

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 28A

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

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**Ordinary 28 - Year A**  
15th October 2023



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy OR**

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

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**277 STF – My song is love unknown OR**

**152 STF – This is the day, this is the day**

Readings: Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

**Hymn:**

**402 STF – Go to the world! Go to all the earth OR**

**415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult OR**

**531 STF – What a friend we have in Jesus**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

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

**663 STF – I the Lord of sea and sky**

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

Lord, your love has called us here,  
And we come. To love you, to love each other, and to share your love with the world.

Show us how to live in your love, by your Spirit, O God,

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy OR

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

## Opening Prayers

Let us pray.

To begin, a prayer of thanksgiving

You might, at this point, like to turn to the person sitting next to you and ask them to share something that they are grateful for in their life, it could be a person, a memory of the past day or something they are excited about... Share that together as part of our time of prayer.

*[After they have shared with one another, you might want to ask them to shout it out loud so that others are able to hear from one another.]*

Loving God, we thank you for the sleep of the night and the new beginning we are able to experience today.

We thank you for the gifts you have blessed us with and the way they each enrich our lives. May we not lose sight of these good gifts but have refreshed appreciation and gratitude when we leave worship today. For all you have given we say thank you.

Amen.

*[Pause].*

And now, a prayer of confession.

Lord we come to you.

We confess that at times, we prioritise our own desires over the needs of others.

In our pursuit of success and recognition, we may neglect the marginalized and those in need. Forgive us for our self-centeredness and help us to see the world through your compassionate eyes.

In this digital age, we confess the times when we've allowed screens to separate us from the warmth of human connection. We've sometimes used technology for harm rather than for good. Forgive us for not using our digital tools responsibly and for not valuing face-to-face relationships as we should.

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

We acknowledge our role in environmental issues, where convenience has often taken precedence over stewardship. Forgive us for contributing to the pollution of your creation. Grant us the wisdom and strength to live more sustainably and to care for the earth you've entrusted to our care.

In a world where division and hatred can be amplified by the click of a button, we confess the times when we've allowed anger and prejudice to overshadow your message of love and unity. Forgive us for our judgments and prejudices. Help us to be agents of reconciliation and understanding in our fragmented world.

In this modern age, the pace of life can be relentless, leaving little room for reflection and prayer. We confess our neglect in spending time in your presence. Forgive us for not seeking your guidance and wisdom in our daily lives.

May we emerge from this moment of confession with open hearts, ready to be instruments of your peace, justice, and love.

In your name we pray,

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord's Prayer**

### **All Age Talk**

So, our talk today tells us of a story from the Bible, Jesus tells us about a great banquet. A banquet is like a fancy feast with delicious food, music, and lots of fun. It's a special celebration!

In this story, there's a king who decides to throw a big banquet for his son's wedding. He sends out invitations to many people to come and join in the celebration. Can you imagine getting an invitation to such an amazing party? Imagine King's Coronation levels.

But here's the surprising part. When the invitations go out, some of the guests start making excuses. One says, "I'm too busy with my work," and another says, "I just bought a new cow, and I need to take care of it." Can you believe that? They were too busy or had other things they thought were more important.

So, the king tells his servants to go out into the streets and invite anyone they can find, good people and not-so-good people, to come to the feast. And guess what? People from all over come to the banquet, and the celebration is in full swing.

But here's a twist in the story. The king comes in to meet the guests, and he sees one person who isn't wearing the special wedding clothes provided by the king. When the king asks why, the guest doesn't have an answer.

So, what does this story mean? It teaches us something essential. The king in the story represents God, and the banquet is like heaven—a joyful place where God wants to be with us forever. The first guests who made excuses are like people who

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Matthew Forsyth

sometimes ignore God's love and kindness because they're too busy or have other priorities.

But God's love is so great that He invites everyone, no matter who they are, to be with the parental God. We can't earn our way to heaven; it's a gift from God. But once we accept that gift, we need to live in a way that shows we appreciate it.<sup>3</sup>

**Hymn:**

277 STF – My song is love unknown OR

152 STF – This is the day, this is the day

**Readings:** Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

**Hymn:**

402 STF – Go to the world! Go to all the earth OR

415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age

**Reflections on the readings**

I've just got back from a family holiday. Usually we fly out early morning arriving in our resort by lunch time, enjoy a leisurely afternoon by the pool then shower and get changed and ready to enjoy the evening's entertainment (although our two are less interested in the mini disco now!) This year we just could not get flights, prices and the all important hotel with water slides to match up with our preferred patten. So, we ended up flying late in the afternoon.

This was not a good decision!

It turns out that our local airport is a lot busier in the afternoon than it is early in the morning, so seating is at a real premium with lots of people choosing to stand at the bar or sit wherever they can on the floor. Wherever you end up, you need to be close enough to peer intently at the screen, waiting for that joyous moment when your gate is announced.

The flight itself is actually, usually, quite restful. So long as you can put up with the cramped space and a few hours of discomfort, but at least you have a seat.

It was when we landed that the fun and games began again. Another airport with too many people and not enough seats as we begin the frantic battle to retrieve our cases from the least fun carousel in the world. From there, a long walk in the evening humidity, dragging our suitcases and being hassled at every turn by drivers looking for work.

Finally we made it, through the touts, through the heat, to the coach that would take us the 20min transfer to our hotel. We packed our cases into the luggage hold and took our seats and waited. Then, after 10 minutes, and a number of other travellers boarded the coach, we waited some more. Once it seemed that all of the others

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

journeying with us had stashed their cases and boarded the coach, finally, we were ready... to wait some more!

Apparently one of the families who was supposed to be joining the coach had decided they didn't want to journey with us and it seemed they were getting a private transfer instead. It would have been good if they had told our coach driver so we didn't have to wait!

How frustrating that somebody had decided not to show up for something that had been prepared and was waiting for them. Judging by the coach drivers loud conversations with the holiday company rep, I don't think he was very pleased either. Although he didn't go quite as far in response as the King in Matthew 22.

Our gospel reading this morning tells the story not of a holiday, but of a wedding feast. We hear about its preparations including the invitations that are made. Yet, when all is made ready, those who have been invited chose not to attend, offering a number of different excuses or, in one particularly brutal case, killing the messengers. The King in Jesus's story, retold by Matthew, responds to this slight by sending out his servants again, this time inviting anyone they find to come and share at the feast. After, that is, he orders the murder and destruction of the cities that had visited violence on his messengers!

It seemed a shame then that we couldn't do the same on that coach. Not the murder and destruction bit! I mean go out and search for someone who hadn't booked a place on the transfer, saving them from the scrums at the taxi lines!

Jesus's story though, is obviously about far more than just a wedding and its guests. It's a parable that explains to us the concept of universalism. Jesus is explaining to those listening that the Kingdom of God is open to everyone, not just a select group.

The first group of invited guests are supposed to represent the Jewish people, those who thought of themselves as God's people. The way the parable unfolds would have made it clear to those listening that simply being invited is not enough. Their attendance at the feast required them to respond and actually turn up!

It may be that the people in the story who reacted violently to the invitation are supposed to be a foreshadowing of the way the prophets, and even Jesus himself, would be met by violence.

Those in the story who do chose to attend the feast are supposed to represent the Gentiles. The Gentiles were those who weren't Jewish and who didn't follow God so to suggest they would be gladly invited to the feast, and infer that invitation to the Kingdom of God, was a radical readjustment of Jewish theology.

And wouldn't it be lovely if we could just leave things there?

However, the parable doesn't end on that happy note of all being invited. Once everyone is happily tucking into the fattened cattle the King notices that one of the guests isn't dressed appropriately and deals with him by tying him up and chucking him out the door. Now, as I'm still considered fairly young in most of my churches and have a rocker/biker kind of aesthetic I tend to think most people in our churches are inappropriately dressed, and I'm absolutely sure the feeling is mutual! It's a good job then that we're dealing with a parable here and that it's meaning has absolutely nothing to do with the way that we dress but is all to do with how prepared and committed we are. The man who is ejected wasn't prepared to commit himself fully to the feast.

While this parable clearly says that everyone can come to God's Kingdom, Jesus is expecting us to respond with a commitment.

Some questions to consider:

- Do we sometimes think Jesus is only for those of us already in our churches?
- Can you think of any examples where we might exclude people from worship?
- How can we work harder as a church to make sure everyone knows God is for them?
- How can we re-affirm our commitment to Jesus in the coming days and weeks?<sup>4</sup>

**Hymn:**

250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult OR

531 STF – What a friend we have in Jesus

**Prayers of intercession**

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

Heavenly Father we thank you for our invitation to the feast of your Kingdom. We pray that we would be worthy to be in your presence. Help us to commit our lives to you once more as we pray for the world you have created and our place within it.

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

We continue to give thanks and pray for all your created order. Support us to be good helpers and stewards of nature, taking care of the vulnerable and pursuing a fair distribution of resources so that all may find security and prosper.

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

May we strive always for a peaceful existence. Lord hear our prayers for all areas of our world where people live with the terror of war and conflict. We pray for all people who have been displaced from their homes. Help us to have compassion on the stranger and refugee seeing in all people the gift of your Kingdom.

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

We pray for all people who have power. International, national and local leaders. May they always seek your guidance and pursue your peaceful justice. May they use their voice for the good of all creation, seeking your Kingdom come.

We also offer our prayer for those who feel powerless and without a voice. The enslaved, the imprisoned, the hungry and the homeless. May they know your presence with them and may your church be empowered to be their voice.

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

We pray for all our churches. Those who gather in places of worship, those who call schools or community buildings their home, those who work in partnership with local businesses and those who meet in homes or through the gift of technology. Wherever

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Graeme Dutton

you are acknowledged, please be present in power and spirit demonstrating your love and grace to all your people.

Praise the Lord

**Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.**

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

Thank you Lord, for the gifts we have given,  
And for the gifts you have given us.  
Show us how to use all that we have for your Kingdom,  
In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn:**

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder OR

663 STF – I the Lord of sea and sky

**Blessing**

May you find strength in Parental presence, comfort in the promises of Jesus, and courage that flows from the Holy Spirit to face the challenges of each new day. May you walk in faith, knowing that God is with you in every step you take.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Graeme Dutton

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

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