

twelvebaskets



EPIPHANY 7C

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

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

Seventh Sunday After Epiphany - Year C
23rd February 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

249 STF – Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love OR

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises OR

686 STF – Jesus, Lord, we look to thee

Readings: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

Hymn:

519 STF – Father, I place into your hands OR

520 STF – Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving OR

466 STF – Have faith in God, my heart

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR

303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives

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

Living, loving God,

God of yesterday, today and for ever,

We come into this time of worship, thanking you for your loving care, protection and strength.

Today we ask that the whole of our lives might be testament to your eternal love, mercy and grace. Amen.¹

Hymn:

249 STF – Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love OR

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise

Opening Prayers

Loving God,

As we come to worship today, we pray that you still our hearts.

We ask that you still the worries and wonderings we bring with us from the week gone by and help us to simply be whole and at home in your presence.

As we sit with you today, we pray that you quieten our minds,

We ask that you quieten the chatter and the list-making we are so encouraged to do within society

so that we might simply be present to you instead.

As we share together today, we pray that you bring rest to our weary bodies.

We ask that you bring rest to the aches of our toils this week

so that we can feel true rest with you this day.

Thank you for always loving and providing for us.

Thank you that we can come this morning to sit and be alongside you knowing that—despite it all – we are safe and loved.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Do you remember a time when you've felt left out? Perhaps you've been made to feel unwanted? Maybe it was in the playground at school, at home on our own, when we've

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

discovered some of our friends are meeting and we haven't been invited or just when we've gone into a new situation and not known anyone to chat to.

There are situations that happen to all of us that leave us feeling excluded. For some of us it might be linked with sports. When a team is being chosen it seems you are always the last to be picked, just because you aren't very good. You seem to have the tendency to drop the ball just at the wrong time or have the ability to come last out of your class in a race – no matter how hard you try... Perhaps that is a distant memory of school, or perhaps it is something you are going through right now.

For others it might be that you seem to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. This tends to get you into all sorts of difficult and embarrassing situations, leaving you feeling isolated.

Perhaps some of you just seem to have the skill of being able to upset other people – maybe your teacher, parents or friends – without even trying. It's not that you are deliberately trying to wind them up, but before you know it, you're in trouble again and nobody wants to sit next to you or talk to you.

These types of situations leave you feeling lonely, sad and left out.

One thing we know about the Jesus stories in the Bible is that he seems to have been most interested in the people who were left out or excluded. He often visited people suffering from diseases that made them 'unclean' in the eyes of other people, he touched people that society said you weren't supposed to touch, cared for those who were poor and cast out, and he went for tea with tax collectors (who were seen as real bad guys as they often cheated people out of their money to get themselves rich).

He was always offering people a fresh start.

And Jesus invites us to do the same – can we forgive people who are mean to us? Can we be nice to those who are sometimes not nice to us? Can we go and speak to the people who appear to be excluded?

We are thankful to those who reach out to us when we feel excluded, now our challenge is to do the same for others...

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, help us to remember to be thankful in all situations, particularly when we are given a new start, a fresh beginning. Make us welcoming to all, even to people who seem different to ourselves.

Help us to care for your world and the people in it.

Amen.³

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises OR

686 STF – Jesus, Lord, we look to thee

Readings: Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Hymn:

519 STF – Father, I place into your hands OR

520 STF – Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart

Reflections on the readings

How thankful do you feel today?

This is a strange season, isn't it? The excitement of Christmas and New Year seems a distant memory. The days are still short. The weather often unpleasant. Easter seems a long way off...

But we have so much to be thankful for – have you noticed? I know that I don't always take the time to give thanks, to recognise the blessings I have received, to be grateful. Do you?

Shall we do it right now? Let's all shout out one or two things we are thankful for today. Perhaps it's a hard day, and you can only think of one or two, or perhaps you've got hundreds to choose from, but let's all try to name something for which we can be grateful...

[Give time for people to respond, encourage people to try and come up with something].

There is plenty of evidence that little practices of gratitude make a huge difference in terms of our mental health and wellbeing. The ability to notice that there are things to be thankful for can be transformative for how we interact with the world, especially in the midst of anxiety, pain and grief.

And yet, we take a great deal for granted, don't we?

What do you think are some of the things that you take for granted? You don't have to shout those out, don't worry, but just spend a moment thinking about them now. What opportunities for being grateful are you missing?

[Give people a moment to think.]

So today, the invitation is simple: practice gratitude.

As the theological Mister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say is "thank you", that will be enough.' Not because our lives end with thank you, but because in the act of thanking, we are changed into more grateful, more loving people. That is why we teach our children better manners. That is why it's helpful to keep a 'gratitude journal'. That is why we give thanks for God's love for us.

As we, once again, learn the lesson of not taking things for granted, let us do the same with love. Let us not take love for granted. Let's give love a chance.

So, as Jesus says in Luke 6 – we have to practice love. Love for our 'enemies'. Love for those who curse us. Love is not just a comfortable blanket that we can wrap our friends and family in – that's easy, that's not difficult (at least, not most of the time!). Love, in the Jesus imagination, is radical – it reaches across boundaries and breaks through borders. It punches a whole in the walls of exclusion and exclusivity. It bridges the gulf of social order and institutional segregation.

'Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back'.

That's a kind of gratitude, a kind of generosity, a kind of love that changes things.

But that's not how we live, is it? We take our possessions for granted, until someone comes and tries to take them, or appears to be asking what we consider to be 'too much'. What if we held things a little lighter? What if we could be a little more generous? What if, in our

gratitude, in our saying 'thank you', we could come to see that we have much to give, much to share, instead of always assuming we must 'hold on' to what 'little' we think we have?

That's why gratitude is an expression of love. We love, because we were first loved. We give, because everything is gift. And we say thank you as we go.

Let's be a grateful people this week. A giving people. A loving people, who know that God is at work in the world, sharing love, being love.

Love is. And there is only one thing we need to say in response to that: thank you.

Wherever you are right now, let's say those two simple words aloud together.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving OR

466 STF – Have faith in God, my heart

Prayers of intercession

Parent God,

We come before you, imperfect as we are, to thank you for the week we just had; for good or bad it has added to our experience of life and given us opportunity to encounter glimpses of you.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done.

Attune our hearts to how your spirit is moving in our community, how we can help build your kingdom here and lift up those in our community who need to know the love of God.

On earth, as it is in Heaven.

Keep us mindful to the needs of the planet, to be dutiful stewards of the environment and that we can encounter God in creation around us.

Give us today our daily bread,

We are thankful for the food on our table and the nourishment of our souls. Keep us mindful of those who have not, and our hearts open to sharing what we have with those around us.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Forgive us for the times we have not been the reflection of Christ's teachings in our community, have been swift to judge and quick to anger. Strength us to forgive those who harm us or others, and that in that act we know the presence of Christ.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Set the hearts of ourselves, our community, those that lead us locally and nationally on building the kingdom here on earth, and that we not be distracted by material things or paths that cause pain to others.

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.⁵

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

We will now take up the offering.

Living God, we offer you these, our gifts. Amongst the uncertainty of our broken world, a world waiting for a Saviour, we offer you ourselves.

Move amongst us, by your Spirit. Amen.⁶

Hymn:

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR

303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives

Blessing

Give love to your enemies, do good to those who hate you;
Live as true sons and daughters of your heavenly father;
The blessing of the one who come, who comes and who will come again go with you.

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker