

twelvebaskets



EASTER 4C

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

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Fourth Sunday of Easter - Year C
11th May 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

247 STF – I danced in the morning when the world was begun OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

Hymn:

297 STF – Christ is alive! Let Christians sing OR

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there? OR

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

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR

666 STF – Master, speak! Thy servant heareth

Blessing

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Call to worship

God who is Father and Mother,
God who is Creator, Spirit and Christ,
Three in one,
We bring ourselves in worship this day.

Show us how to walk in your way.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR
18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

We live between safety and adventure,
Betwixt and between then and now.

Here we are with more questions than answers,
Longing to be sure but frightened of certainty.

You say we cannot be snatched
You say we will know your voice
You say we are your people
You say that we will recognise you.

Yet, we continue to ask, 'Who are you?'
What do you want of us?
How can we know what is true?

Help us, God of love, to continue living these questions.

Give us courage not to be sure,
Save us from crucifying what we do not understand.

We walk through valleys of death and doubt
But there are still waters.

We are hungry, but our cup will be filled.
We may wander like lost sheep,
But you can restore our souls.

These are not vague promises
Nor a recipe for an easy life
But a way of being, of seeing and believing
As you have shown us, in Jesus
Guide our way, stay with us. Amen.²

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Barbara Glasson

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Many people have attempted to summarise everything about being a Christian in a few words – perhaps if you can't think of anything else to do in the rest of the service, you might like to have a go at it yourself!

However, I'd like to suggest one possible summary of the whole Christian faith: 'You are loved'.

There you go, three short words, and it's probably not good enough – because it doesn't mention God, or sin, or Jesus, or penal substitution, or the Holy Spirit, or grace, or a million other things that people would want to include in their sentence. But it works for some people – because it helps us to hear those three words: 'you are loved'.

We live in a world where, sometimes, it is easy to forget that we are loved. There is so much pressure on us to be better, the adverts on TV, the articles in magazines, things other people might say or the jokes they tell can all make us feel like we are not good enough.

Perhaps it is an advert for new clothes, which only works if it makes us feel like the clothes we currently own aren't good enough – that is how the company will persuade us to buy new ones. Or perhaps something that one of our friends or someone from our class, our workplace, our community says. They might not mean to be offensive, but they have their own worries and insecurities and in trying to protect themselves, they put us down, or say something negative about something that matters to us. It is easy to forget that we are loved.

But God loves us, no matter what. And an important part of the Jesus story is inviting us to recognise that – to see that God is close, God is with us, God loves us, just as we are.

In order for us to respond to what it is that God is calling us to do, it is important that we hear that message of love. We act, not always from a place of feeling guilty, but of feeling loved. The first thing God is calling you to be, is you.

Tim Minchin, the Australian singer, has a song called 'Not Perfect'. If you haven't heard it – I suggest looking it up. This song is his reflection on the importance of loving himself, even though he recognises that he is not perfect. The verses reflect firstly on the whole earth, then his country, his house, his body and finally his brain. He recognises that each of these is 'where I spend the vast majority of my time. It's not perfect, but it's mine'.

Perhaps we can come to the same realisation about ourselves? We are not perfect, but we have been created by a loving God who loves and accepts us just as we are. Can we learn that lesson again today? God is saying to each of us: 'you may not be perfect, but you are mine.'

'And you are loved'.³

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Hymn:

247 STF – I danced in the morning when the world was begun OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

Hymn:

297 STF – Christ is alive! Let Christians sing OR

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Reflections on the readings

Greetings everyone! It's a pleasure to see all of you here today. Today, as we gather together, we'll explore some powerful messages from our readings in John, Revelation and Acts. These passages will be read later in our service and highlight themes of guidance, protection, and the transformative power of faithful action.

Reading from Revelation 7:

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst... For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘He will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

Imagine you're in a vast crowd, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before a throne. Above you is not the sun or any artificial light, but the presence of God illuminating everything with warmth and love. This is the scene described in Revelation, a vision of a great multitude saved by God's grace.

This vision gives us a glimpse of the ultimate fulfilment of God's promises - the complete renewal of creation where there is no pain, hunger, or sorrow. But how do we live today in light of this promised future? How do we participate in bringing about this vision?

In John 10:22-30, Jesus speaks about His followers hearing His voice and following Him, promising eternal life and safety in His care. Meanwhile, in Acts 9:36-43, we see Tabitha, a disciple known for her good works and acts of charity, being brought back to life by Peter, which leads many to believe in the Lord. These narratives challenge us to listen to Jesus' voice and to act in faith, serving others as we have been called.

Let's think for a moment: What are some ways we hear Jesus' voice today? How can we be like Tabitha in our communities? Turn to your neighbour and share one way you feel called to help or serve someone this week.

Jesus' promise that his sheep hear his voice and follow his is comforting. It tells us that being part of his flock means we're never alone; his guidance and protection are always with us.

Similarly, the story of Tabitha inspires us to put our faith into action, not just for our salvation but for the benefit of those around us. Can anyone share a time when you felt guided by Jesus' voice in your decision-making or actions?

[Allow for one or two brief responses if appropriate.]

As we hold these scriptures in our heart, let us strive to be attentive to the voice of Jesus, guiding us through the Holy Spirit. Let us also be ready to serve, using our gifts to manifest God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, as we anticipate the glorious future promised in Revelation.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, thank you for the vision of a world made new, where every tear is wiped away, and every heart knows your comfort and provision.

Help us to hear Your voice clearly and to follow faithfully, serving those around us with the love and compassion You have shown us. Empower us to be agents of Your grace in this world.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Take this message with you into the week, and let the hope of Revelation inspire you to live out your faith actively and joyously every day.⁴

Hymn:

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there? OR

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

Prayers of intercession

Heavenly Father,

Gracious parent,

As we pray, we thank you that in Jesus you have given us a Good Shepherd who is faithful and loving.

We thank you that by your Spirit, you strengthen us to walk the way of the Good Shepherd. Today, we commit our lives afresh as we walk in your footsteps and listen attentively to your voice.

Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of life and life everlasting. For ourselves and for the whole of your creation, grant us new life and hope. Help us to trust in your promises especially when we face obstacles and enemies.

We pray for those who feel burdened by life and who can't see a way out. We pray for those who are walking in new lands and in uncertain territory. For those who are scared and vulnerable. Renew in them a deep trust in you and calm their fears.

For those who support others and for those who feel weary and restless, we ask that you fill and sustain them with your comfort and endless goodness.

For those guiding others; those in local, national and global politics and business; for those in leadership roles in your Church, we pray they will look to you for guidance and wisdom.

God of Peace, in all our troubles, we hold fast to the promises of your Son. We thank you for Jesus Christ who has overcome this world and conquered death. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace for peace in our hearts, in our homes and throughout the world this day and always.

Amen.⁵

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

We will now take up the offering.

God of peace,
Thank you for the gifts we have received.
Bless these gifts, that they might be put to use to care for those in need, spread hope and joy, and bring peace to your world.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.⁶

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory OR
666 STF – Master, speak! Thy servant heareth

Blessing

Let us go out in peace,
Seeking your kingdom of justice and joy,
Praying for a better world
And playing our part in bringing it about.
Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker