

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 32B

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

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Ordinary 32 - Year B
7th November 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

342 STF – All hail the power of Jesu’s name! OR

571 STF – As your family Lord, see us here

Opening Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

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

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

Readings: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

466 STF – Have faith in God, my heart OR

566 STF – Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee

What am I being called to?

Hymn:

515 STF – Unless the Lord builds the house we labour in vain OR

327 STF – Jesus is King and I will extol him

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

243 STF – A rich young man came seeking

Blessing

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Call to worship

God of our Sunday worship, we have gathered in your presence.
God of our weekday lives, we bring all that we are to you.
God of our mornings and evenings, we bring you the days to come, that you will use us to build your kingdom.
God of each movement, move amongst us now, by your Spirit.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

342 STF – All hail the power of Jesu's name! OR
571 STF – As your family Lord, see us here

Opening Prayers

Loving God, we open ourselves up to your presence today,
As we gather in your house,
This house,
This space in which you are present, and we are present.

In the midst of the busyness and uncertainty in our world, in our families, in our neighbourhoods and in our own lives, we mark out this space as sacred, this moment as one in which we will be open to the divine.

Come amongst us, Holy Spirit.
Nurture our flickering faith,
Breathe on our wilting hope,
Spark the flames of our love.

As we pray, we give thanks for all the ways in which we have been blessed by you,
For all that we have received, all that we have and are,
We give thanks for your gifts, your grace, to us.

And as we pray, we also take a moment to let go of all the shame and guilt that we carry around. We know that we have fallen short of your glory, and we come, knowing that you have already forgiven us. You have already set us free.

Help us to live freely, by your Spirit, O God.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

All Age Talk

In the book of Romans, in the Bible, we read the invitation to offer our lives to God, to help make the world a better, safer place. Let's hear that verse from The Message translation:

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

That is today's simple invitation. It sounds easy, but it is actually really hard. What do you have, what are some of your skills, that could be used to help make the world a better place? How can you help to show God's love to the people in your life – your family, your friends, people at your school or college or nursery or workplace, people in your community, and people around the world – even those you have never met.

Later in our service, we will hear about the woman who didn't have very much, but was willing to give it up in an offering to support others and the work of the temple. Because she gives what she has, Jesus takes a moment to call over his disciples and point out this act of generosity.

What about us? What about you? What can you do this week to spread kindness, spread love, spread hope?

Let us all commit to doing one good thing this week, to taking one part of our life and asking, 'what would God like me to do with this'. If all of us did that, we could really spread some more love in and around this community, and indeed the world.³

Hymn:

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

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

Readings: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Reflections on the reading

I love watching,
I could while away the hours,
Observing life;
The people in the market place,
Going about their daily business.

Shopping for the family,
Thinking about tonight's dinner.

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Looking for something special,
Harassed by the kids,
Talking to their friends,
Avoiding all the others.

Looking for a bargain,
Looking to save a few coppers.

Jesus went ...
And sat and watched.

It's even better watching with someone else
particularly a special friend.

To look at life, and try to understand,
What turns us on, what turns us round.

To share our thoughts with a friend
And to share the thoughts of friends.

So I wish I could have sat with Jesus,
and watched the commentary on life.

Would I have been impressed by the big givers,
and ignored the widow's mite?

Been in awe of the extravagant flowing robes,
and overlooked the widow, dressed in worn out clothes.

Would I have respectfully lowered my head to the religious big wigs,
then craned my neck to look past the poverty stricken widow?

Or longed to sit in the seats of honour,
and shunned the 'standing room only' rest?

Then Jesus' voice breaks in on the silent observation,
'Come and see what I see!
That widow just there, look! She has given the most.

The others? – yes, they gave a lot ... from their surplus;
But she has given all of her all.'

'Sorry, which widow, Jesus?
Somehow I seem to have missed her
I was lost in my own observations;
Just look at that man over there,
Dressed in his flowing robes ...'⁴

That reflection, by David Middleton, helps us to see the 'overlooked' nature of the widow in today's gospel story. That is there too in the Ruth story from the Old Testament – she is in an immigrant in a strange land, a refugee widow with very little means of her own. In the society at this time, it wasn't easy being a woman, or a widow, or a refugee, or a single woman without a father-figure. Ruth is all four. She could easily have been overlooked by society, and many people in her position and similar positions are still overlooked today.

And in the story we heard earlier in our service, she meets Boaz – her kinsman redeemer – the person who, by marrying her, gives her a way back into society and a way to fulfil her potential again.

⁴ Taken from Meditation – 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B by David Middleton

Perhaps, in that moment of redemption, of the outsider finding their place, of the unnoticed widow stepping into the light, we see echoes of the Jesus story too. And these stories can remind us that, however outcast we feel, however unworthy, however much we don't think we can earn our place in God's Kingdom...there is always a space for the outsider. Jesus, our very own kinsman redeemer, welcomes us back into the fold, into the family, into his kin-dom.

And then the challenge to us is, how does that affect how we treat others? How are we shaped by these stories, and by David Middleton's reflection, to ensure we get better at including other people in our visions of what the kin-dom looks like, what the church looks like, what the organisations and movements we are a part of look like. Wherever Jesus goes, and throughout the Jesus story, he is always making space for those who others would have considered outsiders. Can we do the same?

So today, let us make a little space for grace and give up a place for those whom others would disgrace.⁵

Hymn:

466 STF – Have faith in God, my heart OR

566 STF – Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee

What are you being called to?

Does anyone know where the expression of 'going the extra mile' comes from? It's Jesus. Matthew 5:41, 'whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two'. Going the extra mile is part of our calling as Christians. Why? Because it demonstrates the sacrificial love of Christ.

Perhaps we need to go the extra mile for vulnerable people just like Ruth. Perhaps we need to make a choice to say to the most vulnerable people in our society; "because Christ is devoted to you, so is the church, and so am I". In the style of Ruth we might wish to make a similar pledge to our neighbour:

"When you are hungry, I will feed you. Your welfare will be my welfare and your dignity my dignity. When you suffer, I will protest, when you are mistreated, I will refuse to be silent."

[You may wish to emphasise this pledge by repeating this, putting it on the screen or even putting it on little cards to take home.]

Today, let us pledge to commit ourselves to loving our neighbour. This might look different for all of us, it might mean committing time or money or resources or friendship.

Just as Ruth refused to let the vulnerable Naomi suffer alone, let us stand by the vulnerable in our society today.

Let us pray.

God who goes to the margins,

Whose heart is with the vulnerable and oppressed,

Move our own hearts to love our neighbours as ourselves.

God whose love is all-encompassing,

Whose grace abounds without end,

⁵ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Move our priorities from our own desires, to the needs of those around us,
So that in loving them, we might serve you.

Hymn:

515 STF – Unless the Lord builds the house we labour in vain OR

327 STF – Jesus is King and I will extol him

Prayers of intercession

This week, we have celebrated Guy Fawkes' Night or Bonfire Night – I wonder if you have been celebrating over the weekend? You will all know the famous rhyme that begins 'remember, remember the fifth of November' and we are going to take inspiration from that for our prayers of intercession.

Let us pray.

Loving God, you call us to remember – to remember you at the Lord's Supper, to remember your life here on earth, to remember your death and resurrection. We pause now, to remember you.

[Quiet]

Loving God, we remember your world – people far away and in very different circumstances to us, people without the luxury to meet in comfort on this Sunday. People without food, shelter, support or peace. We remember all those affected by Universal Credit across this country, and those suffering the effects of poverty around your world.

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Loving God, we remember those affected by conflict today – the wars that are still going on, and those carrying physical and mental scars from wars long finished. Amongst the pain, the uncertainty, the violence, we pray for your peace.

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Loving God, we remember those close to us, our friends and family, the people we cherish most. In a moment of quiet, we offer their needs, their worries, their concerns, to you.

[Quiet].

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Finally, loving God, we take a moment to pray for ourselves. Show us how to be those that respond to your offer of grace, help us to be good neighbours to those we find ourselves alongside, help us to show the self-sacrificial love of Ruth.

As we remember our act of worship today Lord, show us how to grow more in tune with you, and act with your love for your world.

In the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Spirit we pray.

Amen.⁶

⁶ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Annan-Hood

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

We thank you for your grace to us Lord God, for the many blessings we have received. In this moment, we commit ourselves to you again, to responding to grace with grace, to love with love. Help us to use our gifts to love our neighbours as ourselves,

In Jesus' name.

Amen.⁷

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

243 STF – A rich young man came seeking

Blessing

Guide us, great Jehovah, as we seek to respond to your love to us. Help us be a shining example of love in a world crying out in need. May we be Christ's hands and feet, by the power of your Spirit.

Amen.⁸

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁸ Additional prayers by Tim Baker