



ORDINARY 28C

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

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C
12th October 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

270 STF – Come and see, come and see OR

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

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

79 STF – I'll praise my maker OR

40 STF – Blessed be the name of the Lord

Readings: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7; Psalm 66:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

Hymn:

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell OR

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

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

776 STF – In the Lord I'll ever be thankful OR

559 STF – Lord you have my heart and I will search for yours

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

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

556 STF – Just as I am, without one plea

Blessing

The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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Call to worship

Come further in,
Come further up,
Come into the community of God,
Come and see the beauty of the love, the peace, the joy that we are meant to experience in this life.
Come, play your part in making that a reality for everyone here today.
Come, by your Spirit, O God,
Amen.¹

Hymn:

270 STF – Come and see, come and see OR
33 STF – O Lord, we are always in your presence

Opening Prayers

God of the large and the small,
As we begin our time with you today,
help us to feel you in the stillness.
A short time of silence.
Help us to notice you in the air and in our breath,
in a small smile and a brief nod to another.
Help us to sense you in the rustle of fallen leaves,
and in the gentle sway of late-season wildflowers.
Yes, Lord, you are the God of mountains and oceans,
yet you are also the God of soil and seed.
As we begin our time with you today,
help us to root ourselves in our smallness before you,
and in the greatness of your love.
Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Can you imagine what the world would be like if we didn't know where all the countries are? Imagine for a moment that you look out at the sea and think "Nothing out there but water!" Imagine if all the land you could walk on was on one side of the planet?

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

Well, in the 1400s that's basically what they thought! So much so that some sailors and explorers thought that if they sailed off from the east of the world, they would arrive on the west coast; and the same the other way around! In fact, one man did gather a few ships and set sail to find a way to the east...but they ended up in what we now know as the Americas. That sailor was Christopher Columbus, and most people around the world celebrate today as Columbus Day: in which Christopher Columbus discovered "The New World."

If it wasn't for Columbus finding the New World, we wouldn't have many of the things we find as normal, everyday life. Until this discovery, Europe didn't have tomatoes, potatoes, pineapples, chilli peppers, peanuts, or even cocoa beans! Imagine that!

Until Columbus found the Americas:

- We could have fish, without the chips, or tomato sauce!
- Tomato and basil sauce pasta would just have been basil and pasta!
- Pizza would just be bread with cheese on it, and not lovingly combined with tomatoes and pineapple!
- There was no chocolate!

A lot of amazing things that changed the world happened because of Columbus. But there were already people living in the Americas! They didn't need to be discovered, they already knew each other was there! While most people celebrate Columbus Day, others celebrate Indigenous People's Day on the same day; to celebrate the native peoples of the Americas and to recognise the harm that came from not only the discovery, but the colonisation of the land that followed and the harm that the people still feel. The sailors brought a lot of disease to the Americas, took the land they found from the people that lived there, and ended up causing a lot of pain and death.

We can celebrate the good that happened while also acknowledging the pain that it caused and still causes to this day. In a few weeks we'll be commemorating Remembrance Sunday, the end of war and the values people fought for; but also the lives that were lost and are still lost in war to this day. In the same way we share the stories of Jesus' birth and how wonderful it was; we also remember that Herod ordered the death of a lot of children.

Let us hold these two things, the good and the bad, in our hearts as we pray:

God, we give thanks for Columbus and the passion for exploration and wonder you gave him. We remember all those indigenous people who were exploited and harmed by others. We pray that we can have the passion for a world in which all are treated fairly, are respected by one another, and that we can share and learn from one another.

Amen.³

Hymn:

79 STF – I'll praise my maker OR

40 STF – Blessed be the name of the Lord

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

Readings: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7; Psalm 66:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

Hymn:

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell OR

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

Reflections on the readings

Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? So where are the other nine? Did none of them return to give glory to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:17-18)

Foreigner! Do we even mention this word at the present time?

A word that's likely to trigger arguments, debates, hostility – people getting angry on seemingly dramatic opposing sides. For some, it'll trigger feelings of wanting to make sure people are welcomed and given a safe home. They're worried of how stories about foreigners are being used to stir up hate. For others, they feel threatened by the arrival of people from other places, believing that it's affecting the life they're able to live, worried about what it means for society.

So perhaps as good Christians we should avoid the topic. Yet, in our gospel reading Jesus highlights the foreigner, specifically refers to this identity– and of course, it's not a one-off. We get regular reminders by the gospel writers that foreigners were part of the Jesus-story. And for that reason, as Bible-believing Christians, we cannot ignore it.

At the time of Jesus, we know that many religious people from Jerusalem saw Samaritans as outsiders – thinking them unclean, unworthy, and outside God's love. But we also know through the way the stories are told in the gospels, that Jesus went out of his way to say and demonstrate the opposite. Samaritans are included – they are as much part of the love of God as anyone. Elsewhere in the Gospels, we hear the famous story of the Good Samaritan, which indicates this inclusivity and the way that Jesus is breaking down barriers and borders. In today's reading from Luke, the mention of the Samaritan returning to thank Jesus seems to underline this important point in Jesus' ministry: the Samaritan was healed and saved by Jesus, so Samaritans are included! Foreigners are in, not out!

It's easy to get to this point – all are included in God's love, foreigners too. But what is our contemporary response to what's going on around us? How do we deal with hateful narratives and complexities around migration and asylum seeking? How do we respond when we really do feel things are hard because of the economic situation, money is really tight for many people? The worldwide situation is insecure because of division and war, and our drive for increased productivity and progress is ruining the earth's resources and our climate. How do we respond to the foreigner in these conditions – when things are not easy? When we feel we have no control over any of these structures or situations, and we look for someone to blame who we can aim our frustrations towards.

Our Jeremiah reading might help us find somewhere to begin. The context is simple: God's people of the time, Israel, were in exile. Many had been banished to Babylon – to live alongside Babylonians – they were no longer ruling in Jerusalem. In this case foreign invaders had taken charge. Now the logical step from this might be to condemn foreigners because they were the oppressive rulers. But things are never this simple. The people of a nation often do not reflect the ruling classes of that nation – we see this in so many examples of wars – past and present. There is often something more subtle at play – and that is the oppressive nature of the elite, the rulers – those with the power, the money, who often oppress not only those from other places, but their own people, so that they maintain the lifestyles they want.

So how does Jeremiah tell the people to deal with this, what is the message from God?

Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:5-7)

God says, live your lives to the fullest, do the things that you need to. Make homes, grow food and eat, get married. Then Jeremiah drops some wisdom: the welfare of the place you are in is where you will find your welfare. In other words, don't just do things to look after yourself, look after the place you are in – all its people – for it is your community. In caring for neighbour, you will create a place that cares for you. There is no hint of fighting, resisting, dividing – but the call to be community together. The people in your place are not the enemy – wherever they are from, however they identify, however different they are, they are your neighbours, your people, with a common humanity.

While the ruling classes may seek to oppress, to exploit, to use people for their own ends, to spread hate and create division, the ordinary people of our cities, towns and villages seek the same things: to live life to its fullest. To find homes and shelter for safety and security, to have enough to eat to be healthy, and to have families and friends and relationships that bring joy. So, in seeking the welfare of the place we are in, together we can build communities that thrive and provide places of sanctuary for all of us.

The 'us' and 'them' in the Bible's narrative is never the ordinary folk of different nations – the Bible recognises the sacredness of all human life, particularly those who are poor, oppressed, marginalised and neglected. The Bible's frustration – and God's frustration – is those who exploit and oppress others by misusing power – think of the Pharaohs. God calls us not to find reasons to divide, but to recognise we are all neighbours, loved dearly by God, and often affected by the misuse of power. We may feel powerless and frustrated but we mustn't look for people to blame who are seeking the same fullness that God promises for all people – those who misuse power are judged by God and God's justice will always prevail.

So, what is our response? Join hands with our neighbours to seek the welfare of the city, so the city will look after us. By joining in with God's mission to build wholesome healthy communities, we subvert the narrative that leaders create. Leaders will use our fears and insecurities to make us hate one another, to encourage us to find enemies, to blame someone for our problems, so we ignore the real reasons for the world's issues – in Jesus' time it was the Samaritans, today, we're told its migrants and asylum seekers. Yet Jesus reached out in love across the divisions to show the ruling classes that we are stronger when we love our neighbour, and we reflect the love of God when we unite. In the words of Martin Luther King Jnr:

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

It is the power of love that will transform our communities – bearing the Light of God into the world around us. It is our calling to be those lights for Christ.

What might you commit to today that will share the love of God with those around?

What might this look like in your home, your community, the places you visit?

What are the things you might do individually or as a group to look after the community and help everyone find their fullness in life?⁴

Hymn:

776 STF – In the Lord I'll ever be thankful OR

559 STF – Lord you have my heart and I will search for yours

Prayers of intercession

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

We pray for the world,
for ruling classes, leaders, governments,
may they know their works will be judged,
may it shape their actions,
and encourage them to seek divine wisdom.

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

We pray for the earth,
for those working hard to protect its resources,
may they be given strength to challenge
to speak truth to those who exploit
so their words convict.

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

We pray for places torn apart by war,
may your desire for peace ripple through armies
and transform their hearts ,
turning war machines into harvesters.

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

We pray for the Church,
may it be a people that welcomes
and cares for its neighbours,
continually stepping across divides
to seek the welfare and fullness of life for all people.

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

⁴ Reflection written by Gary Hopkins

We pray for our community,
may we be inspired and encouraged
to act in ways that work towards our common flourishing,
recognising our common purposes
and reflecting God's love into the world.

God of the outcast, stranger, foreigner,
hear our prayers for those you love.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Holy Lord,
You have blessed and guided us,
And brought us here to this moment, through all that has happened in our story so far.
As we come into your presence today,
Help us to use the gifts we have, including those given here today,
To build your kingdom of justice and joy here on earth.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

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

556 STF – Just as I am, without one plea

Blessing

Holy, gracious God,
As we go from this time and space,
Out into the rest of this day and the week ahead,
We go knowing you are already there ahead of us
And we go to meet with you, in the people we meet this day,

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Gary Hopkins

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker