

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 10B

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

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Ordinary 10 - Year B
9th June 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

565 STF – Only by grace can we enter OR

161 STF – Speak, O Lord, as we come to you

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

51 STF – Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father OR

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord

Readings: Genesis 3:8-15, Psalm 130, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-35

Hymn:

679 STF – Come, build the Church – not heaps of stone OR

657 STF – You give rest to the weary

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour OR

433 STF – Out of the depths I cry to thee

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded OR

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound

Blessing

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Call to worship

God is here, and we have come into the presence of grace,

God is here, and we are letting go of all that weighs us down in order to meet with the divine, to be inspired and uplifted, in the Spirit of God

Amen.¹

Hymn:

565 STF – Only by grace can we enter OR

161 STF – Speak, O Lord, as we come to you

Opening Prayers

There will be short periods of silence during our prayers.

Let's pray together...

The Psalmist says: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD."

Lord, from the depths of our limited understanding, we recognise you are a God who we may never truly be able to understand, but help us today to open ourselves up enough to dare to simply know and feel your presence in our hearts.

Help us to be open to learn about the love of Jesus and seek to recognise that love in the people and situations we encounter in this world.

Out of our depths, we cry to you, O Lord.

(Silence)

Lord, from the depths of our soul, we bring our guilt and shame to this time and place today. We bring the things that trouble us and weigh us down. We bring our regrets and missed opportunities.

We stand before a loving Christ who gathers us into reassuring arms, with love and compassion. Help us to feel the strength and courage to try again, refreshed and renewed.

Out of our depths, we cry to you, O Lord.

(Silence)

Lord, from the depths of our hearts, help us to feel and express gratitude for the gifts, graces and blessings we know in our lives. Simply saying "thank you" may feel somewhat inadequate, but let us say it anyway, with conviction and passion.

We are grateful that we have the sense of a living Jesus in our hearts to guide our thoughts and actions. Give us the courage and commitment to follow...

Out of our depths, we cry to you, O Lord.

Amen.²

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Kevin Dobson

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Materials needed: paper and pens for everyone. Children may want some colouring pencils too, for drawing.

Today, at the beginning of our service, we are going to do an exercise about our relationships, and the people we know. This is an opportunity for each of us to reflect on the people in our lives, and perhaps a drawing you might like to come back to later in the week, as a prayer guide.

I want you to draw 3 circles, around each other, getting bigger each time. So you have one circle in the middle, a slightly larger one around it, and then an even bigger one around that.

In the middle, write the names of those people who are closest to you. Perhaps the ones you live with, the people you see nearly every day. Your closest friends. What are your relationships with them like? How do they support you? How do you support them? You might like to draw them, as you think about them.

[Give people a couple of minutes to do this. Perhaps invite a couple of people to share who they have written down].

In the next circle, write the next circle of friends and family – perhaps people you work with, or you see most weeks, or you chat to on the phone but don't often get to meet up... How do they make you feel? Are these relationships important to you? Is something going on for one of these people at the moment?

[Give people a couple of minutes to do this. Perhaps invite a couple of people to share who they have written down].

Then, in the outside circle, write or draw other people – the ones who are your friends or colleagues or neighbours who you don't feel particularly close to, but are still a part of your life. How can you get to know them better? Do you want to? How can you show love to them?

[Give people a couple of minutes to do this. Perhaps invite a couple of people to share who they have written down].

You might like to have yours somewhere you can see it for the rest of the service, as we dive into relationships and friendships, and you might like to put it on the fridge or out on the side at home, so you can pray and think about these people over the coming days and weeks. Use it as a tool to think about, give thanks for, and support the people in your life.

Amen.³

Hymn:

51 STF – Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father OR

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Readings: Genesis 3:8-15, Psalm 130, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-35

Hymn:

679 STF – Come, build the Church – not heaps of stone OR

657 STF – You give rest to the weary

Reflections on the readings

“...you can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family” - Harper Lee (To Kill a Mockingbird)

Whilst I recognise that it's only June, here is a public service announcement: “there are 199 days to go ‘til Christmas!”

I have a “seasonal” quiz question for you.

A greetings card company recently conducted a poll to ascertain what were the main reasons why families argued at Christmas time. Can you guess what the top topics were? *(discuss as appropriate, answers below, in order)*

Answers:

1. Time spent with the in-laws
2. What are we watching on TV?
3. Board games
4. Christmas dinner contents
5. Alcohol...
6. When to open presents
7. What time to get up in the morning
8. Who's in charge of cleaning

I totally appreciate that many families have peaceful and argument-free Christmases, but the notion of families rowing with each other over the turkey dinner is a well-recognised British Christmas “tradition” with good reason...

I often wonder why families insist on doing this to themselves when it so often seems to end up in cross words. The power of tradition is strong, and also the pull of memories of the past and trying to keep family ties alive can be a reason why we keep on trying to maybe “get it right this year”.

It is not restricted to Christmas time. It is just a fact. Family relationships can be at the very least described as complicated, and can often be the source of crippling and damaging stress in the face of the pressure (be it perceived or real) to keep things together, well... - because it's family.

After all... blood is thicker than water, isn't it?

In today's gospel passage – which many people find uncomfortable – Jesus seriously challenges the validity of close family relationships, and the importance we place on them.

It is true one could argue he is doing it merely as a means to an end to make a point, but he nonetheless seems to dismiss the importance of his closest relatives as he looks out into the wider world and considers the value of the relationships we have with the “others” we encounter in our lives.

“Who are my mother and brothers”? he asks in what seems to be a very disparaging way. He is making the point that brotherhood and sisterhood can be found - and often should be found - further afield than merely our closest family connections. He instructs us that everyone who “does the will of God” is someone who he would consider to be a brother or a sister.

This is a very strong call to arms for unity in the world, and it is undeniable that we are all better together as we face the challenges this world throws our way.

I hesitated and almost said “Christian Unity” – a phrase most of us will be familiar with – but I do believe the essence of this point goes beyond even this. Jesus clearly says ANYONE who does the will of God is my brother or sister – with no restrictions about their religious affiliations or ties. I look around and see very many people who patently do “the will of God” as they live their lives and yet wouldn’t go near a church. I agree with Jesus. They are also our brothers and sisters.

That phrase “blood is thicker than water” is a dangerous one in my opinion. It is hardly ever used when not in some form of conflict situation, either to promote the exclusion of someone because they are NOT family, or alternatively as a reminder that someone close to us ought to have behaved more in line with our thinking since they share a bloodline...

It is a dangerous phrase which invokes guilt and shame, and in my experience, it is rarely helpful.

It places an obligation on people who might not see eye to eye to be pseudo-close which rarely stands the test of time, and it automatically relegates people who do not have a blood connection to second class in terms of relationship “status”.

The connections we make with ANY of the people (family or not) who love and support us – both by upholding our choices and also challenging us sometimes – are of paramount importance to us and our well-being, and we should not ever see them as second best. As Jesus says – “these are my brothers and my sisters”

The Harper Lee quote comes from a part of the book where the young Jem Finch is tussling with her own feelings and the insular, prejudicial and partisan feelings of her elderly aunt. Her father Atticus had said these words to her earlier, she remembered them, and she was trying to wrestle with exactly how she felt and her own sense of right and wrong.

They are thoughtful words that we are wise to ponder ourselves: “...*you can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family*”

Here’s the truth. Some family connections can be utterly beautiful, affirming and lifelong for all the right reasons, and that is to be celebrated and protected.

Some, however, can be toxic.

We so often end up drawn back into these relationships from a sense of duty and it is just not helpful for either party. This can be our human tendency sometimes. Listen to this challenging passage from Proverbs:

Proverbs 26:11 - New International Version

*11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so fools repeat their folly.*

We can keep on coming back to the same negative emotional place in our lives, and it can be crippling.

The voice of the “serpent” in the story of Adam and Eve from Genesis that we heard today is an poignant way of representing these negative voices that we insist on listening to. I’m sure we can all name a handful of people who sound like “serpents” in our relationships.

When we find relationships that are affirming for us we should celebrate them and hang on to them. This requires work. Work that is worth it. By putting effort, consideration and compassion into people we relate to positively, great rewards can be reaped. Those we find in our lives that are honest with us, that look out for our welfare, that invest time and energy in us and how we are feeling... these relationships are vital and it simply should not matter whether or not they happen to share a blood bond.

We should celebrate the ones that don't just as much as the ones that do.

In his letter today, Paul speaks of "*grace, as it extends to more and more people*"... and this is what we should strive for.

Where do you feel grace between you and others?

This grace is the marker of positive, productive relationships, and relationships like this bear fruit not only for those directly involved, but also for the wider world.

This grace encourages honesty and integrity between people.

This grace inspires confidence between people.

This grace shows where love resides in relationship between people.

This grace is God at work in the world. We are all invited to join in.

Let's give it a try.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour OR

433 STF – Out of the depths I cry to thee

Prayers of intercession

For our prayers of intercession today, we focus our minds on **grace**.

I invite you to close your eyes, and let your thoughts wander as you listen to the following words and prompts.

As we look out into the world, illustrated by the news feeds and headlines we see, what are the situations that capture your attention?

As we pray today, we ask:

- Where is the grace?
- Are there ways we can extend more grace into this situation?

Lord Jesus, give us the courage we need

As we think about our country... the politics, the issues at hand, what are the situations that capture your attention?

As we pray today, we ask:

- Where is the grace?
- Are there ways we can extend more grace into this situation?

⁴ Reflection written by Kevin Dobson

Lord Jesus, give us the courage we need

As we ponder the local community in which we live, what are the situations that capture your attention?

As we pray today, we ask:

- Where is the grace?
- Are there ways we can extend more grace into this situation?

Lord Jesus, give us the courage we need

As we think about our friendships, both close and more distant, what are the situations that capture your attention?

As we pray today, we ask:

- Where is the grace?
- Are there ways we can extend more grace into this situation?

Lord Jesus, give us the courage we need

As we think about our family relationships and all the inherent joys and complications, what are the situations that capture your attention?

As we pray today, we ask:

- Where is the grace?
- Are there ways we can extend more grace into this situation?

Lord Jesus, give us the courage we need

Gather our prayers Lord Jesus, and help us see the grace around us.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Lord, we give you our thanks – our thanks and praise,

For this day, for this moment, for this time of our gathering.

We give you thanks also for these gifts, those given from a place of abundance, and those given despite scarcity.

In the midst of all that is 'not as you would have it be' in this world, come Lord Jesus,

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded OR

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Kevin Dobson

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Blessing

Out into the world we go,
Knowing that the unending grace of God is there already,
Knowing we can encounter you in all walks of life and all spaces and all people.
Help us to notice The Christ in the people we meet this week,
In Jesus name, go in peace,

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker