

# twelvebaskets



## EPIPHANY 2C

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

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**Second Sunday After Epiphany - Year C**  
19th January 2025



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by his grace OR**

**33 STF – O Lord we are always in your presence**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**348 STF – He is Lord, he is Lord OR**

**317 STF – At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow**

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

**Hymn:**

**618 STF – Sacred the body God has created OR**

**134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain OR**

**689 STF – Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR**

**664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service**

Blessing

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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](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).

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## Call to worship

Here we are Lord, your people, gathered in your name on this Lord's Day. Here we are Lord, stepping aside from the world 'out there' to meet as your church, today. Here we are Lord, seeking an encounter with you again, a fresh taste of grace. Here we are Lord, we have come.

Come amongst us, by your Spirit, we pray,

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by his grace OR

33 STF – O Lord we are always in your presence

## Opening Prayers

Gracious God, you have called us to be your people,  
And we come to worship you this day,  
May we become aware of your Spirit here, as we worship, O God.

Loving God,  
We gather today,  
Stepping aside from the distractions of the outside world, to tune our hearts to love again.

You, O Lord, have blessed us richly, with your unchanging faithfulness to us and your love for all people.

Today, we give you our thanks, our praise, and our worship.

Today, we come to you to seek to connect with the great spirit-of-life that is flowing through all creation,

To be inspired, uplifted, reinvigorated, and reminded of your love for us.

Today, we turn aside from the choices of sin and selfishness, knowing that you have already forgiven us, and for that we are truly grateful.

Come, Lord Jesus.

May we be a people who take that love with us in all that we do,

This day,  
This week,  
And forevermore.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

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

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

## All Age Talk

Two of our readings today are two famous passages from the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and John 2:1-11. These stories show us how God gives us special gifts and how we can use them to help others.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians that God gives each of us special gifts through the Holy Spirit. These aren't gifts like toys or candy but abilities and talents to help others and share God's love.

Here are some examples Paul mentions (you could make below a quiz to be able to see the congregation have examples)

- Wisdom: Knowing the right thing to do.
- Knowledge: Understanding God's truths.
- Faith: Trusting God completely.
- Healing: Helping others feel better.
- Helping others: Caring for people in need.

Here's something amazing: everyone has a gift! Maybe you're good at sharing, comforting a friend, or helping at home. God made us all unique, and when we work together, it's like a big team where everyone plays an important role.

Get people to consider in pairs what their 'gift' is?

In this story, Jesus goes to a wedding with his mum, Mary. Everything is going well until – uh oh – they run out of wine to drink! This would have been embarrassing for the hosts, and ended the party earlier than anyone would have hoped! Mary tells Jesus about the problem, and even though Jesus says, "It's not my time yet," He decides to help.

So, Jesus tells the servants to fill big jars with water. Then, he performs a miracle – the water turns into wine! The wine wasn't just okay: it was the best wine ever.

This was Jesus' first miracle, and it showed his power and care for others. He didn't use his gift to show off; he used it to help people, to save embarrassment and to bring joy to the wedding.

What do these stories teach us?

Firstly, that everyone has a gift: Just like the Holy Spirit gives us special abilities, Jesus used his gift to help others. What gifts has God given you?

Lastly, we need to use our gifts to help others: God wants us to use our talents to show his love. Maybe you can cheer someone up, help with chores, or pray for a friend this week.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### Hymn:

348 STF – He is Lord, he is Lord OR

317 STF – At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow

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

**Readings:** Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

**Hymn:**

618 STF – Sacred the body God has created OR

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies

**Reflections on the readings**

Today has one of those catchy titles in the church calendar – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany - reminding us that it is nearly two weeks since we celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany on 6<sup>th</sup> January, immediately after the final day of the Christmas season on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

But despite the rather dull title, and despite the flatness which sometimes seems to be all around in January after the excitement of Christmas, this season is full of sparkle and promise and so are today's readings from Isaiah and John.

Epiphany means 'shining out' and for these weeks which follow the Feast of Epiphany we are given examples of the light of Christ shining out – something we may be glad of in these dark, cold winter days and something which can re-energise us in the first few weeks of a new year. There is much here about new beginnings and starting again. In our Gospel passage we heard how Jesus transformed a wedding in a very non-Methodist way, and brought joy and celebration to those who were there. We'll go to the party soon, but first let's go back 600 years or so to the ministry of Isaiah, for the shining out of God begins long before the time of Jesus.

It seems likely that these final chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah were written between five and six centuries before Jesus, as Israel began to see signs of hope and restoration. You may remember that the foolish alliances of a succession of kings had led to military defeat and religious ignominy as the people were taken away from their beloved homeland and temple and spent long years in exile in Babylon and Assyria. But now things were changing again and Isaiah's message is full of hope and promise.

- Isaiah prophesied that the vindication of Jerusalem would 'shine out like the dawn and her salvation like a burning torch'.
- He announced that they would be given a new name and become a crown of beauty.
- Then a very tender prophecy in v 4 'You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married'.

Some of you may have older translations of the bible where the Hebrew words for these titles are retained as names; names, which have survived in some cultures today – Hephzibah for 'My Delight is in her and Beulah for 'Married'. Perhaps you know or know of women with these delightful names!

After years of shame and desolation, feeling that they had let God down and were, at best, a disappointment to God, now they were being told 'the LORD delights in you'. The second phrase, 'Your land shall be married' may sound a bit odd to us but it recalls for Israel the covenant God has made with the people, like the covenant of marriage, which assures them they will be cared for, protected and honoured.

As we know from various stories in the Bible, the giving of a new name indicates a new chapter in someone's life, a new or renewed relationship with God, almost a new birth. *(If the congregation likes participation, they could suggest biblical characters who have been*

*given new names, if not, the leader can supply a few... Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, Saul to Paul, Simon to Peter...)*

What do we need to hear from Isaiah this morning?

- That after the challenges we experienced in 2024, this new year is a new beginning?
- That after a time of straying from God, we are welcomed back?
- That we are not a disappointment to God, but are loved and cherished?
- That God has new ideas, new direction, perhaps even a new name for us?
- That, like Jerusalem, our vindication might shine out in a context where sometimes our faith is dim?

It's appropriate that the passage from Isaiah ends with imagery of marriage with the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride – that leads us very smoothly into the Gospel story from John chapter 2, the wedding at Cana.

Perhaps as you heard it read today, the very first few words grabbed your attention – 'On the third day', making a connection with the Resurrection of Jesus, which took place 'on the third day' and so perhaps sending us another message too, that this is going to be a story about a new order, a new start, a new kind of life? [As a slight red herring, it is really interesting to discover how often 'the third day' is mentioned in the Bible, not only in the New Testament, but even in the Old Testament. It's as if there has always been something special about the third day – so if Jesus was going to rise from the dead, it would certainly be on that day!]

Moving on into the story, we discover that Jesus and his mother are both guests at a wedding – we don't know whose. At some point disaster occurs – at least, in a culture which holds generous hospitality in very high regard, it's a disaster – the wine runs out. This is going to mean embarrassment and shame for the families involved and the happy day of celebration looks like turning into a day of grumbling and discontent. Until Mary, the mother of Jesus, decides that this is something Jesus can help with!

Some of us here are mothers, most of us have had mothers and so most of us will identify with the experience of being asked to do something by your mother which you feel is inappropriate... *(if possible, give an example from your own experience!)* Jesus doesn't sound thrilled at being brought in to help – 'No mother, it's not my time yet.' His mother disregards his protests and tells the servants to do whatever he tells them to do. Unable to escape from the situation, Jesus tells them to fill some extremely large jars with water and then, without any song or dance or incantation or ceremony, the water becomes wine. Not just a few bottles, but more than 120 gallons. The party is rescued. The chief steward is completely amazed, not, it appears at the quantity of the wine, but at its quality. Why, he asks the bridegroom, have you kept back this superior wine until the end? I imagine the bridegroom has no idea how to answer that!

John goes on to describe this as the first of a series of 'signs' which Jesus performed. A sign of what?

- John suggests it was a sign of glory, the glory of God demonstrated in human form in a remarkable way.
- John also tells us that as a result of these signs, the disciples believed in him, so it was a sign that Jesus was worth following, worth believing in.
- Was it also a sign that whatever God does is of the highest quality imaginable? That God is not content with mediocrity or expediency, but always demonstrates capacious grace, abundant joy, overflowing life?

But it was done without fanfares or announcements – I imagine that most of the guests went home not even knowing where the wine had come from. For those who knew what was going on, however, this was a true Epiphany, a shining out of the light of Christ in a way which brought sparkle and life to a situation which was potentially flat and shameful. For them it was a sign of God's glory breaking out in a man they knew.

Could that happen today for us? Not the sudden transformation of gallons of water into wine, but the shining out of God's glory to a world which knows more about shame and dullness? Could we be part of that?

- Could some of the flat and lifeless situations in which we may find ourselves be transformed because Jesus is present – in us and in others?
- Could any depression or dullness which we may feel in the long weeks of winter be infused with glimmers of hope and light because Jesus is present – in us and in others/
- Could the church in our community, which may seem dull and unappetising to so many who live near, offer joy, celebration, community and hope because Jesus is present – in us and in others?

On this second Sunday after Epiphany, let's be open to the light of God shining into us and shining out from us wherever we may go this week.

Thanks be to God,

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### Hymn:

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain OR

689 STF – Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity

### Prayers of intercession

Today we are using the response: Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

God of new life, new hope, new beginnings, new opportunities, we bring our prayers to you this morning for all who are in need of your transforming power:

We pray for all who feel flat, tired, anxious or depressed, perhaps bringing ourselves to God now as we also name others in our hearts... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

We pray for all who are ill or in pain, at home or in hospital and for those who care for them. Some are known to us, all are known to you... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

We remember those we know who we love but see no longer, those who have shone your light into our lives and we pray for all who grieve at this time... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

We pray for our community, bringing before you the particular needs of which we are aware, praying for our schools, our local councillors, our charities... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

We pray for the wider society of the British Isles, praying for the government, and bringing before you the many needs and injustices throughout society... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today.**

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

We pray for the world, naming in our hearts those countries experiencing war, famine, flood, drought, oppression, mismanagement... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today**.

We pray for the church; for this local congregation and for the worldwide church, asking for new hope, new courage, new energy, new wisdom... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today**.

We pray for ourselves, knowing that we need to be filled with your light and your love, to equip us for whatever the week ahead will bring... Jesus Christ, **shine your light today**.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

God of every day,

Help me to see that I have gifts, and that I can use them to make this world a better place.

God of this Sunday,

We commit these gifts to you today – which we are grateful to have received and want to put to use for the building of your Kingdom here on earth, in Jesus' name.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service

### **Blessing**

May we go with the courage of Christ in our hearts. May we go with the fierce energy of the Spirit in our bodies. May we go with the God of love streaming through us and out into the world.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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

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

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