

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 19A

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

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Ordinary 19 - Year A
13th August 2023



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR

137 STF – New every morning is the love

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew 14:22-33

All Age Talk

Hymn:

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

449 STF – Lord of creation, to you be all praise!

Readings: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Romans 10:5-15;

Hymn:

416 STF – There's a wideness in God's mercy OR

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

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

696 STF – For the healing of the nations OR

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

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

624 STF – Calm me Lord, as you calmed the storm OR

353 STF – Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it

Blessing

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Call to worship

The God of Sunday mornings welcomes you here.

To this place where we gather
this place where we listen
this place where we wonder
this place where we come ready to be changed forever.

God welcomes you here.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR

137 STF – New every morning is the love

Opening Prayers

Loving God,

We thank you for bringing us together and for providing a safe space to worship you.

In a moment of quiet – rest and reflect on the week you have just had; the joy, the frustration, the love and the pain.

Leave people with a few moments of quiet.

Thank you, Lord, for being with us through the rollercoaster of life. Thank you for never leaving our side.

We are sorry, Lord, for the times we have doubted your presence.

Thank you, Lord, for showing us unconditional, radical and inclusive love.

We are sorry for the times when we have not shown that love to others.

We ask you to open our hearts to pay attention to what new things you have to say, and we ask your Holy Spirit to move freely amongst us.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew 14:22-33

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Georgie Bylth

All Age Talk

Do you recognise yourself in this story?

Perhaps you feel like you're in a boat on a stormy sea, with something difficult happening in your life. Maybe you're holding onto the boat, but you're feeling tossed about, with things you're afraid of or worried about or the busyness of life.

[Ask somebody to come to the front to play this role, you could have a prop for them, and you could invite them to answer some questions, such as:

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?]*

Or maybe you feel like you're the one climbing over the side of the boat, doing something new, stepping out into a new adventure with bravery, and it's scary and exciting all at once and a bit overwhelming.

[Ask somebody to come to the front to play this role, you could have a prop for them, and you could invite them to answer some questions, such as:

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?]*

Or maybe you're watching on as somebody else looks like they are sinking. Perhaps you are friends or family with somebody who is struggling to stay afloat and you're not sure what to do to help them.

[Ask somebody to come to the front to play this role, you could have a prop for them, and you could invite them to answer some questions, such as:

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?]*

Or maybe you feel like you're sinking yourself. Maybe things feel a bit much and you really need Jesus to reach out and pull you out of the water.

[Ask somebody to come to the front to play this role, you could have a prop for them, and you could invite them to answer some questions, such as:

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?]*

Or maybe you've just seen God do something amazing, you're sitting in the boat watching as Jesus miraculously comes towards you. You've just seen God turn up in your life.

[Ask somebody to come to the front to play this role, you could have a prop for them, and you could invite them to answer some questions, such as:

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?]*

Sometimes it might feel like this story is all about Peter. If only he had enough faith or courage he wouldn't have doubted and he wouldn't have sunk.

Look at this glass.

[Hold up an empty glass and ask people to look at it.]

What does it have in it? It might appear to have nothing in it, but that's not true.

[Take a prepared folded up piece of paper with the words "whoever you are, Jesus is with you" written on it and wedge it at the bottom of the glass so it doesn't fall out when you turn it upside down].

When Peter steps out of the boat, his lack of faith seems to be the problem, but that's not what the story is about at all. The story is about Jesus, moving towards us. Jesus who is with us, whoever we are.

[Take a bowl of water and put the glass upside down into it, so the water rises up around the sides but the vacuum inside means the paper doesn't get wet.]

Look - we might seem like we are empty of enough faith or strength or courage or wisdom, but Jesus protects us. The presence of Jesus with us today might be invisible, like the air in this glass, but Jesus is here.

[Take the glass out of the water and take out the piece of paper and ask somebody to read it.]

Whoever you relate to in the story, however you're feeling now, even if you feel like you aren't full up enough with faith or courage, Jesus is with you, like the air in the glass preventing the piece of paper from getting wet. Like the air in the glass, although you can't see him, Jesus is drawing near, in your doubt or your joy or your fear or worry or relief or happiness. Whoever you are, Jesus is with you.³

Hymn:

342 STF – All hail the power of Jesu's name OR
449 STF – Lord of creation, to you be all praise!

Readings: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Romans 10:5-15

Hymn:

416 STF – There's a wideness in God's mercy OR
367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me

³ All Age Talk written by Holly Adams

Reflections on the readings

Right through the heart of Bethlehem, the place where the Jesus story begins, there is a wall dividing the ancient town in two.

For much of the twentieth century, Berlin, one of the biggest and most diverse cities in Western Europe, had a wall dividing it in two.

For the entirety of the Donald Trump era as President of the United States, people lived in fear of a wall being built between America and Mexico, a symbol of division and exclusion.

Can you think of other famous walls or separation devices? There are plenty in scripture – perhaps most famously at Jericho, where God's army marches around the city until by some miracle the whole wall collapses.

There are no iconic walls in our readings today, but there are these same symbols of division, and God's commitment to tearing them down, to bringing unity, to breaking down boundaries and barriers and borders, and bringing people together.

There is the water that divides Jesus from his disciples, which Peter attempts to cross, meeting with a moment of his fleeting faith.

There is the division between Jew and Gentile, which Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans have 'no difference' anymore.

There is the division and separation between Jacob's sons, eventually leading the brothers to selling Joseph into slavery, but even this becomes a moment for healing and opportunity for this same family when it is Joseph's family who are fed by the planning Joseph himself does as Pharaoh's right hand man in Egypt.

So much division, and yet God is at work in all these barriers, bringing us together. In Christ, all things are holding together.

This is a time for us to break into groups and have a conversation, ideally in 4s and 5s.

- What are the things in your life that divide you from other people?
- Can you recognise God at work, seeking to break those barriers down?

Allow this conversation to play out for 5-10 minutes and then bring people back together to share their insights and feelings, especially around the second question. Do people find it helpful, or difficult? Is it a way to explore what God is doing, or does it present more challenges.

You might like to hold a moment of quiet prayer after this conversation.

Next, I invite you to have moment on your own, thinking about a barrier in the world that you'd like to break down. It might be a barrier between nations, racial or sexual or gender identities, politics, class, religion, or some other boundary. Try to be specific in terms of what you would like to change – not just 'all walls', but pick one in particular.

Give people a minute or so to do this.

Now share with the person sitting next to you – what was your wall, and have a conversation about what it is you could do, or pray for, or find out more about, in order to break it down.

Give people 5 minutes to have the conversation. It may not be helpful to have a plenary after this, but you could offer this prayer as a way of bringing the conversation to a close:

Loving God, thank you for all that you are doing in our lives, and in the world, to break down barriers and make space for grace.

Be at work in me this day, and in each of us, to show us how to be builders of bridges, not walls, to be people who smash up boundaries and make space for grace.

Come, by your Spirit, and bind us together, Lord,
Bind us together.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

696 STF – For the healing of the nations OR

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

Prayers of intercession

As we pray our prayers of intercession, I invite you to hold out your hand. In turn we are going to hold each of our digits, that represents different prayers we are praying.

First, we are going to hold our thumb, as we pray for ourselves

Lord, we offer up to you ourselves. We ask you to come into our lives and fix what is broken. We need you in the centre of all that we do. We ask you to be present with us throughout our week and guide us into doing what you have called us to do.

Now, hold your index finger, as we pray for the world

Lord, we offer up to you the World in which you have created. We pray for peace in areas of conflict, and hope in areas of despair. We pray for healing in areas of brokenness, and reconciliation in areas of estrangement. In the challenging times, help us to come to you as our source of strength and through you let us fix the world that we have damaged.

Next, hold your middle finger, as we pray for the people in authority

Lord, we offer up to you the work of world leaders and people in authority. We pray that you give them wisdom and compassion in the decisions they must make. We ask that you guide them into making the right decisions for the best interest of your world and your people.

Now, hold your ring finger, as we pray for the church

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Lord, we offer up to you the work of our church and ask that you guide us into the service you want us to provide. We pray for revival and the ability to show your radical inclusive love to everyone that walks past our doors. We pray for your church throughout the world and particularly pray for those who put their lives at risk because of their faith.

Next hold your little finger, as we pray for all those in need

Lord, we offer up to you the people who are sick, lonely, bereaved or sad. Those who are known to us and those who are only known to you. We ask that you heal their bodies and hearts and fill them with your endless peace, unspeakable joy and never-ending love.

Finally, as we join our prayers together, I invite you to hold out your hands as we lift our prayer to God.

Gracious God, draw near to us as we lift our hands to you, offering our prayers for ourselves, others and the world. In the name of Your son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Thank you Lord, for all your goodness to us.

Thank you that you came and lived amongst us, and continue to come amongst us today. Accept these our gifts, as a measure of our response to your love, in Christ Jesus.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

624 STF – Calm me Lord, as you calmed the storm OR

353 STF – Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it

Blessing

Go then,
Leave this space,
Knowing God is with you,
Knowing you will be richly blessed,
Knowing that you are called to make a difference,
Knowing that God will bless others through you,
Knowing the overwhelming love of the living God.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Georgie Blyth

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker