

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 12A

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

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**Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A**  
21st June 2026



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**50 STF – Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise OR**

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

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**109 STF – In the darkness of the still night OR**

**595 STF – Lord, we have come at your own invitation**

Readings: Genesis 21: 8-21; Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17; Romans 6: 1b-11; Matthew 10: 24-39

**Hymn:**

**489 STF – All I once held dear, built my life upon OR**

**248 STF – I heard the voice of Jesus say**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? OR**

**706 STF – Longing for light, we wait in darkness**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult OR**

**303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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## Call to worship

The Spirit of God is here, all around us.  
Today, as we worship, help us to open our hearts and minds,  
To receive your Spirit in our lives, O God.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

50 STF – Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise OR  
463 STF – Deep in the shadows of the past

## Opening Prayers

Leader: God of the heavens and the earth,

We arrive here today resting in the knowledge that you are far bigger than anything we can comprehend, yet you know the names of even the smallest creatures on this planet.

**All: Thank you, God, for all that you are and all that you have provided.**

Leader: We arrive here with you today in awe of your expansive being- both rushing waterfall and still, calming waters, we meet you where we are.

**All: Thank you God for all that you are and all that you have provided.**

We arrive here together today, letting go of what has been and picking up the mantle of what is to come.

**All: Thank you God for all that we are and all the ways you help us along the way.**

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

### All Age Talk

Have you ever had a moment when things felt a bit upside down? Perhaps when something you expected to be simple turned out to be complicated? Or when doing the right thing didn't feel easy at all?

Today's readings are not the easiest ones we hear, they're not neat or tidy, they don't wrap everything up with a happy ending. But they are honest and they speak into real life.

In our reading from Genesis, we will hear a painful story: Hagar and her son Ishmael are sent away into the wilderness. It's a story of fear, loss, and being pushed to the edge. And

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

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

yet, in that place of desperation, God hears their cry and is present with them in the wilderness.

It's not a story that tells us everything is suddenly fine, but it is a story that reminds us: even in the hardest places, people are not forgotten, God is present.

Then, in the Gospel reading, Jesus speaks in a way that might surprise us. He talks about division, about difficulty, about the cost of following him. These aren't the gentle, comforting words we might expect, and yet, woven through them is something important.

Jesus doesn't pretend that love, truth, or justice will always be easy. He doesn't promise that doing the right thing will always make us popular or comfortable. And yet, he also speaks about courage, about not being afraid, about trust.

He reminds his listeners that they are known and valued, even down to the smallest details of their lives: "Even the hairs of your head are all counted," he says.

It's a way of saying: you matter, even when things feel uncertain or difficult or you feel small.

There will be hard moments, there will be wilderness places, there will be times when following love and truth comes at a cost. But, we are not alone.

Hagar and Ishmael are seen and heard in the wilderness. The disciples are reminded that they are known and valued. And we are invited into a life that can always begin again. This doesn't take away the difficulty, but perhaps it can change how we walk through it.

Where do I need courage right now? Not big, dramatic courage, but the quiet kind.

As you seek for it, know that you are seen, you are known, you are held, you are loved.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

109 STF – In the darkness of the still night OR

595 STF – Lord, we have come at your own invitation

**Readings:** Genesis 21: 8-21; Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17; Romans 6: 1b-11; Matthew 10: 24-39

### **Hymn:**

489 STF – All I once held dear, built my life upon OR

248 STF – I heard the voice of Jesus say

### **Reflections on the readings**

There are some Bible stories we might rather hurry past.

Genesis 21 is one of them.

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

A child is born into laughter and promise, and another child is pushed out into the wilderness. Sarah sees Ishmael playing and becomes afraid of what his presence might mean for Isaac's future. Abraham is distressed, but he goes along with it. Hagar is sent away with bread and a skin of water, and when the water runs out she puts her child down at a distance because she cannot bear to watch him die.

It is a painful story. And maybe one reason it matters is because the Bible's telling of the story does not attempt to smooth over its harsh reality. It does not pretend that family life is simple, or that the people through whom God works always make good and generous choices. Sometimes the Bible gives us not a neat example to follow, but a hard truth to sit with. Hagar is not simply in a difficult family situation. She is someone with very little power over what happens to her or her child.

And the truth here is hard: people often protect what they think is theirs by pushing others to the edge.

Sarah is worried about inheritance, status, future and security. Those are recognisable fears. They are fears people still live with now – the fear that there will not be enough, that someone else's presence threatens our place, that our safety depends on drawing a harder line around who belongs. Fear like that can make us justify things we would once have thought unthinkable.

That is why this story feels so painfully current. We still live in a world where vulnerable people are sent away for the sake of someone else's comfort or security. We still live in a world where children are caught in adult conflict, where displaced people are treated as problems to be managed, where survival can depend on whether anyone is willing to hear a cry from the wilderness.

And that is where this story turns.

Not because everything suddenly becomes all right. Not because Hagar is quickly restored to comfort and dignity. But because God hears.

That is the heart of the passage. Hagar has reached the point where she cannot see a way forward. The child is crying. Death feels close. And in that place – beyond family protection, beyond human fairness, beyond easy answers – God hears the voice of the boy.

That matters. God does not only hear the powerful, the settled, the socially approved. God hears the cry from outside the camp. God hears those who have been treated as disposable. God hears those whose suffering is inconvenient to other people's plans.

And then something else happens. The text says that God opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well of water.

It is such a gentle line, but it carries so much. The well does not seem to appear by magic. It is there. But grief and exhaustion can make the world feel so narrow that we cannot see what might keep us going. Hagar does not need a lecture. She does not need blame. She needs water. She needs the chance of tomorrow. She needs enough hope for the next step.

There is something deeply tender there. God's response is not abstract. It is not a slogan. It is not, "Everything happens for a reason." It is water in the wilderness. It is survival. It is accompaniment. It is the reminder that the cast-out are not forgotten.

And that connects so strongly with Matthew 10. Jesus is speaking to disciples who will face resistance, hostility and fear. He does not pretend that faithfulness will be easy. He is very honest that it can be costly. But right in the middle of that hard truth comes these repeated words: do not be afraid.

That phrase can sound patronising if we use it carelessly. If “do not be afraid” means “your fear does not matter” or “nothing bad will happen”, then it is not much comfort at all. But that is not what Jesus is saying. He is speaking to people who have every reason to be anxious, and he tells them they are seen. Even the sparrows are noticed, he says. Even the hairs of your head are counted. In other words: fear does not get the final word, because you are not abandoned. Jesus says, “You are seen.”

That is close to Hagar’s experience. She is not told the wilderness is fine. She is not told exclusion does not hurt. She is not told to pretend. She is met there by a God who hears.

Perhaps that is one of the invitations in these readings for this Sunday: to ask whose cries we are in danger of not hearing.

It is easy to read Genesis 21 and stay with Abraham and Sarah, because they are nearer the centre of the story as it is often told. But the passage itself will not let Hagar and Ishmael disappear. God’s attention falls on the woman and child outside the household. Their suffering is not a side-note. It is the cost of choices made by those with greater power.

And maybe that is a question for the Church as well.

Who gets pushed out so that others can feel secure? Who is treated as an inconvenience, a threat, an embarrassment, or an afterthought? Whose survival is left to charity rather than justice? Who is expected to carry exclusion quietly so that more comfortable people do not have to change?

These are not abstract questions. They are about migrants and refugees. They are about poor families. They are about people made unwelcome in churches because of who they are. They are about those whose pain does not fit neatly into the dominant story. They are about anyone who has sat down in the dust and wondered whether anyone sees.

The good news in this passage is not that exclusion is acceptable if God eventually helps people cope. The good news is that God is not on the side of erasure. God hears the cry. God sees the cast-out. God makes a future where others have tried to close one down.

That should comfort us, but it should unsettle us too. Because if God hears the cry from the wilderness, then discipleship means learning to hear it as well. And not only to hear it, but to respond. To become people who look for the well. People who share water. People who refuse to build our security on someone else’s exclusion.

So perhaps this week the question is not only, “What am I afraid of?” though that is a real question. Perhaps it is also, “Whose fear am I overlooking? Whose cry is hardest for me to hear? And what might faithfulness look like if I took that cry seriously?”

God does not leave Hagar and Ishmael unseen in the wilderness. God does not lose sight of them. And Jesus says: do not be afraid.

Not because the world is harmless. Not because conflict is unreal.

But because the God who hears the cry of the abandoned is still the God who is with us now.

Reflection / discussion questions

- What part of this story stays with you most strongly, and why?
- What might it mean, in practice, for us to hear the cry from the wilderness and to share water in a dry place?

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Gary Hopkins

**Hymn:**

673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? OR

706 STF – Longing for light, we wait in darkness

**Prayers of intercession**

God of the wilderness,  
you hear the cry that others try not to hear,  
and you do not forget those pushed to the edges.

We pray for all who are cast out or left behind –  
for refugees and displaced people,  
for families in temporary housing,  
for children caught in conflict,  
for mothers, fathers and carers trying to keep children safe with too little support,  
and for all who live with fear about what tomorrow will bring.  
May they find safety, dignity, and companions on the road.

God who hears,  
**listen in mercy.**

We pray for places where fear turns into exclusion,  
where scarcity is manipulated,  
and where people in power build security for some  
by denying it to others.  
Disrupt cruelty, expose injustice,  
and turn hearts towards compassion and courage.

God who hears,  
**listen in mercy.**

We pray for all who feel worn down, unseen, or close to despair –  
for those who are grieving, anxious, exhausted, unwell,  
and for those who cannot yet see where the well of water is.  
Meet them with tenderness,  
and raise up people who will bring practical hope.

God who hears,  
**listen in mercy.**

We pray for your Church.  
Where we have been comfortable with exclusion, forgive us.  
Where we have failed to hear the cry of the vulnerable, change us.  
Teach us to be a people who make room, share bread, carry water,  
and stand alongside those the world pushes aside.

God who hears,  
**listen in mercy.**

We bring before you those known to us  
who are walking through wilderness now...

*Silence*

God of life,  
when fear is loud and the future feels fragile,

keep us close to Christ,  
that we may live with courage, mercy, and hope.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

Gracious and loving God,  
Take these simple offerings,  
And turn them into the gifts of love, peace, hope and grace that the world around us so  
needs to hear.  
Come, by your grace, we pray

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult OR

303 STF – I know that my Redeemer lives

### **Blessing**

Living, loving God,  
Let me, let each of us, live the gospel truth of resurrection and new life this day,  
this week, and on into the weeks ahead.  
As we rise from this place, bless our living and our loving,  
In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Gary Hopkins

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

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