

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 24C

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

Produced by **twelvebaskets**. Subscription available from **theworshipcloud.com**

**Ordinary 24 - Year C**  
11th September 2022



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR**

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

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk (including Luke 15:1-10)

**Hymn:**

**494 STF – Come, thou fount of every blessing OR**

**323 STF – I will sing the wondrous story**

Readings: Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; 1 Timothy 1:12-17

**Hymn:**

**462 STF – Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world OR**

**55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell OR**

**470 STF – Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity OR**

**277 STF – My song is love unknown**

Blessing

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**Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on [www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).**

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## Call to worship

Let us gather,  
Let us be still,  
Let us hold this space of quiet and know that you are here, O God.  
*[Stillness]*

Open our hearts and our minds, as we worship you, Lord Jesus.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR  
443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love

## Opening Prayers

Loving God

Open our ears, so we may hear your word anew today  
Open our hearts, so we may be moved and inspired by your Spirit.

Speak your word to us  
Challenge us  
Strengthen us.

*Let us hold a moment of quiet and simply listen.*

Walk alongside us, as we strive to be your people of light and love  
In Jesus' name

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

### All Age Talk

*(Before this talk: Hide one of your shoes, somewhere you wouldn't mind a child going!)*

Has anyone here ever owned something special to them? Like a stuffed toy? Or some jewellery? Or something similar?

***(Encourage members of the congregation to share what that something was and ask them why it was special to them, and what would happen if they lost it!)***

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<sup>1</sup> Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Emma Dobson

*(After a few responses)*

These are all incredibly special things to you all! And we all agree that if we lost it we'd be upset and try to find it again, wouldn't we! Well, my special things are my shoes! They get me from place to place, keep my feet dry and are my special shoes I wear for Sundays! In fact, I wore those shoes here today!

***(Look down and realize that one of the shoes is missing!)***

***(Become appropriately upset at missing your shoe.)*** Oh, I love that shoe! I don't really feel complete now it's missing! Can anyone help me find my shoe? Please! It's ***(describe the shoe)!*** I had it on when I got here so it must be around here!  
***(Have people start looking around for the shoe.)***

***(When the shoe is found: Become overjoyed! Celebrate that you found your lost shoe!)***

Oh my friends! Thank you for helping me find my shoe! I can't say enough how happy I am to have found it again!

It reminds me of something Jesus once said to a crowd of his friends. It went something like:

***(Read Luke 15: 1-10 in the version that is comfortable to you)***

In both these Parables, Jesus was showing that when something is lost and found again, we must celebrate when it is found! Just like I did when I found my shoe! And we can celebrate that today just as that woman did in Jesus' story!

What if we celebrated like that every time we lost something? Or even if we found something for the first time! Imagine what the celebration would be if someone new came to church each week? Or if someone was baptized, do we not have a party? *(If there has been a recent baptism then refer to that.)*

Let us think about that as we pray:

"Dear God, help us to look after the things that are special, to look for them when they are lost, and to celebrate joyfully when they are found again.

Amen".<sup>3</sup>

**Hymn:**

494 STF – Come, thou fount of every blessing OR

323 STF – I will sing the wondrous story

**Readings:** Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; 1 Timothy 1:12-17

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

## **Hymn:**

462 STF – Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world OR

55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise

## **Reflections on the reading**

How are you?

No, I mean it – how, actually are you?

I insist, I want to know how you are actually, really doing...

This doesn't happen very often, does it? We regularly greet each other with a 'how are you' or 'how are you doing' or perhaps a 'what is new with you'...but do we really want to hear the full answer? Do we really have time, the emotional energy, and the pastoral skill to listen to each other, to hold each other in the fullness of our human experience.

Hopefully, you have some friends or family members – perhaps some people who are here at church with you today – who would really ask, who would really slow down and try to extract a full idea of all the things that are worrying you, the shame you are carrying, the pain you feel. Yes – of course, the stories of joy too, and we need to be better at that too: celebrating each other, giving thanks for the moments of success, the times of laughter, the achievements and good things.

But, in light of today's Bible readings, it seems we are being invited to think about how we treat each other in times of difficulty and pain.

The sheep is lost, and the shepherd has gone out looking.

The people of Israel are lost, and God is despairing through that great 'prophet of doom', Jeremiah.

Timothy knows himself to be a sinner, lost and fallen, but God is working through him.

And there we have it – the Christian narrative that might just help us to be a people who can hold meaningful conversations, who can coach and nurture and love our friends in the way that Jesus did, and still does today. This is the best evangelism we have – the richness of our human relationships and the conversations we can have with our friends, our contacts, even with strangers. If we can model love, depth, grace, hope and healing – we can show people a glimpse of Jesus the Christ. It doesn't mean we have to be overly intense, or 'hard work', or a natural conversationalist – it just means we have to care, and show people we care.

The sheep is lost, but the shepherd has gone out looking.

The people are lost, but God cares and wants to bring them home.

The early church leader is broken too, but God is using him all the same.

This is what grace looks like, can we model it?

Where have you seen a story of grace at work in your life?

Why not take a moment to listen to these two stories, and then reflect on whether you have an experience like this.

Both these stories come from the world of men's sport – though I am hoping that these will connect with you and you will have your own experiences or stories you know. Firstly, a story from Lance Armstrong, the cyclist, who after years of dominating the sport, was outed as a drugs cheat, and a drugs cheat who had repeatedly lied and found ways to hide his cheating. Not the typical 'hero' in sermon illustration, and certainly a fallen and broken human being – but then, so is Timothy, in his own words in the New Testament, so who are we to judge?

Once, not long after all the news about his cheating broke, he was walking past a bar, where lots of people were sitting outside, to meet a taxi driver who was taking him home. Someone recognised that this was Lance Armstrong walking past, and started shouting abuse at him. Some pretty horrible and personal stuff about his own personal life – all of which was being dragged through the papers, as always happens when a superstar has their 'fall'. And then someone else joined in, and another person. Before long, this whole terrace of people who – a few moments earlier had been enjoying a pint in the sun or a family meal – were shouting abuse at this man they had never met. Armstrong didn't know what to do, but he got in his taxi and drove away.

What he did next shows something of the power of grace. He asked the taxi driver the name of the bar, he rang them up, and he simply told the restaurant that he would pay the bill for everyone seated outside that evening. Everyone. Every drink, every meal, every snack, all evening. And, he had no interest in the waiter telling people who had paid: 'just say it's been paid for'.

Now, maybe we can't all afford to do this, but Lance Armstrong could, and did. In the face of violence and abuse, in the face of recognising his own mistakes and the things he has done wrong, he acted out of generosity. Can we do the same?

And secondly, the story of Ben Stokes. Perhaps you know this one too. Stokes is now the England Men's Test Cricket Captain, and at the time of writing has led the team to four remarkable wins in a row, after a very barren couple of years for the English Test Team. But Stokes has had his own struggles, and has talked openly in recent months about how he hopes he will be able to bring the wisdom of having made mistakes and experienced grace and forgiveness to his leadership role.

A few years ago, Stokes served a ban from English Cricket – and almost did jail time – for hitting someone outside a night club in the early hours. He got himself involved in a conversation that he didn't need to be in and – in using his physical presence to intimidate, made a mistake that could have cost him even more than it did. As it was, there was a time when people thought it might have cost him his career, and certainly any shot at leadership. Stokes returned wiser, and more careful, and has also had time away from the sport since to focus on his mental health, to grief the loss of his dad, and to continue to grow as a man as well as an athlete.

The energy and the joy he brings to his new role is exciting, inspiring, and transformative. But he's only there because he knows something of grace. And that grace has shaped him, is shaping him, and the grace flows out of him to others.

At the heart of all these stories – the story of the sheep, the story of the people of Israel, the story of Timothy, and the stories we've just heard from Lance Armstrong

and Ben Stokes – is grace. Is the notion that we are not defined by how lost we are, but how loved we are, and how much we can demonstrate that love to others.

Is that an experience you have noticed in your own story, or the story of someone close to you?

Are those experiences, those stories, things you could share with others?

However you feel about the word 'evangelism', however you experience that as a vital part of your own discipleship, can I urge you to share one of those stories with someone you know this week. We have good news to share, and God's grace flows out of us into the world, making other people's lives richer, as well as connecting them to the great Spirit of love that flows through all things.

So, that's the invitation today. Tell a story of grace. There is some research into parenting that suggests that the most important factor in the mental wellbeing of children is whether or not the parent-figures in their lives are able to 'tell their story through the lens of grace'. To communicate how they have failed, how things have not always gone to plan, how bad things happen in life, but how – despite that experience – good things have emerged. We are not defined by our mistakes, by our failures, or the bits that 'didn't work out'. We are defined by love, not by how lost we are.

So go out into the world, and tell your story through the lens of grace. Go on, I dare you...<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell OR

470 STF – Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided

### **Prayers of intercession**

For our intercessions, we will hold three short periods of quiet, in which each of us is invited to bring our own prayers to God.

Firstly, we pray for those close to home, calling to mind the name or the face of somebody in our own family, amongst our church congregation or a close friend. In the quiet, we hold them and their situation up to God.

*[Silence]*

Living God, you know our hearts and our hurts. We commit them to you now, and invite you to come close to those we have prayed for, bringing them your healing, your comfort, your hope.

Secondly, we pray for situations further afield – taking a moment to pray for something we have heard in the news that troubles us, or for someone we have never met but whose story has affected us. In the quiet, we hold these people and situations up to God.

*[Silence]*

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Tim Baker

Living God, you know the pains of your world. It can feel like a dark world when we switch on the news, or read our newspapers. In the darkness, bring your light. In the conflict, bring your peace. In the brokenness, bring your healing.

*[Silence]*

Finally, we spend a moment praying for the church: perhaps this church congregation, the wider Christian church, or all people of faith. In the quiet, we pray for all who are gathering in worship today.

*[Silence]*

Living God, help us – your people – to be your hands and feet in the world. May we find ways to be an answer to prayer, to bring transformation in our own lives, communities and our world.

We pray these, and all our prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

## **We will now take up the offering.**

### **Blessing the offering**

Into your hands, we place these gifts, and all our gifts. We recognise that all that we have is a gift and we seek ways to pass those blessings along to others. Show us how to be a gift-giving people, in Jesus' name.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity OR

277 STF – My song is love unknown

### **Blessing**

Loving God, you walk with us in the hills and the valleys of life,  
You rescue us when we go astray,  
You welcome us back when we wander from you.  
God who is shepherd, guide us on straight paths this week.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker