

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 30C

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

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

Ordinary 30 - Year C
23rd October 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

34 STF – O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness OR

123 STF – Come, you thankful people, come

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above OR

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me

Readings: Joel 2:23-32; Psalm 65; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

Hymn:

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder! OR

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

746 STF – For all the saints who showed your love OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

370 STF – Breathe on me breath of God OR

487 STF – You shall go out with joy

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.

Copyright for content is retained by the original author / contributor.

www.theworshipcloud.com

Call to worship

God is here, as we, God's people, gather to praise, to pray and to reflect.
Move amongst us, by your Spirit, that we might see your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

34 STF – O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness OR

123 STF – Come, you thankful people, come

Opening Prayers

Loving Father, we come together to worship you in spirit and in truth,
We know that you are here with us to listen, to love and to accept us just the way we are.

We ask for forgiveness and mercy as we prepare for this sacred act of worship.
We come just the way we are – ready for your touch.

Loving Father, we come with our cheerful singing,
To offer our sincere prayers, read your word and share fellowship.
We come with the longing to hear your words, help us to recognise your voice and respond to you,
We come just the way we are – ready to hear from you.

Loving Father, we thank you for the opportunity to serve you.
We thank you for the privilege to worship you in this safe space.
We thank you for the blessings of this new day that you have given unto us
We come just the way we are – ready to receive from you.

Omnipresent God, come now and receive all that we offer in this worship
We ask these prayers in and through the name of Jesus.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

If possible get two groups of five or six people to the front - a diverse mix of people would be great. Let them know upfront what they are going to do.

It's a competition to get themselves in order.

Ask: Which group can do it the quickest?

Do three different orders. You could use a timer here! Feel free to add in your own funny ones but be careful not to expose people to ridicule.

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Lansford Penn-Timothy

1. Birth Month order.
2. Shoe size order.
3. Shirt/Top colour order (this one should cause a little confusion!)

What was wrong with that last one?

(If necessary, prompt people for possible answers - it's not like a measurement, there isn't a more and less)

Human beings love to be put in order – who is the tallest, who has the best grades, who has the most money, or who gives the most to charity or who has the most likes and it can be really addictive and not do us any good.

There is nothing wrong in being good at things and doing good things, but it's also really good if we don't start thinking, I am taller than so and so and that means I'm better than them or I have more likes than so and so and that means I'm better than them or I have an electric car so that means I'm better than them. We start comparing ourselves to others and forget to love and cherish the people that we are for who we are and the wonderful way that God has made us. Whoever we are, however we look, whatever talents we have or whatever good things we do or not, God loves and cherishes each one of us the same.³

Hymn:

117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above OR
367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me

Readings: Joel 2:23-32; Psalm 65; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

Hymn:

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder! OR
504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Reflections on the reading

'Two men went up to the temple to pray...it sounds like the beginning of a joke, so what is the punchline?

The audience of Jesus here is made very explicit. It's more specific than the Pharisees who appear regularly within Luke's gospel, often contrasted to tax collectors or other sinners (Luke 5:30, 7:30, 7:36-50, 15:1-2). Here the audience is people who trusted in their own righteousness and regarded others with contempt.

Is this negative focus on the Pharisees by Luke fair? Is it a caricature? Is there anything problematic here? Is Luke above any criticism? These are valid questions to ask but perhaps it is worth noting that the whole view of Luke is nuanced, such

³ All Age Talk written by Andy Dye

that in Luke 13:31, some Pharisees come to him seemingly to protect Jesus from harm. We must always be careful of vilifying or venerating any named group of people be it a political party, a brexit voter or those travelling on boats.

This parable is in the context of the teaching on prayer, the positive examples of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8) and the core teaching of Jesus and the Lord's prayer (Luke 11). This parable is also in the context of the teaching of the kingdom of God which is pervasive throughout Luke's writing. Just preceding the passage on prayer in Luke 18 is the apocalyptic language of the sudden way in which the kingdom comes, upsetting the status quo (Luke 17:20-37). We are left with a sense of the urgency of responding to the message of Jesus and we see just that one chapter later when the figure of the tax collector in the parable seems to be brought to life. It is the tax collector Zacchaeus who responds to Jesus with a radical act of reparation (Luke 19:1-10).

As we meet the Pharisee in the parable he stands by himself. Splendid isolation. He is confident by himself, publicly able to speak out a prayer. Both prayers of the Pharisee and tax collector start with the same word, God, yet this prayer of the Pharisee in the parable is not to God, it is specifically for the hearing of others, and it is to the idol of his own righteousness. He separates himself from the community, he is clearly better than those around and he wants those around to know it.

As we meet the tax collector he stands *far off*, a term which echoes the term used in the parable of the two brothers (Luke 15:11-32). In that parable as the young brother returns to his father, after recklessly squandering his inheritance it says in vs20b 'But while he was still *far off*, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.' (Italics my own). Is Luke signposting this to us that this is God's response in the face of the tax collector's outpouring of honesty and repentance? Here is a picture of a God who is actively moving toward us in love and compassion. A creator actively loving all creation. It is the honest, humility and God focus of the tax collector that enables him to connect with God and be part of the wider community as we learn he returns home justified before God.

What is striking about the Pharisees' position is that it is one that leaves him nowhere to go. He is at the pinnacle and there is no way to partake in the hope of the coming Kingdom. In this place of self assured righteousness how could his ears be open to the Jesus manifesto that frames the book of Luke (4:18-19), when Jesus proclaims good news, release, healing and freedom, political, social, environmental, personal, physical, spiritual. Encompassing the whole of human existence and extending to creation.

How can the Pharisee hear the proclamation of the year of the Lord's favour above the sound of his own proclamation of self righteousness?

He can't. That is the hopelessness of his position.

Yet, it is the tax collector who can hope for a dynamic journey of faith.

In the words of the reading from Joel, if you don't recognise the destruction of the locusts how can you begin to take part in the satisfaction of restoration, reparation and the closeness of God?

How do we respond to the passage today?

There is a warning for us about our own self righteousness and regarding others with contempt. We live in a time of climate crisis, war, flood, drought and pandemic. For many it is as if that apocalyptic language used for the coming of the kingdom (Luke 17:20-37) or the destruction described in Joel 2, has come to fruition. In the midst of that we seek answers, individual and collective. Some choose personal actions, changing the food we eat or choosing the things we buy carefully. Others choose to join political movements or advocate for change. Still others choose more radical direct action to stop traffic, disrupt weapons manufacture or look after a refugee in their own home. These wonderful ethical actions that bring about a new world can too easily lead those with agency and power to do those things by performing ethics for social media or pressurising others without the same agency or power into guilt and shame. This isn't about false humility about the things we do or are good at, but it is a recognition that we are encouraged to use the God given resources that we do have to love our neighbour not berate them, to lift up our community not build ourselves into gated isolation. Faith is not performed for social media likes or to gain in reputation. Down that route is hopelessness.

There is also the reminder to us that God meets us in our brokenness, in our repentance from our collusion with oppression, in our honesty about the things we get wrong. God's grace is for each and everyone. Jesus shows us the way through death and resurrection. Destruction to Life. No one is left out. In a place of grief, brokenness and repentance, be that for the environmental crisis, for our divided communities or in our personal life, we can find hope in God. That is the hope of God's love that is forever drawing toward us in Christ. That is the hope of the power of God that is always seeking to repair and build. That is the hope of God that we can be part of a praying community of change following Jesus, that looks forward to the year of the Lord's favour by working towards it in the here and now. Amen.

Here are two questions for us to consider, in small groups and in the week ahead.

1. Buying ethically sourced food or goods is often more expensive. How can we encourage each other to this social good in a way that includes everyone, not just those who can afford it?
2. Where are the signs of humility and hope around you?⁴

Hymn:

746 STF – For all the saints who showed your love OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Prayers of intercession

Ever-present God, help us to be thankful for all that you have given us, especially during difficult times. When we enjoy times of great happiness, celebrate our accomplishments and achievements, Lord may we gratefully give you thanks and praise.

⁴ Reflection written by Andy Dye

Help us to remember that in the difficult and painful times in our lives, you are there with us.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to us we pray.

[Pause]

Ever-present God, be with us, throughout the race, and the struggles along the way. You promised to complete the good work you have begun in us. For our world we pray;

Wherever good works have begun to help the poor in our world, to help the sick, to help the needy, we pray that you will help to complete those good works.

Where good work has begun to tackle climate change, we pray that you will help to complete that work.

Lord where good work has begun to bring peace where there is war, love where there is hatred, provision where there is hunger and starvation, we pray that you will help to complete those good works.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the world we pray
Lord for the church we pray.

[Pause]

We pray that you will help the church to remain true to you, true to your gospel and true to ourselves. Unite your church in love, mission and in the desire to fight the good fight of faith. Give us the grace and courage to speak up against injustice, hatred, bigotry, racism, discrimination and all forms of bullying and abuse. May the church continue to be the salt of the earth and the voice of the voiceless.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the Church we pray.

[Pause]

Father we pray for our friends, family, loved ones and we bring to you the names recorded in our prayer book...*[insert as appropriate]*

We thank you for the gift of life, for your provision, for shelter, food, and every blessing. For the sick, we pray for your healing, for the lonely we pray for your peace and presence. For the bereaved, we pray for comfort, for the lost we pray for salvation.

For young families, we pray for your guidance, for ourselves we pray and present our individual needs to you in this moment of silence

[Quiet]

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to us we pray

Amen.⁵

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Lansford Penn-Timothy

We will now take up the offering.

God of all grace,

We know that all we have is gift from you.

Use these gifts, and all the gifts, skills and resources gathered in this space to build your Kingdom here on earth - a Kingdom of justice and joy.

Amen

Hymn:

370 STF – Breathe on me breath of God OR

487 STF – You shall go out with joy

Blessing

Lord of all hopefulness,

Lord of all joy,

Lord of all we have and are,

Inspire us by your Spirit to be a part of your mission.

Amen.⁶

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker