you, every single step of the way.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Emma Dobson

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker