



ORDINARY 28A

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

Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A
11th October 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR

3 STF – Eternal God, your love's tremendous glory

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

123 STF – Come, you thankful people come OR

429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy

Readings: Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

Hymn:

415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age OR

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder!

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

646 STF – Come and let us sweetly join OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

663 STF – I the Lord of sea and sky OR

402 STF – Go to the world! Go to all the earth

Blessing

The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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Call to worship

We come to praise you, O God our Creator,
We come to give you thanks, O Christ who is with us,
We come to seek inspiration from you, O Spirit who leads us on.
Let us notice you in our midst this day, triune God, we pray

Amen.¹

Hymn:

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven OR
3 STF – Eternal God, your love's tremendous glory

Opening Prayers

Loving and faithful God,

We thank you that you are good, and that your love endures forever.

Forgive us, Lord, in times where we may forget you.

Forgive us when we put our own desires, before you.

Help us to remember all that you have done for us.

When we are anxious, remind us of your faithfulness.

When we are uncertain, help us to trust you.

When we have wandered from you, give us the courage to turn back.

Lord, bring your peace into our hearts.

At times where we may feel anxious, please be our reassurance.

Where there is conflict across the world you created, bring reconciliation to those directly affected so that they know you feel their pain and suffering alongside them.

Where there is division, bring unity to our lives.

Teach us how to be gentle, patient and generous and the importance of this in everything we do.

Help us to rejoice in you, even in difficult times,

Open our hearts oh Lord to receive your grace and transform our lives.

We pray for those who have not yet heard your call and experienced you in their lives.

For those who have turned away from you in despair or for those who feel forgotten or excluded, and for those who are still searching for hope,
May they encounter your love through us.

Make us people who remember your goodness,
seek your presence, live in your peace,

At times we may forget you, remind us if we fall, forgive us.

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

When we are anxious, give us peace in the comfort of your presence.
When we are divided, bring us together. Now more than ever.
Give us hearts that are ready for you.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

I wonder what was the best event you've ever been too? Was it something meticulously planned with save the date cards, or in your diary for over 6 months?

Or, was it something more impromptu, just in the right place at the right time? Why not chat to your neighbour and share what comes to mind. *Allow 2 minutes*

Right, would anyone like to share?
(take some examples and thank them for sharing)

Did it help to dress for the occasion? Did it help to respect those around you? *(if appropriate cite something that was shared)*

A little later on we shall be looking at a story/stories where people, even though they were invited to be part of something special, instead chose the wrong thing, and didn't respect this special opportunity (of trusting God and waiting for Moses and/or attending the wedding and dressing appropriately).

Amen.³

Hymn:

123 STF – Come, you thankful people come OR
429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy

Readings: Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

Hymn:

415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age OR
732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder!

Reflections on the readings

There is an old saying that "seeing is believing."

We tend to trust what we can see, measure and understand, yet faith often asks something different. Faith invites us to believe that God is present even when we cannot see the whole picture.

² Opening prayers written by Alice Arbon

³ All Age Talk written by Mark Stennett

That seems to be the journey Moses is on. After everything he has experienced, the burning bush, the plagues, the crossing of the sea, the gift of the commandments, he still longs for something more.

"Show me your glory." It is such an honest prayer. Not, "Give me more information" or "Help me win the argument." But simply, "Let me know you."

Many of us have prayed something similar. Perhaps not in those exact words, but in moments of uncertainty we've whispered, "God, where are you?"

When illness arrives, when relationships break down, when the future feels unclear, when the news feels relentlessly bleak.

We long for certainty, yet God's response to Moses is both beautiful and mysterious: "I will make all my goodness pass before you."

Notice that. When Moses asks to see God's glory, God speaks instead of God's goodness. Perhaps God's glory is not found in dazzling displays of power, but in acts of mercy, compassion and faithfulness.

Yet Moses cannot see God's face. Instead, he catches only a glimpse as God passes by. Perhaps that is true for us as well: very few of us have dramatic moments of certainty. More often, we catch glimpses: a kindness that arrives just when it is needed, a conversation that changes us, a moment of peace in the midst of grief, the courage to keep going when we thought we had none left.

Looking back, we recognise that God has been there all along.

Paul's letter to the Thessalonians speaks of another kind of glimpse. He thanks God because their faith has become visible, not through grand speeches nor impressive buildings, but through their lives.

He remembers their "work of faith, labour of love, and steadfastness of hope." What a wonderful description of Christian discipleship. Faith that gets its hands dirty, love that costs something, hope that refuses to give up.

In a world that often celebrates success, achievement and status, Paul celebrates something different: a community whose life reflects Christ. It makes me wonder: if someone knew nothing about Christianity except the lives of the people in this church, what would they discover?

Would they encounter generosity? Patience? Hospitality? Justice? Joy?

Perhaps the Gospel is most persuasive when it is lived before it is explained.

Then comes Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and Herodians. They think they have him trapped. "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?"

It is a political question designed to divide. Jesus asks for a coin:

"Whose image is this?" And the answer comes back: "Caesar's."

"Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

The obvious answer concerns taxes, but perhaps Jesus is inviting us to ask a deeper question. If the coin bears Caesar's image, what bears God's image? Well, according to Genesis, every human being does.

Every one of us. Every neighbour, every stranger, every refugee, every political opponent, every person we struggle to understand, every child, every older person.

Every person carries the image of God.

That simple truth has enormous consequences. If every person bears God's image, then every person deserves dignity. Every person deserves justice. Every person deserves compassion.

It becomes much harder to dismiss people as "them" when we remember that they, too, reflect something of the Creator.

The three readings come together around a surprising invitation. Moses teaches us to seek God's presence, Paul teaches us to reflect God's character, Jesus reminds us that we bear God's image.

Perhaps that is the purpose of the Christian life: not to possess God, not to have every answer, but to become people through whom others catch a glimpse of God's goodness. We may never see God's face as Moses longed to, but we can reveal something of God's love by the way we live:

- Every act of kindness.
- Every word of encouragement.
- Every stand for justice.
- Every moment of forgiveness.
- Every welcome offered to someone who expected exclusion.

These are all glimpses of God's glory, not because we are extraordinary, but because God continues to shine through ordinary people who are willing to love.

May we become that kind of people.

Amen.

Questions for Reflection

- Moses longed to see God's glory. Where have you caught glimpses of God's goodness in your own life recently?
- Paul describes a faith that can be seen in action. What kind of witness do you think our church offers to our community?
- If every person bears the image of God, how might that change the way we speak about, think about and treat those with whom we disagree?⁴

Hymn:

646 STF – Come and let us sweetly join OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray.

God of goodness,
You revealed your presence to Moses,
encouraged the first Christians,
and in Jesus showed us what your love looks like.

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

As we gather our prayers,
help us to trust that you are near,
even when we cannot always see the way ahead.

Pause

Loving God,
We pray for your Church throughout the world.

May our faith be more than words.

Teach us to welcome generously,
to listen carefully,
to serve joyfully,
and to seek justice faithfully.

Where churches are discouraged,
renew them with hope.

Where churches have caused hurt,
bring healing and humility.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Creator God,

We pray for our world and all who exercise power.

For governments and public servants,
for community leaders,
for those making decisions that affect the lives of many.

Give them wisdom,
integrity,
and compassion.

Help us to remember that every policy, every decision and every debate ultimately affects
people who bear your image.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of compassion,
We pray for those whose dignity is overlooked.

For people experiencing homelessness.
For those seeking refuge from war or persecution.
For those facing prejudice or exclusion.
For anyone who feels unseen or forgotten.

May they encounter welcome, justice and hope.

And show us how we can be part of your answer to these prayers.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of comfort,
We remember those who are carrying heavy burdens.
Those who are ill.
Those who mourn.
Those who are anxious about the future.

Those who are lonely.
Those whose faith feels fragile.
In the quiet of our hearts, we name them before you now.

Pause

Surround them with your peace,
strengthen those who care for them,
and remind them that nothing can separate them from your love.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of hope,
As we leave this place,
may we seek your presence with the honesty of Moses,
share the hope of the Thessalonians,
and follow the wisdom of Christ.

May our lives become small reflections of your goodness,
so that others might glimpse your love through us.

In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Lord of all faithfulness,
You have been good to us, and we have received so much.
This day, and every day, help us to be thankful, to show gratitude for what we have and not take it for granted.
Bless these gifts, tokens of our appreciation, and help those who choose how to use them to always do so in line with your gospel of grace.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.⁶

Hymn:

663 STF – I the Lord of sea and sky OR
402 STF – Go to the world! Go to all the earth

Blessing

Lord we hear your call, and we come.
Send me, send us, out from this place, up from this moment,
To hear the call of all who are in need, and to transform the world around us,
By the inclusive love of the Spirit of God.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker