



ORDINARY 33A

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

Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

15th November 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

185 STF – Sing we the King who is coming to reign OR

154 STF – Come, divine Interpreter

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

566 STF – Take my life, and let it be OR

608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord

Readings: Judges 4: 1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30

Hymn:

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour OR

429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR

340 STF – Ye servants of God

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.

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

www.theworshipcloud.com

Call to worship

The Lord our God goes before us, into this time of worship,
And out into the world beyond.
The Lord our God travels with us, here and everywhere.
May we become aware of your presence this day, we pray.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

185 STF – Sing we the King who is coming to reign OR

154 STF – Come, divine Interpreter

Opening Prayers

These prayers are designed to be said by a leader and the whole congregation. If it's not possible to print or project the words for everyone, then it might be easier for them to be said by two voices, with one playing the role of 'leader' and the other of 'all'.

Leader: Loving God,

Use our eyes this morning that we may see ourselves, this world and all who dwell in it as you see us.

Use our hearts this day that we may feel for ourselves, for this world and for all who dwell in it as you feel for us.

Use our bodies and minds this week that we may walk, talk and be for ourselves, for this world and for all who dwell in it all that you seek for us to be.

All: Loving God, we bring all of ourselves to you this morning, allowing all that has come before to fall away.

May we leave this place changed today, knowing how much we are loved.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Throughout November, the All Age talks for The Vine have been prepared by our friends at All We Can, the Methodist Church's international development agency. Each week, we are highlighting one of All We Can's 'Extraordinary Gifts', which are a great way to do your Christmas shopping! Why not buy a gift that transforms life for someone in one of the

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

countries where All We Can's partners are working this Christmas – find out more and order a catalogue for your church online at allwecan.org.uk/extraordinary-gifts

Today, we are focusing on Super Spuds (*you might like to display a picture of this gift from the All We Can website, or invite people to turn to the relevant page in the gifts catalogue*).

What is your favourite way to eat a potato? [*Get people to shout out, and you might like to change the question to see how many others you can name, if everyone says 'chips', for example!*]

In 1 Thessalonians we read, “but since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” God makes us resilient and equips us for the challenges we face.

We know that climate change is making life difficult for lots of people, including those who are growing potatoes or other crops in order to survive. As the weather changes, and becomes less reliable, we need harvests to be more resilient and All We Can's partners have been introducing a more sturdy potato as a seed potato into parts of Ethiopia.

A gift of Super Spuds this Christmas time, could help that work to continue and reach more farmers. Perhaps you can think about and pray for all the people who are involved in growing your food when you sit down for your next meal?

Amen.³

Hymn:

566 STF – Take my life, and let it be OR

608 STF – All praise to our redeeming Lord

Readings: Judges 4: 1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30

Hymn:

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour OR

429 STF – Lord, we turn to you for mercy

Reflections on the readings

“I was afraid...and I went and hid...”

When were you last afraid?

Fear is a natural, healthy feeling. It's important. It helps keep us safe, helps in making us ask questions about what might bring harm. It helps inform what we might need to do.

Fear can be energising as it drives us to action. Fear of losing something important can make us fight, fight for justice, protect others, fight for what is right.

Fear might also be quite disabling and even force us into making bad decisions when the pressure is on and we don't know what to do.

³ All Age Talk written by All We Can

In our story in Matthew's Gospel the one who was afraid went and hid something valuable. And it seems that this was not the right thing to do in the circumstances.

Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, might just as well have said, "Look, you know what to do. It's not rocket science. Just get on and do it."

The Thessalonians, a new faith community, already knew about the Lord. They knew the light, they were supporting one another and growing. "Don't worry, just get on with it," Paul says.

But what might have been going on for the Thessalonian church for Paul to feel the need to write to them? What were their concerns, worries, fears?

Well, they were anxious, anxious about whether what they had been told, what they believed was right and were worried about the future.

They had been expecting the return of Jesus to be sooner rather than later, certainly within their lifetimes. And it wasn't happening. And what is more, some church members had already died, before Jesus' return. They were asking if these people would get to heaven as promised having died before Jesus came back for them?

The Thessalonians were wondering what their faith was and what it meant for them.

And, so too, might have been Paul. A new, exciting, meaningful thing had come into their lives: Jesus. They had changed everything because of Jesus but now they were wondering what it all meant because maybe it was not what they thought it was.

Paul and the Thessalonians were growing, learning what a life in Christ might really be about, what demands faith might make on them. However, their anxiety, fear, worry, panic, call it what you will, was in danger of holding them back.

These were challenging times. It would be natural to be concerned, fearful even. Notice what Paul does. Paul draws the attention of the Thessalonian community to their good qualities telling them that they are of the light. And importantly, their ability to encourage and build up each other with the simple instruction to keep on doing it.

Community, after all, is central to the Christian faith. Community is what church is. To work together is how we get stuff done. Working together is how we learn and grow, sharing thoughts, exploring new ideas, listening and praying together. And working together through the toughest times is when we grow most.

Which takes us back to the one in the story from Matthew's Gospel who buried the treasure. They had a gift but chose to hide it, were given a responsibility but chose to shy away from it.

They were afraid. But did they ask for help? They were struggling, did others look out for them?

There are some problems that we can solve on our own but there are plenty more that we can not. What to have for lunch is a problem I can sort out on my own (usually), however, what to do about a struggling church, family disputes, community tensions, overcrowded prisons, climate change, living with complex health needs...make your own list, these are not generally things we can sort out on our own and attempting to do so might make us hide from the real issues.

We need each other. Had the one who was afraid and hid asked their neighbours for help perhaps things might have been different. Had their neighbours noticed that there was a problem for this individual then things too might have worked out differently. There is a lesson here in knowing when to ask for help and when to offer it. If we are afraid of doing either, then there is something to be learnt.

It was good that the Thessalonians had Paul to encourage them and help them look beyond their somewhat narrow perspective. Someone, with the right skills, outside a situation, can often be helpful. It was good that Paul highlighted the gifts, skills and faith of the Thessalonian church to encourage them.

Although we may not feel it, Paul says to us, “you...are not in darkness...you are all children of light.” It is a reminder for the times when we are fearful, that not only do we have treasure but that we are not alone and need not be alone.

“Therefore encourage one another.”

Questions for discussion (which you might wish to do in small groups or as a whole congregation).

- The Thessalonians were being challenged to change what they thought and believed about the Second Coming, the return of Jesus. Have there been issues over which your faith has changed?
- Asking for help is not always easy. Why might people of faith not ask for help?
- What helps people of faith face the fears they might have for the future?

After the conversation, you might like to share this short poem, written by David Buck (the author of the reflection above).

Sunflowers

I saw today three sunflowers
growing amongst the rubble
of a demolition site

youthful and bright
reaching for the sky
in joyous praise of living

fearless and brave
courageous and bold
overflowing with hope

speaking to the wind
come with us
resurrected soul

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

Prayers of intercession

These intercessions, where it is felt appropriate, may be interspersed with names of individuals, groups and organisations or situations that people would specifically like to

⁴ Reflection written by David Buck

mention. These words should not be rushed, allow time for quiet between the different sections.

In response to the words, *We are children of light*, please respond, *Let us help and encourage one another.*

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

We are different people from different backgrounds. We have different gifts and different failings. We have different needs and different desires.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

We lift before God all who are fearful, people who are fearful for themselves and people who are fearful for the future, uncertain what to do or what is to come. May they have courage to reach out, to take a step towards sharing their burdens.

We give thanks to those who give help and support to the anxious, worried and afraid.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

We lift before God all who are suffering in health, poverty or because of circumstance. We pray for lost dreams, unanswered questions, lives disrupted, plans having to be remade.

We give thanks for all those who seek to relieve suffering.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

We pray for a world that often seems to be in chaos through conflict or political upheaval. We pray for reason, for justice, for humanity and peace.

We give thanks for those who seek to bring order to chaos.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

We pray for the church and all who minister there in any way. The pressures are many and often conflicting. May we be wise when facing difficult decisions, patient and compassionate in hearing what others have to say, and may we learn and grow together.

We give thanks for all who work for the common good.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

May our lives and the life of the ever-evolving church bring light to others, may God ground us, may Jesus inspire us, may the Spirit guide us.

We are children of light,

All Let us help and encourage one another.

Amen.⁵

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by David Buck

We will now take up the offering.

Thank you Lord, for all the ways in which you have blessed and inspired us.

As we worship you today, O God, we pray that you will make yourself known to us, and that we will be able to use our gifts and these donations here offered today, to help others to experience your love, your peace, your justice,

In Jesus' name we bring this and all our prayers,

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR

340 STF – Ye servants of God

Blessing

As we go from this time of gathering,

Remind us that we are connected.

As we go from this time of worship,

Remind us that our whole lives are for your glory.

As we go from this time of reflection,

Remind us that every moment provides opportunities to hear from you.

Let us go in peace, always

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker