

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 34B

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

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Ordinary 34 - Year B
21st November 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

44 STF – Come on and celebrate OR

177 – Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

185 STF – Sing we the king who is coming to reign OR

180 STF – O Come, O Come Immanuel

Readings: 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

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

77 STF – Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King

What am I being called to?

Hymn:

333 STF – Majesty, worship his Majesty OR

318 STF – Christ, our King before creation

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove OR

673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Blessing

The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on www.theworshipcloud.com.

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Call to worship

May Christ our King reign over us,
his love inspire us,
his footsteps guide us,
his peace be with us.

May Christ our King reign over us,
now and always.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

44 STF – Come on and celebrate OR
177 – Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Opening Prayers

God of welcome, you invited Adam and Eve to share your garden, and you provided for them.

God of welcome, you invited Abram and Sarai to travel to a new land, and you guided them.

God of welcome, you invited Moses and Miriam to lead your people to freedom, and you equipped them.

God of welcome, you have invited us to worship you today and we respond with joy.

Jesus Christ, you were invited to a wedding and you transformed the ordinary into the special.

Jesus Christ, you were invited into the homes of sinners and you brought salvation and rejoicing.

Jesus Christ, you were invited into the homes of friends and you offered blessing and grace.

Jesus Christ, you came amongst us as a human child and we respond with joy.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the prophets of old who testified in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the early church who witnessed in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed into every generation of the church who sought to live in your power.

Holy Spirit, we welcome you today into our worship, our prayers, our hearts and our service.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Jill Baker

All Age Talk

Who are your role models? Who are the people you look up to? Either people you know, or perhaps famous people in the world/history?

[Take a few suggestions].

As Christians, we have the ultimate role model – in Jesus Christ. The point of the Jesus stories is to help us have someone we look up to, someone whose experiences we can be challenged and inspired by.

Do you have a favourite story about Jesus that inspires you?

[Take a few suggestions, and perhaps share an example of your own].

We all take slightly different parts of Jesus' story and life to heart, don't we? Perhaps depending on what we need to develop in our own lives and what we are already good at, or what we think as important.

Today, as we worship Christ our King, let's take inspiration from his stories once again. As we get closer to Christmas, we are going to hear those remarkable stories about Jesus' birth, but let's not forget about his life and ministry as we do so. Jesus is for life, not just for Christmas!

Are there interesting and helpful ways we could reflect the figure of Christ this Christmas period? Perhaps in your homes, or here at church? Let's spend a few minutes discussing our ideas: how can we be better followers of Christ during December this year?.

[Allow for discussion, in groups or together as a whole church if appropriate. If there are children among you, make sure their voices are heard and perhaps give space for children and adults to draw or write down their thoughts, as well as contribute them to the conversation in spoken words].³

Hymn:

185 STF – Sing we the king who is coming to reign OR

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Readings: 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

Hymn:

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

77 STF – Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King

³ All Age talk / discussion written by Tim Baker

Reflections on the reading

It's nearly here friends! Next week is Advent Sunday, the beginning of the season of waiting, when we prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas. He is coming!

This Sunday, the one before Advent, is called in some traditions 'Christ the King', and several of our hymns this morning have reflected the kingly nature of Christ's ministry here on earth, echoing Jesus' own reflections on what it means to be a king as he stands in Pilate's halls. This reading, coming just before we embark on the familiar Christmas story, also reminds us of the end of Jesus' ministry even as we are about to begin his story again.

This contrast helps us to sing 'O Come, O Come Immanuel', not just in a cosy, festive, Christmas-is-coming sort of way – but to recognise the miracle of Immanuel, God with us in all God's fullness. That miracle included and led to Jesus' betrayal by his own people and death on the cross, but also to the remarkable resurrection and recognition of Christ as King. This Sunday, we remember that the statement 'God with us', is a remarkable, life-changing truth, that takes us right to the heavenly throne in Revelation, where we sing 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty – who was, and is, and is to come.'

We are now going to hear a brief reflection on that Gospel reading, then a poetic take on Revelation 1:4-8.6.⁴

Gazing on the gospel

Gaze on the gaudy colours of the luxurious Imperial Palace, the wealth of velvet and silk, armour and flags, which decorate the towers and gates that keep the people out.

Gaze on the hierarchy of officials and servants, there to make visible the Emperor's power. This is all so different to the simple world Jesus knew best – villages and hillsides, wide skies and open water, where thoughts take root.

See Pilate, trying to control the proceedings. Pilate is racked with uncertainty yet must keep up the outward pretence of imperial strength and dominance. These are Pilate's first words to Jesus: 'Are you the King of the Jews?' They burst out of him, shocked as he is at the sight of this calm, quiet man who bore no resemblance to a dangerous terrorist who might threaten the Empire.

Gaze on these two men from such different cultures and with such different degrees of power. Which one displays the greatest authority?

Consider Jesus' reply, for he begins with a riddle – yes, I have a kingdom but it's not one you could imagine. Then he gets drawn into a conversation, for as always, and with everyone, he is willing to respect Pilate as a person, and give him a chance to understand. Jesus searches for a simple but bold explanation: that he is here to reveal 'the truth'. What a gigantic claim!

⁴ Introduction to reflections by Tim Baker

Consider how Pilate stands for all of us in this questioning. He is desperate to know what is the truth that keeps the world spinning, what is the truth that explains our existence, what is the truth that can set us free from the limitations of human consciousness and the tangle of power. If only he had continued his conversation a little longer with Jesus, he might have found the answer.

Consider why it is fitting that this is the last Gospel reading before Advent. After all the journeys Jesus has travelled, and the hardships he has endured, we have reached this momentous point in his story. Here Jesus confirms for us the mightiness of the work God is doing through him. And we, with Pilate, must acknowledge the truth: 'You are a king, then!'

Contemplate what kind of king Jesus was. King of truth, not of land. King of a community, not of troops. King with no parliament but a people. King without a crown, but full of wisdom. King without a realm but full of healing. A king whose only power was love.⁵

Revelation: what about the end?

Every good story has a beginning, a middle and an end.

But where do we start with God?

If God is the source of all being, how far back must we go to find the start of everything?

And where is the middle?

Is it in the emergence of the human race?

Or at the point when people began to worship?

Or in the days when Jesus showed God's presence among us?

Or in our present global age?

Then are we prepared to think about the end?

Often we cannot even face the thought of our own death, so how do we cope with the idea of the end of the world?

Isn't it reassuring to hear the announcement that God is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the whole alphabet, not just the story?

A never-ending, ever newly-beginning source of life and hope and promise.

An eternal narrative.

One that the whole world will know – one day.⁶

Hymn:

333 STF – Majesty, worship his Majesty

318 STF – Christ, our King before creation

⁵ Taken from Gazing on the Gospels by Judith Diamond

⁶ Taken from Full Service by Marjorie Dobson and Andrew Pratt
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Prayers of intercession

We live in a world where price is often confused with value; as we bring our prayers for others today, we hold in our minds those on whom little value is sometimes placed, knowing that God's love for each one is immense:

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for babies and small children; those who live near to us, those who live far away in lands torn apart by war or famine, those who are sick...

Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for young people; those scarred by the past, those who fear the future, those whose lives have been disrupted in recent months and who feel lost...

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for all who are sick in body; people in our families with cancer or degenerative diseases, people near and far affected by the Coronavirus and other illnesses...

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for all who struggle to hold onto good mental health; friends living with depression, anxiety, addiction... and for ourselves in these times of uncertainty and fear...

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for all who are dying and those who have been recently bereaved; we know that your love is stronger than death – surround them with that love...

Holy God, gentle and strong God, we pray today for any who feel lost, abandoned, neglected or unvalued, for whatever reason... we know that you came to seek and to save the lost and we pray that they may know your gentle and strong love surrounding them at this time.

Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

Amen.⁷

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Accept us, O God.

Accept all that we have to offer.

Accept us just as we are, and use us – and these gifts – to build your kingdom here on earth.

Amen.⁸

⁷ Prayers of intercession written by Jill Baker

⁸ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Hymn:

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove OR

673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Blessing

We will leave here, never the same again.

We will follow you, our God, into the week ahead.

We will go where you will lead us.

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us.

Amen.⁹

⁹ Additional prayers by Tim Baker