

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 11A

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

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Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A
14th June 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn OR

443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

407 STF – Hear the call of the kingdom OR

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

Readings: Genesis 18:1-15; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; Romans 5: 1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:8

Hymn:

162 STF – The prophets' voice comes down the years OR

475 STF – O God of Bethel, by whose hand thy people still are fed

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

462 STF – Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world OR

562 STF – O God, what offering shall I give

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling OR

699 STF – God of justice, Saviour to all

Blessing

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Call to worship

As sure as the sun rises,
So sure can we be of your love for us,
Of your grace, going before us.
Come into our midst, this morning, we pray, O God,
That we might know your presence and sense your hand on our lives.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn OR
443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love

Opening Prayers

Leader: We come before you grateful for this time,
reminded of your goodness and grace.

We come seeking renewed strength in you
and in your constant presence beside us.

All: We come before you, trusting that you hear us when we call.

Leader: We come seeking peace in your presence,
and strength for our days ahead.

All: We come before you, trusting that you hear us when we call.

Leader: We come carrying the weight of things beyond our control,
longing for rest in you.

All: We come before you, trusting that you hear us when we call.

Leader: We come, too, with joy,
knowing that you know us and call each one of us by name.

All: We come before you, trusting that you hear us and that we are truly known.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker ²

Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

All Age Talk

I'd like to begin with a simple question: have you ever received news that felt... almost too good to be true? Something that made you stop and think, "Really? Me?" Or even... "That can't possibly happen."

Pause.

In today's readings, we meet people who hear exactly that kind of news, and who don't quite know what to do with it.

In our reading from Genesis, Abraham and Sarah are visited by strangers. They offer them hospitality: food, rest, welcome, simple acts of kindness. And then they are told that Sarah, in her old age, will have a child, and Sarah laughs. Not a joyful laugh, at first, but a surprised, disbelieving laugh.

And perhaps we understand that, because sometimes hope can feel risky. Sometimes promises can feel hard to trust, especially when life has taught us to expect less.

Then, in the Gospel reading, we see Jesus moving through towns and villages, teaching, healing, noticing people. And we're told something very simple, but very important: he has compassion. He sees people who are tired, overwhelmed, and unsure where to turn, and his heart goes out to them.

Instead of doing everything himself, Jesus calls others to join in. Ordinary people, disciples who don't have all the answers. And he sends them out to heal, to bring peace, to share good news.

"The kingdom of heaven has come near."

Not far away, not only for later, but close: already beginning, already breaking into ordinary life.

God's promise sometimes feels hard to believe, God's compassion reaches us, no matter how far away we might feel. Sarah laughs because the promise seems impossible, the disciples might well have felt unready for the task. And yet, God's work continues through them. Not because they are perfect, but because they are willing.

Most of us, at some point, feel a bit like Sarah, wondering if hope is really for us. Or a bit like the disciples, unsure if we have what it takes. But the message running quietly through all of this is: God's love comes close, God's compassion is real, and we are invited to take part.

Where might you be invited to share a little of that compassion, in a simple, ordinary way? Because the good news is not distant, it comes near in welcome, in kindness, in love that reaches us before we feel ready.

Amen.³

Hymn:

407 STF – Hear the call of the kingdom OR

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

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

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Hymn:

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Reflections on the readings

“How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?” (Psalm 116: 12)

We Lived Happily during the War

By Ilya Kaminsky

And when they bombed other people’s houses, we
protested

but not enough, we opposed them but not
enough. I was

in my bed, around my bed America
was falling: invisible house by invisible house –
I took a chair outside and watched the sun.

In the sixth month
of a disastrous reign in the house of money
in the street of money in the city of money in the country of money,
our great country of money, we (forgive us)
lived happily during the war.

[Pause]

There’s a room in my house which I knew would be the last one to sort out and fully
unpack when I moved house last year. Not because I didn’t want to sort the room out, but
because every other room in the house needed more attention, and it could wait.

As months passed by, the room, at first just stacked with the boxes of things that were
needed in that room, also had other boxes put in there ‘to sort out later’, and bags with
random bits and pieces which just needed to be put out of sight and out of mind for a little
while.

The trouble with this is twofold: firstly, of course the work of organising that room became
more and more complex with every bag and box and pile that ended up in there, and
secondly, the room happens to be the conservatory, so as the weather has improved and
we’ve wanted to be in the garden or enjoying lengthening evenings, ‘out of sight’ quickly
became ‘eyesore’!

The relief of finally sorting the conservatory out, into a lovely place to sit and to craft, was
immense indeed. But the work, which I had put off for so long, was by this point a huge
undertaking, and I had to fight that instinct to ignore it still longer, the weight of the work
being so overwhelming.

It’s trivial, I know, but helps me to think about the attitude I so often have to the work God
has called each of us to, in this world which so needs the love of Christ. Perhaps I’m not
the only one who feels like the task is too big, too overwhelming, that it’s more comfortable
to bury our heads in the sand and hope when we come up for air some elves or imps or
other kindly magical creatures have done the work we’re tasked with.

When Jesus sends out the twelve apostles in Matthew chapters 9 and 10, he warns them that there is much work to be done, and there are few workers to tackle the load. It's clear from the way Jesus sends the apostles that this is not a pleasure cruise, no easy task. Instead, they are sent out with what might sound like very limited resources- no gold, silver, or copper, no bag, extra tunic or sandals or staff – to go far and wide, preaching that the kingdom of heaven is near. They are instructed to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy and drive out demons.

It makes my boxes in the conservatory look somewhat ridiculous as a 'workload' doesn't it?!

Like those first apostles, we are called, gathered, and sent, to be those who bring the good news of the kingdom of heaven and the love of God in Christ, to those who have not yet heard. We are faced with a task that feels as impossible as it did then perhaps, and with resources that are far more plentiful than those first evangelists had, but seem to us so limited.

How many meetings have you or others around you had recently where hands have been wrung and heads shaken about money worries, property concerns, compliance work, or the difficulty of filling posts or succession planning?

It feels like these things are the work we are tasked with as those who are trustees or members of the church.

In fact, these things are **not** the work, but are those resources we must manage and use well for the work that's actually around us. With or without pennies in our coffers, or extra resources to our name, the work remains, and we are called to it whether or not we feel equipped.

The work, fellow disciples, is overwhelming when we examine it. Around us a world rages with hatred, greed, violence, oppression, injustice, discrimination and the devastating effects of the climate crisis. On our televisions, newspapers and apps, headlines about military action around the world scream at us, and we see images of the current President of the USA and other members of his administration spouting hatred, division, and violence beside the cross, with a Bible in hand, claiming their policies and actions are condoned by God. In our communities, we have seen a rise in racism and division.

The work, fellow disciples, is not diminished whether or not we think our resources are likewise diminished.

We must remember our call to go and heal, and restore, and bring peace, and preach that the kingdom of heaven is near, and can indeed be built here, where peace and justice are sought above greed and domination.

The poem I read at the start is by Ilya Kaminsky (a Ukrainian poet who, with his family, sought asylum in the USA from Odessa). It is an uncomfortable read which reminds us that, around us, war is raging, and that it is very possible to sit in the eye of the storm ignoring it. With strong echoes of Niemöller's words 'First they came for...', Kaminsky offers us this stark image of living not just comfortably but *happily* while the world around is crying out in pain and suffering.

As churches, we could very well do the same. But I hope we will not choose to do so.

In the letter to the Romans, chapter 5, we are given yet more confirmation that the task of Christ-following is not easy, but that when we suffer, we learn perseverance, which builds our character, which teaches us hope.

The gift of hope is the greatest resource we can have in this work. We can know that God has 'poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit' (Romans 5:5) and with this

knowledge, we must find greater resolve to be those workers in the field, ready to bring God's love in Christ to others.

If I can feel some relief after unpacking some boxes in a small sunny room, how much greater joy waits for us if we work for building the kingdom here and now, with whatever we have been gifted, knowing there is always hope, for a world which sings to peace's melody and rests in justice's calm?

Questions for discussion in small groups / as a whole congregation, or for people to take away and think about some more (perhaps over tea/coffee):

- 1) What is the work in your community? Are there groups of people in particular you are being called to serve?
- 2) Which resources that you have currently feel like more of a burden, and how can you change that?
- 3) How should we pray, speak, speak out and act when the world is so torn apart by fear, violence, and misrepresentation of the gospel of Jesus?

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

462 STF – Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world OR
562 STF – O God, what offering shall I give

Prayers of intercession

Holy God, you have given us all we have needed for the work you have called us to.

Help us to remember this as we pray.

As the world groans with injustice, we bring before you the planet you loved into life, the creation we see around us.

You have given us all we need to look after all you have made.

Open our eyes to the work, and make us eager to bring change.

As the peoples of this world are torn apart by division, violence, hatred and oppression, we pray for all humanity, and the systems we have created, soaked in injustice.

You have given us all we need to care for one another and live in peace.

Open our eyes to the work, and help us to challenge injustice and hatred.

As our faith is used and misrepresented for political purposes, and given as a foundation for exclusion, discrimination and war, we pray that the world would come to know Christ's way as one of peace and justice.

You have given us all we need to share your love and build the kingdom of heaven.

Open our eyes to the work, and give us courage to be true and visible witnesses of your love.

Send us out, loving Jesus, and give us hope that the work you call us to will indeed change our world for the better, for your glory, for the good of the most vulnerable and lost.

These things we ask in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit

Amen.⁵

⁴ Reflection written by Becki Stennett

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Becki Stennett

We will now take up the offering.

Loving God,

We know there is so much need for grace and peace and healing in your world,
And we want to put these gifts – the gifts here given, and all of those we have at our
disposal – to use in sharing your love with those who need to know its reality, today and all
week.

Come, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit, we pray

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling OR

699 STF – God of justice, Saviour to all

Blessing

God of justice,

God of wisdom,

God of light,

Inspire, carry and lift us through this week ahead,

That we might catch the opportunities to join in with your invitation,

This day and always,

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker