

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 21C

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

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**Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C**  
**24th August 2025**



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! OR**

**132 STF – O God, our help in ages past**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**152 STF – This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made OR**

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

Readings: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

**Hymn:**

**650 STF – Heal us, Immanuel! Hear our prayer OR**

**681 STF – Community of Christ, who make the Cross your own**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**507 STF – O for a heart to praise my God OR**

**526 STF – Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling OR**

**378 STF – Father of everlasting grace**

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**

Hope shines in the darkness,  
And whilst peace seems far away, we must hope and pray for it.

Come to us now, O Lord, we pray, this day,  
That we may know how to follow your invitation.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! OR

132 STF – O God, our help in ages past

## **Opening Prayers**

We were knit together in our mother's womb.  
Before our first breath on this earth you had a plan for us.  
From babe to elder you have a blueprint for our lives.  
You created a divine calling for us to live our lives in accordance with.

In the plan you made for us we may face many trials.  
But in the utter darkness and hopelessness let there be light.  
Lord, call to us in the dark and deliver us to the light of your love.

Give us an openness to allow your plan for us to progress as per your will.  
Liberate us from the bondage of the troubles that ail us.

We ask you to be our refuge.  
Helping to heal us when we are wounded.  
To help close the gap between fear and grace, allowing for grace to prevail.

We depend on you and praise your almighty name.  
Transform us in your will and lead us back to our path.  
We praise your almighty name.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

## **All Age Talk**

Later in our service, we'll hear a few verses from the beginning of Jeremiah. This little reflection uses those verses as an inspiration.

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

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Alice Arbon-Maher

When you look around the room today, what separates you from the other people that are here? What makes you different from them? Because we are all different in our own way.

Those of you who are under 18, do you ever think about the things you will be able to do when you get older that you can't do now?

Sometimes if we are younger than others we can feel like we're in a waiting room, like we can't reach our full potential until we are an adult, like we have not yet earned the right to serve God.

The passage that we will look at later from Jeremiah addresses this, God tells Jeremiah that he knew him before he was born, that he set him apart. Jeremiah expresses his concern that he is too young, he cannot serve God because no one will listen to him... and God say "Do not say 'I am too young'.... Do not be afraid."

God can use anyone of any age, even as God forms us into the people we will one day be, we are not waiting for the moment when we are complete, we are always evolving always learning, but always qualified to love and serve God.

So what makes you unique? What gifts, or skills or talents set you apart from others? How do you think God might use those gifts in you?

It might seem scary, to think about God using us, Jeremiah was certainly scared. But God has created us for something incredible, and God will be there every step of the way making sure it's not scary.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

152 STF – This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made OR

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

**Readings:** Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

### **Hymn:**

650 STF – Heal us, Immanuel! Hear our prayer OR

681 STF – Community of Christ, who make the Cross your own

### **Reflections on the readings**

The calling of a prophet can be to prophetic words, and to prophetic action. Our world is more than ever in need of prophets, and it could be argued that it is the role of all Christians to be people of prophecy, in word and deed. What might your calling be?

In words that echo Psalm 139, God speaks of the personal nature of his call upon Jeremiah's life. It is not that God has watched Jeremiah grow into a fine young man, standing out amongst his peers as the next prophet, instead this calling beats deep within Jeremiah's heart, from the very first beat in his mother's womb. Here, God knew him,

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Pippa Lupton

loved him, chose him and ordained him for the prophetic life that lay before him. Jeremiah responds to this deep spiritual call with a firm “no”, for he is too young.

What makes you ill equipped for the task that God is calling you to? What excuses do we find to say “no” to God?

Here these words spoken directly by God to your heart:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
before you were born I set you apart;  
appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah may have been one of the heavy weights of biblical prophecy, one the great characters of the bible, but that does not mean that God thinks any less of us than he did of Jeremiah, it does not mean that our lives and our calling is less in God’s mind as we took our first stretch, our first kick, our first heartbeat in the womb. He knows us and he loves us and he has called us to serve him.

In the late 1990’s the preacher James Payne felt called to be a local preacher. In his first year of university, he did not feel that the call could be right. Channelling his inner Jeremiah he believed himself too young, why would people who had lived 70 or 80 years of faith listen to the words of an 18 year old student, whose life was a mere third of the years of their faith. And yet into his heart God spoke – “if you speak my words, they are not your words, and people will listen”.

We are all called, but we are not all called to preach. And even though we may not all be called to be prophets, perhaps we are all called to prophecy. Sometimes we like to find neat boxes for the gifts of the Spirit – only those with the gift of healing will see miraculous acts happen in Jesus name, only prophets will prophesy. And yet when we offer forgiveness we heal relationships, when we speak words of love to the broken hearted, we heal those hearts – healing is not always miraculous. In the same way, when we listen to God and offer words of encouragement to a person for a specific situation we may be prophesying, when we follow Christ’s lead and challenge injustice or write to our MP’s, when we buy a meal for someone living on the streets, we are involved in prophetic acts. We do not have to be called to be prophets to be prophetic, we just have to be open to the fact that we are called.

The calling of a prophet can be to prophetic words, and to prophetic action.

We are more familiar with the prophetic words of the Old Testament. From major prophets to minor prophets, there were words that challenged a whole nation, words that challenged kings and rulers, or even enemies of Israel. It is perhaps because of the need to speak truth to power that Jeremiah felt too young. Jesus himself spoke such words to the leader of the synagogue and those around him. When challenged about healing on the Sabbath, Jesus responded with a challenge - "Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" As he often does, Jesus calls out hypocrisy and relates his work to the religious heritage that the leaders held so dear.

Just like Jeremiah, we may feel daunted by the idea of speaking truth to power. Challenging those who wage war, those whose businesses profit at the expense of the most vulnerable, or standing in the way of oppressive actions – all of these may make us feel that we would be way out of our depth. John Stuart Mill said that “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good [people] to do nothing” (sometimes attributed to Edmund Burke). Feeling that we cannot speak into such situations should not make us feel guilt ridden, praying for the work of JPIT (<https://jpit.org.uk>) enables a voice in the

corridors of power. We do still have a prophetic voice of our own, however. When we hear friends or family speak ill of the marginalised, stigmatise the most vulnerable or air views that are contrary to the gospel, we can still speak truth, ensuring that evil does not triumph, being prophetic.

What situations in the news do you think we can speak Jesus' truth into? Where have we failed to speak out recently? What might you say in the weeks to come?

The calling of a prophet can be to prophetic words, and to prophetic action.

For Jesus, words were often not enough. His challenge to the synagogue leader arose because of the action he had just taken – healing on the sabbath. Sometimes we might see a need and resist acting because of some social norm or other. Jesus saw a need and acted even though the rules said that he shouldn't. Over the years we have seen Methodist lay people and ministers arrested for protesting and standing against for what they felt God calling them to challenge. Most recently we have seen this in reference to the climate crisis, and the need for us to protect one of the most precious gifts that God has given us.

Whether it is standing to be counted on the streets or sitting on those same streets alongside someone who has no home, security or safety and sharing in a simple meal, we can take prophetic action. Whether it is sitting on the floor in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square or sitting in someone's living room bearing the gift of a meal as they wrestle with grief, we can be prophetic. When God urges us to take action to further his kingdom, we are taking prophetic action. Such actions may feel more 'prophetic' when they involve change from the ways of the world that are contrary to the gospel that have global impact, to the ways of the Kingdom that transform lives. And yet we should not belittle the small actions, the ones done behind closed doors that go unnoticed, and yet still transform lives. God used Elisha to speak a message of abundance in the face of famine, and also used Elisha to bless a widow and her sons with oil, a small act with personal impact.

Jesus took the ultimate action for our sake, laying his life down and sacrificing himself to bring light into a dark world. As Jesus calls us to love one another as he loved us, we should see any action that we can take to bring more love into the world through the lens of Christ's cross. It is the transforming power of Christ's love in our actions, no matter how small, that makes the prophetic a reality. Whether he was turning over tables or healing on the sabbath, Christ inspires in us the need to be prophetic and change the world.

What does prophetic action mean for you? What action could you take tomorrow to right a wrong? Is there anything that you feel you couldn't do if God showed you a need?

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

507 STF – O for a heart to praise my God OR

526 STF – Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

### **Prayers of intercession**

God of life and love,  
You have known us and loved us before we were born,  
and you have called and anointed us to be people of the word.

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Phil Jackson

We confess those times when we have taken a step back  
failing to speak out against injustice,  
speak up for the needy,  
or actively live out your love.

By your mercy, forgive and inspire us to be people of action.

We pray for the prophets of the world.

Strengthen those working for peace in the face of war,  
and equip those working on the front line to lessen the suffering,  
Lord who calls the prophets,  
rouse us that we may never do or say nothing.

We pray for the prophets challenging injustice.

Give wisdom to those fighting to build a better society,  
and lift those who are picking up the pieces when society failed.

Lord who calls the prophets,  
rouse us that we may never do or say nothing.

We pray for the prophets who are rebuilding communities.

Stand with those who volunteer so others know they are loved,  
and strengthen the activists willing to argue for their neighbours.

Lord who calls the prophets,  
rouse us that we may never do or say nothing.

We pray for those who are prophets in your church.

May we speak your word, that the world may know the God of justice and mercy,  
may we do your will, that love may be known in every part of your creation.

Lord who calls the prophets,  
rouse us that we may never do or say nothing.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

Living, loving God,  
Thank you for your love for us, and the many blessings we have received.  
As we offer you these gifts, may they be used to help bring peace, joy, love and hope to  
those in need in the days and weeks to come.  
Inspire us by your Spirit, we pray,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Phil Jackson

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

**Hymn:**

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling OR

378 STF – Father of everlasting grace

**Blessing**

May the way ahead seem clear to you as you leave,

May the Lord of light open doors for you and create opportunities to join in with the great story of love.

And may peace reign in your hearts, always

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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