

# twelvebaskets



## EASTER 6A

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

Produced by **twelvebaskets**. Subscription available from [theworshipcloud.com](http://theworshipcloud.com)

# Sixth Sunday of Easter - Year A

10th May 2026



## Order of Service

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**4 STF – Father in heaven, grant to your children OR**

**463 STF – Deep in the shadows of the past**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**418 STF – We have a gospel to proclaim OR**

**293 STF – All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord**

Readings: Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

**Hymn:**

**372 STF – Come down, O Love divine OR**

**94 STF – To God be the glory, great things he has done!**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**350 STF – I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship OR**

**476 STF – One more step along the world I go**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**345 STF – And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? OR**

**296 STF – Christ has risen while earth slumbers**

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

Copyright for content is retained by the original author / contributor.

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

## **Call to worship**

For centuries, the followers of Christ have met to worship and pray,  
Today we connect together to do so again,  
To maintain an ancient tradition,  
To keep the story of resurrection alive,  
In Jesus' name,

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

4 STF – Father in heaven, grant to your children OR  
463 STF – Deep in the shadows of the past

## **Opening Prayers**

We join together in prayer.

We bring ourselves, just as we are, with all our baggage.

Our worries, our doubts, our fears, our regrets.

The fear that we are not enough, not doing enough.

Help us remember that we are lovingly made in your image and we are loved...  
Loved unconditionally.

Help us look outward.

We are sorry we get so much wrong, sometimes saying or doing the wrong thing.

Sometimes not saying or doing things that could help someone else, those we share our  
lives with and those further afield...

Too often not saying or doing the things that would help ourselves.

Help us lay our baggage down.

We bring our prayers before you with gratitude and love for you, the world... and  
ourselves.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

---

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

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Lorna Dobson

## All Age Talk

I want you to imagine something today. Close your eyes if it helps. Imagine you have to go somewhere important. Maybe a new school, a new job, or moving to a new town. Now imagine the person who usually helps you is not going with you.

You might feel a little nervous. You might wonder how you will manage.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is preparing his disciples for a moment like that. He is telling them that he will not always be with them in the same physical way.

And you can imagine the disciples feeling worried. But then Jesus says something very comforting:

“I will not leave you as orphans.”

Jesus, in this moment, is saying that his followers will never be abandoned. They will never be left to face life alone. Then he introduces a very important idea. He tells them that God will send the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit can sound mysterious, but Jesus describes the Spirit as a helper and a presence that stays with us. Think about when someone encourages you at exactly the right moment.

Or when you feel a quiet sense of peace even though life is difficult. Or when you suddenly feel the courage to do something kind or brave.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in moments like these. The Spirit reminds us that God is near. The Spirit helps us understand how to live in the way of Jesus. The Spirit nudges us toward love, kindness, forgiveness, and courage.

Jesus also says something else important in this passage:

“If you love me, keep my commands.”

Now that might sound like a rule, but it is really about relationship. When we love someone, we care about the things that matter to them. If someone you love asks for help, you help them. Not because you have to, but because you care.

Jesus invites us into that kind of relationship with him.

Following Jesus is not about ticking boxes or proving how good we are. It is about learning to love the things Jesus loves. Caring for people. Welcoming those who feel left out. Choosing kindness when it would be easier to be harsh.

And the good news is that we do not do this alone. The Holy Spirit walks with us.

So, when we try to live the way of Jesus, we are never trying by ourselves. God is already at work within us.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### Hymn:

418 STF – We have a gospel to proclaim OR

293 STF – All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord

---

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

**Readings:** Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

**Hymn:**

372 STF – Come down, O Love divine OR

94 STF – To God be the glory, great things he has done!

**Reflections on the readings**

Today's reflection has been written by Lucy Zwolinksa, a regular contributor to The Vine resources. Let's read her words now, though she begins by quoting Jesus:

*"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth."*

What a bewildering time it must have been to be one of Jesus' disciples. To fall in love with God made flesh, to lay aside everything you've known to follow him, listen to his teachings and then to see him persecuted and to watch him die on the cross. To see him raised to life and then, once again, to face the ache of his leaving.

Of course, I'm jumping ahead in John's Gospel here, but given that this is the sixth Sunday in Easter, that feels appropriate.

But I'm struck this ongoing Easter season by Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit as being something given, just at the same time as something is taken away – for the disciples it is given as Jesus is taken, materially at least.

So much of life feels like that, doesn't it? Some blessings are bestowed, while others slip through our fingers and others are taken away. It is the human experience.

But into that confusion, Jesus speaks this promise:

*"I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."*

This is the promise of the Advocate — the Holy Spirit — who would remain with the disciples even when Jesus was no longer physically present. And it is just as much a promise for us today: God with us and in us. And it is on that promise that I invite you to join me in meditating on today. First, I'll invite us to reflect on the 'now and not yet' of God's kingdom: made 'now' by the Holy Spirit. I'll then reflect on noticing the 'now' in the everyday, and end by turning to some wise Christians on whose shoulders we stand to ask how we lean into the 'now'.

So, first: God in us 'now', even if the Kingdom of God isn't yet fully manifest.

N. T. Wright describes the Holy Spirit as "the down payment of the new creation." I love that image.

Recently I paid a down payment on a holiday. It's a big exciting holiday that will involve sunshine, swimming, cycling and hiking and I just cannot wait. I'd been planning and plotting the holiday for a long time, although it still felt a bit like a distant dream or a 'maybe' until I paid the down payment.

At the moment, as I paid that deposit, it shifted from a dream into something real. I started planning. Buying cycle gloves. Booking hotels. Telling other people. Imagining myself there. I might still be sitting in the UK in the rain, but I am sure that soon I'll be slapping on the SPF.

I think that's a helpful image of how the Holy Spirit works. The Spirit is God's guarantee that the new creation is not only coming, but already breaking in. It makes it real for us in the here and now. And to be honest, my holiday simile falls down a little here, because the Spirit doesn't just point us toward a future kingdom. The Spirit allows the kingdom of God to be made manifest for us.

This is the paradox we live in as Christians: the world is broken. Life can be difficult *and* kingdom of God is here. We have not been left as orphans in this broken world, we are invited into the sacred today. This is what Jesus is preparing his disciples for: a world where his physical absence does not mean the absence of the sacred.

Whenever I think about the "now," I remember reading *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor during the first Covid lockdown in 2020.

Do you remember that strange season? I remember the spring and summer as unusually warm and beautiful, a real juxtaposition with the fear and uncertainty we were feeling around the world. I am sure that many of you experienced a version of this: moments of noticing, moments of fear, moments of unexpected grace.

Reading Barbara Brown Taylor at that time invited me to notice God everywhere: she points to the sacred not only in church, but in nature, in tired hands and feet, in the faces of others. And that summer, accompanied by that invitation, I walked. I noticed blossoms opening, trees shifting through their seasons, the warmth of the sun on my skin. I was scared and confused, and yet I felt God incarnate around me in the everyday.

I reckon I've lost sight of that a bit now.

Perhaps you have too.

Sometimes we simply lose sight of the Holy Spirit at work.

So, the question becomes: *how do we attune ourselves again to the ever present work of the Holy Spirit?*

This brings me to my last point. Christians throughout history have tried to explore how we open ourselves to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thomas Merton, a 20th Century Catholic Priest once famously wrote, "There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun." He believed the Spirit was everywhere, in every human face. I reckon he and Barbara Brown Taylor would have got on well.

For Merton, silence and solitude were the ways we tune our hearts to God. "In silence," he said, "God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience."

Silence can be frightening.

It can leave us along with our fears and our flaws.

But silence also opens us to the still, small voice of God, nudging us toward the person we are called to be, toward the waking of the kingdom. If we want to attune ourselves to the gift of the Holy Spirit, silence is a good place to start.

I'm also interested that in this passage in which Jesus is speaking about the gift of the Holy Spirit, he also tells his disciples to keep God's commands. The two aren't juxtaposed; to attune ourselves to the Holy Spirit, it's worth sticking close to the life that Jesus calls us to; of fellowship, of prayer, of sacrifice, of turning the other cheek. These are spiritual practices too, as much as they are a practical guide for life.

But while all this reads like a practical guide to Christianity, I must confess that to me the working of the Holy Spirit is a mystery.

When Jesus says, “The world will not see me, but you will see me,” I sometimes think, “Oh dear — I am the world.” Because there are days when I struggle to see God in anything, let alone to feel the Holy Spirit within me.

But mystery is part of our inheritance, and an important one. And when understanding fails, poetry and prayer can carry us. I’m going to leave you with a prayer from Saint Augustine that feels like a song - that, for me, captures the mystery and still leans into a longing for the ‘not yet’ of the Kingdom of God.

My prayer for each one of us today is that we might notice the Holy Spirit within us - in silence, in longing, in daily life. And so, we pray with Augustine:

#### Augustine’s Prayer

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my work may be holy.  
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
that I may love what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
to defend what is holy.  
Guide me, O Holy Spirit,  
that I may always be holy.  
Amen.<sup>4</sup>

#### Hymn:

350 STF – I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship OR  
476 STF – One more step along the world I go

#### Prayers of intercession

Call: God of the now and the not yet;  
Response: We pray for the coming of your Kingdom.

God who promises never to leave us as orphans;  
We thank you for your Holy Spirit.

God may the working of your Holy Spirit in us lead to real change in our lives.  
May you draw us closer to you, into deeper waters.  
May you transform our fears and our foibles and put us to work to your glory.

Call: God of the now and the not yet;  
Response: We pray for the coming of your Kingdom.

God we are sorry for when we have ignored your still small voice and gone our own way.  
We pray for forgiveness for when our own desires have superseded yours.

Call: God of the now and the not yet;  
Response: We pray for the coming of your Kingdom.

God we pray for those people who are on our hearts today, those who are suffering.  
In a moment of silence we offer you up their names.

---

<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Lucy Zwolinska

### *Silence.*

Work in their lives, God, restore, heal and renew.

Call: God of the now and the not yet;

Response: We pray for the coming of your Kingdom.

God we pray for our world. For the places and countries experiencing the brokenness of the world.

Where it is so hard to imagine the Kingdom of God breaking through, we thank you that your plans are beyond our imagining.

Call: God of the now and the not yet;

Response: We pray for the coming of your Kingdom.

We hand all of these prayers, spoken and unspoken, up to you, our God who has promised to be with us always.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

Thank you Lord, for all that we have received.

May these gifts, and all the gifts we carry with us, be used for building your kingdom of justice and joy here on earth, we pray.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? OR

296 STF – Christ has risen while earth slumbers

### **Blessing**

May you go out from here, an Easter people.

May you go from here to tell stories of new life and possibility.

May you go from here to share God's love with those you meet,

And may the Creator, the Christ and the Spirit go with you every step.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Lucy Zwolinska

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

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