

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 14A

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

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Ordinary 14 - Year A
9th July 2023



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God OR

91 STF – The God of Abraham praise

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour OR

85 STF – Praise the Lord who reigns above and keeps his courts below

Readings: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Hymn:

443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love OR

714 STF – The God who sings a new world into being shows the way

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

607 STF – When love is found and hope comes home OR

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

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Call to worship

Jesus calls us, here to meet him,
And we come – from afar or near, connecting together in this act of worship.

We have been richly blessed, and we come to worship the living God, and to be filled again with your Holy Spirit.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God OR

91 STF – The God of Abraham praise

Opening Prayers

God of all beginnings,

In the first moments of creation, amongst big bangs, creative sparks and a divine word spoken, you were there.

At the very end, you will be there, our God.

When meaningfulness collapses, life ends, universes fade and creation stops creating, you will be there, our God.

We praise you, God of the beginnings and God of the endings.

God of the first breath, and God of the last.

God of the labour pains and God of the dying moments.

We praise you, God of all time, in this moment, this time.

Come amongst us, spirit of the living God.

For our prayer of confession, we are just going to pause for a moment to reflect on some of the ways in which we have not been our best selves, ways in which we have let ourselves down. If it helps you to write, or draw, as you reflect, then by all means do that. Let us just be still for a moment, and reflect on the places where we are not living up to our true potential.

[Hold quiet for a few minutes. You might like to play some quiet reflective music, and it may be helpful to have pen and paper on hand for people to use if they wish or would be more comfortable doing so].

Living God, we want to be better, we want to be our best, for you and for your world.

Move within us, transform us, change us.

Challenge and inspire us, by your Spirit, to fulfil your desires for our lives.

We are sorry, for all the times we've turned away from that desire, all the times we've let each other down.

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

And even as we say sorry, we know that you forgive and accept us, you accept us just as we are. We see in you the love we wish to reflect into the world – a love that always accepts, and always hopes for better.

May we be reservoirs of that love, overflowing out into a world in need.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

I have a question that I want you to answer for me today if you can. Riddle me this.

[As you are reading the list, pause between each item]. What do gloves, twix earrings, headlights, knitting needles cufflinks socks, shoes all have in common?

[Take some suggestions].

Well the answer is that they all come in pairs. A pair is defined as "a set of two things used together or regarded as a unit."

Jesus, the Son of God had his friends who were called his disciples who travelled, ate and learnt from him. These friends were very special to Jesus, but it was now time for them to go and do some of the amazing things that Jesus was able to do. However, Jesus didn't say go on your own, no, Jesus said go together – he invites us all into relationship...

One sock is fairly useless by itself. So too is one shoe. One of either would leave your foot vulnerable to being wet when it rains or cold in the winter. Only one creates a weakness. That's the same when it comes to what Jesus is encouraging the disciples to do when they go out.

Jesus knows that life might not always be easy when his friends go out and share the good news of Jesus. So Jesus is being loving and caring and making sure they go out in pairs so they can be strong together.

Who are your friends? Who would you take with you on a trip like the disciples?

Let's say a prayer and thank God that we have friendships and that we are encouraged to be with them when times are difficult and hard.

God, thank you for our friends. Thank you that we don't have to face the difficult moments alone. Help us to be kind and share the good news of your Son Jesus.

Amen.³

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

³ All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

Hymn:

60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour OR

85 STF – Praise the Lord who reigns above and keeps his courts below

Readings: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Hymn:

443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love OR

714 STF – The God who sings a new world into being shows the way

Reflections on the readings

From the very beginning of the Bible, from the creation myth that starts off the Genesis story, we have this rhythm of productivity and rest. Of sabbath. But, so often, we get distracted from this rhythm, drawn away, distracted.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus invites us to 'come to him all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. Is that you today? This passage comes just after Jesus is teaching the crowd about the important and prophetic role that John played as the messenger coming before Jesus.

In this passage he scolds the generation, comparing them to brattish children wanting their own way. He highlights the differences in the ways John and Jesus have lived out their faith, their calling, their role. John fasting from food and drink and living a very simple life mostly away from large cities and towns, Jesus on the other hand was always eating and drinking with so called sinners. Both were dealt with harshly – one called a demon and one a glutton and a drunk.

Both of these men were working tirelessly for the Kingdom but the way their roles looked were very different. I find this encouraging as the way I live my life may look very different to how you live yours but both are valued and important. Both have the potential to bring great goodness into the world and build the kingdom of God.

But, the 'tirelessness' is a challenge to us here. Is 'working tirelessly for the kingdom' really what we want to model? How do we practice the principles of Genesis and have a sabbath tradition?

[Spend a few moments reflecting on this. Then turn to someone sitting near to you and share your answers.]

But, of course we must not forget the other side of Jesus' message where he is calling out those who have spoken harshly of himself and John, he is highlighting the judgements that we all pour out on others unfairly and thoughtlessly.

Jesus says that his Father has hidden things from the wise and revealed them to little children. A second reference to children – this time far more favourable. Jesus seems to be suggesting that while we should not be like children constantly wanting their own way we have much to learn from them in other ways. Children are honest and open when dealing with new people and new situations. Their immediate reaction is not dismissal of others' behaviour as strange or sinful but an intrigue and a desire for

understanding. They have not been hardened by inherited prejudice or by previous situations that have left them hurt and angry. As adults we all carry these things with us but the challenge is to be able to see past them and remember we are ultimately called to love.

What prejudice have you carried and what judgements have you made of another person recently?

[Spend a few moments reflecting on this. Then turn to someone sitting near to you and share your answers.]

Jesus says his yoke is easy and his burden is light, a beautiful and often quoted section of Matthew 11. Looking at it in this context perhaps Jesus is saying that we should worry less about the way the world views our lives and our achievements but focus on whether they are Kingdom-shaped. Also, it is an easier yoke to carry to be open and honest than twisted with prejudice and judgements of others. Viewing ourselves and others through a Christ-like lens of love may not appear simple but if we do it is easy and light.

How do you 'view yourself'? Are you able to see Christ's love for you?

[Spend a few moments reflecting on this. Then turn to someone sitting near to you and share your answers.]

Let us pray.

Lord, we bring ourselves today. Just as we are.

Help us to see your love, shining through us.

Help us to have a child-like eagerness to know you more, and share your love in the world.

May we live as your children: gentle, and lowly in heart.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

607 STF – When love is found and hope comes home OR

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray,

God of our hearts ,

Come into our feelings, our emotions, teaching us the art of love.

Show us how to embrace your world and your people, with arms of grace.

Guide us in each moment, that the very impulses of our bodies might be tuned to you.

God of love, enter our hearts,

And tune your world to love.

God of our minds,

Come into our thoughts, our intellects, and help us to focus the work of our brains on you.

Show us how to be agents of love in the workplace, at school, in our reading, our writing, our thinking.

⁴ Reflection written by Anna Bland

Guide us to come to know you more, through the power you have given us in our minds.

God of love, enter our hearts,
And tune your world to love.

God of our families,
Come into the places we call home, that we might show and discover something about you in our houses, at our mealtimes, in our beds.
Show us how to love each other, and reveal your nature of love to us, through our relationships with those closest to us – our family and closest friends.
Guide us in the difficulties and struggles that come with our family lives, and the suffering of those closest to us – bring them your love.

God of love, enter our hearts,
And tune your world to love.

God of the Church,
Come into the midst of your people, come to bring healing, to bring unity, to build a movement that can shape the world for good.
Show us how to love each other, to heal broken rifts within churches and between denominations. How to reach out into the world around us, bringing peace, not division, bringing love, and not conflict.
Guide us in our decision making and our worship, our committees and young church, our church councils and prayer meetings, bring the church closer to your design, your hopes for humanity.
We pray for the circuit, for all those looking for a fresh start. Lord, bring your newness, your refreshing and re-charging love. We pray for this church, as your people here begin afresh their journey with you.

God of love, enter our hearts,
And tune your world to love.

God of this country,
Come into broken Britain, bruised Britain, bringing healing and comfort.
Show your love to those suffering in this country – the elderly, those suffering with mental illness, those without homes, those carrying a disease, those struggling to make ends meet, and those suffering from damaged relationships.

God of love, enter our hearts,
And tune your world to love.

God of the world
Come into your suffering, unequal planet, bringing peace and harmony where there is war and discord.

God of love, enter our hearts,
And tune your world to love.

God of our hearts - help us to be agents of love across your world, in the way we live our lives, in the people we meet and the situations we hold influence.

Amen.⁵

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by the Joint Public Issues Team

We will now take up the offering.

Gracious God, we give you praise for your goodness to us. Take these gifts, and use them in the ongoing transformation of the world, in the name of all that is good, and right, and just and loving.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

Go and enter into the flow of love that is at work in the universe.

Go and discover that God is out there, moving, transforming, touching lives and all creation.

Go and encounter the Spirit of God.

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker