



## EPIPHANY 2A

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

# Second Sunday of Epiphany - Year A

18th January 2026



## Order of Service

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**58 STF – Lord, I come before your throne of grace OR**

**570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us in the love that knows no fear**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me OR**

**239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I**

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

**Hymn:**

**401 STF – Come, sinners, to the gospel feast OR**

**186 STF – Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR**

**234 STF – Behold the Lamb of God**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**564 STF – O Thou Who Camest From Above OR**

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

Blessing

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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).**

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## Call to worship

Here we are, stepping out of the kingdom of comfort,  
And into the kingdom of heaven,  
Leaving behind productivity and busy-ness,  
Entering a place of stillness and be-ing.  
Come, God of all grace, and show us how to tune our whole hearts to your rhythm, we  
pray,

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

58 STF – Lord, I come before your throne of grace OR

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us in the love that knows no fear

## Opening Prayers

Let us pray.

Will you come and follow me?

That's God's desire for us,  
Jesus came to live among us, to teach us how to live, how to love.

We are only human and sometimes we can be blinkered, too scared to shine, live a life  
hiding so much of ourselves, feeling unworthy...

BUT, we are told...

You are worthy...

You are loved...

Your name is written on my hand,  
Every hair on your head counted,  
I love you.

You were made to shine.

So, let us give thanks for that love,  
this world, our God, those we love and who love us.

In giving thanks, let us say yes, we will follow,  
we will shine light and love into this world.

Let that light shine a light on the beauty in every aspect of this world.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

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

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

### All Age Talk

Our New Testament reading from John 1:29–42, which we will hear shortly, is full of people trying to work out who Jesus is.

Think about the first day at a new school, club, or job. People ask you questions like: What's your name? Where are you from? What do you like doing? We use names and labels to try to understand each other.

In the passage, John the Baptist sees Jesus and gives him a very special name: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

That's a huge statement. John is saying, "Here is the one who will deal with everything that separates us from God."

Then two of John's disciples start following Jesus. Jesus turns and asks them a simple question: "What are you looking for?"

It's a question for us too. I wonder if that is maybe something we might want to speak to our neighbour about for 2 minutes (*invite people to talk about this question in groups or pairs*)

Question: What are we looking for from Jesus?  
Comfort? Help? Forgiveness? Purpose? Hope?

However, back to the story, the disciples don't really answer. Instead, they say, "Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying?"

I hope you're keeping count because now Jesus has another name, Teacher. And his reply is very gentle and open:  
"Come and see."

As they spend time with Jesus, their understanding grows. By the end of the reading, we hear even more names for Jesus. Messiah (the Christ), the one Moses and the prophets spoke about. Son of God and King of Israel.

The more they are with Jesus, the more they see who he really is.

And then something very personal happens. Andrew brings his brother Simon to Jesus.

Jesus looks at him and says, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas (which means Peter, the Rock)."

Jesus doesn't just have essential names himself. He also speaks a new name, a new identity, over Simon. Jesus sees who Simon will become.

So, there are two things we can take away here. Firstly, we discover more and more of who Jesus is. Secondly, Jesus tells us who we are in him.

Here's a final question for us to wonder today:

- If you had to choose one word for Jesus, what would it be?  
(Friend, Saviour, Light, Guide, Hope...?)

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

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

**Hymn:**

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me OR

239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I

**Readings:** Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

**Hymn:**

401 STF – Come, sinners, to the gospel feast OR

186 STF – Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord

**Reflections on the readings**

Today's sermon is presented in four parts, taking each of the readings in turn, and after each section, there are some questions for us to discuss or reflect upon [*comment now on what you plan for people to do so they have a heads up that there will be some discussion, in pairs, groups or as a whole congregation*].

First, the Isaiah reading, from Isaiah 49.

Have you ever felt left out or forgotten? Maybe your friends didn't pick you for a game at school during Physical Education (PE), or someone ignored you when you tried to help.

The people in the Bible story today felt that way, too. They had been taken away from their homes to a faraway place called Babylon, and they felt as though God had forgotten them and had stopped caring about them. Then came Isaiah's second Servant Song, which starts by calling out to the "coastlands" and "people far away." It wasn't just local news; it's for the whole world. He speaks of a figure called the Servant of God. This servant was chosen by God even before he was born! God gave him a special mission: to speak God's words and bring hope to people who were hurting.

The Servant's identity here starts with God, not with personal plans: "*called from the womb,*" "*named before birth.*" Our calling begins with God's purpose, not our own ideas (Jeremiah 29:11). God often prepares people in quiet places before sending them out. Moses in the wilderness is a good example. We don't always see what God is building below the surface, and God's call rarely launches with grandeur or fireworks. It usually begins with formation, a season that can feel slow, as though we are not making progress.

In that moment, then comes the feeling many of us know: To quit. "I have worked for nothing. I am tired. Was it all in vain?" The Bible doesn't hide this kind of discouragement. Faith doesn't pretend we are never exhausted; it hands the final word back to God: The Servant will be "*a light to the nations.*" God's vision is bigger than our best plans.

As Christians, we read this in two ways. We see Jesus, the perfect Servant, called, faithful, seemingly defeated, and then vindicated. He then chooses us and gives each of us something special to do. To show love, compassion, kindness, to help someone who is sad, or to stand up for what is right. We may not feel strong or important, but God can use us in big ways when we trust him.

[*You may like to split into groups to consider these questions together*]

- What are some ways you can be a light for God this week, at home, in the community or with your friends?

- How does it make you feel to know that God knew you and loved you before you were even born?

Let us come back together, and reflect on the Psalms reading for today.

The other day, my daughter visited us. Her baby was asleep upstairs while we chatted downstairs with the TV on. In the middle of our conversation, she paused and said, "My baby is awake, she's crying. I can hear her." A mother's ear is usually tuned to the frequency of her child's voice. So is God's ear tuned to our cry.

In this reading, David says, *"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry."* The waiting here is not passive resignation, but alert, stubborn trust. In the waiting, God acts. He bends down, lifts the singer from the "pit of destruction" and the "miry bog," and sets him on a rock. Deliverance is not merely escape from trouble; it is a new footing, a new future, and beautifully, a new song.

David was going through a difficult situation; he couldn't move or see a way out. But he didn't give up. He kept praying, trusting that God would rescue him. And God did! David says that God lifted him out of the mud, set his feet on solid ground, and gave him a *new song* to sing.

Have you ever had to wait a long time for something? Maybe you waited for a doctor's appointment, for a holiday, or for someone to help you when you were stuck. Waiting isn't easy! However, waiting on God comes with a renewed strength. Isaiah 40:31 *"But those who wait upon the LORD will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint"*.

Psalm 40 shows us that even when we feel stuck, sad, or scared, God hears us. God may not answer right away, but God never ignores our prayers. When the right time comes, God gives us strength and fills our hearts with joy again.

From this Psalm, we learned from David that when God helps us, we should tell others about it. Our stories of how God helped us can give hope to people who are still waiting for their own miracle. The theme this year, chosen by the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, is "Our story, our song". What about it?

Our story and song are powerful and can help others place their faith and trust in God.

*[You may like to split into groups to consider these questions together]*

- When was a time you felt like you were "stuck"? How did God help you?
- Why do you think God sometimes asks us to wait before answering our prayers?
- What "new song" could you sing or share to thank God for what the Lord has done for you?

Let us come back together and turn to 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, to hear Lansford Penn-Timothy's reflections on this reading:

Have you ever been part of a team? Maybe you sing in a choir where you all have to work together to bring out the harmony and melody, or maybe you work in a factory where different departments have to play their part for the production to come out right, or you are part of a football or other sports team.

In my early life, I was part of the Tug of War team in our inter-school sports competition in Sierra Leone. Being part of a group or a team means working together, cheering each other on, and sometimes learning how to get along.

That's what the church in the city of Corinth mirrored. A man named Paul, one of Jesus' followers, wrote them a letter because they were starting to argue and forget what it means to be part of a team and what it really means to be the church. He opens his letter

to this messy church not with scolding but with grace. Before addressing divisions, pride, and moral confusion, he names the Corinthians as “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” In Paul’s theology, identity comes first: they are God’s, not because they are exemplary, but because God has called them. The same is true for us. Our story with God begins in God’s initiative, not our impressiveness, but the amazing grace of God that has saved even the vilest offenders. The Christian life is fellowship with Christ before it is work for Christ; participation precedes performance. From that fellowship flows every correction the letter will make.

The letter offers a practical rhythm of the Christian life for them and for us today: to remember who we are in Christ before tackling what is wrong. Receive our gifts as grace, not as badges, use them to build up, not to compete. To wait with hope, letting the future appearance of Jesus shape present priorities, and to rest in God’s faithfulness.

From this passage, we learn that being part of God’s family means more than attending church. It means knowing we are loved, forgiven, and chosen to share that love with others. God doesn’t expect us to be perfect. Rather we are called to keep trusting in God and using our gifts to make the world kinder and brighter.

*[You may like to split into groups to consider these questions together]*

- What does it mean to you to be part of God’s family?
- What special gifts has God given you to help others?
- How can you show gratitude to God this week for God’s love and grace?

May your reflection on these questions draw you closer to God today. Amen.

Finally, we turn to the gospel reading from John.

These days, whenever we have exciting news, we look to whom on our contact list to share it with. Have you ever been so excited about something that you just had to tell your friends? Maybe you met a celebrity or a role model you admire, or you found the best ice cream shop in town! That is a little like what happens in today’s Bible story.

This story comes from the Gospel of John, one of the books that tells us about Jesus’ life. John the Baptist was a preacher who told people to turn back to God and get ready for the Saviour. One day, when he saw Jesus walking by, John pointed and said, “*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” He wanted everyone to know that Jesus was the One they’d been waiting for.

Some of John’s followers decided to go after Jesus. When Jesus noticed them, He didn’t push them away. Instead, He asked a simple question: “*What are you looking for?*” Then He invited them, “*Come and see.*” They spent the whole day with Him, and their lives changed forever! Through the quiet miracle of ordinary evangelism, one of them, Andrew, ran to find his brother Simon and said, “*We’ve found the Messiah!*” and brought him to Jesus.

The pattern still works, we point like John, Behold the Lamb and, like Andrew, we tell one person what we have found and bring them to Jesus. Most people meet Christ because someone they trust takes their hand.

Here we can see that faith often begins with an invitation, a chance to come and see who Jesus really is. The Good news is this: Jesus still invites us today to walk with him, to ask questions, and to share God’s love with others. When we do, we discover that following Jesus is the greatest adventure of all!

In conclusion, you might like to ponder these questions:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Come and see”?

- Who first told you about Jesus, and how can you share his love with someone else?
- What might it look like for you to “spend time with Jesus” this week?

May your reflection on these questions draw you closer to him today.

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

234 STF – Behold the Lamb of God

### **Prayers of intercession**

#### **Let us pray.**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the hope you have given us in Christ, the meaning and purpose, joy and fulfilment you bring us through him, as you hear our prayers now.

We pray for your Church throughout the world, and for all Christians everywhere.

We pray that your Church may be welcoming and open, that the Holy Spirit will continue to fill us with the knowledge of your Will in all wisdom and understanding, especially to seek out the needy, the outcasts and rejected, so that love may be shown in action.

We lift up to you, Lord, those who are persecuted for their beliefs, grant them courage in adversity and help them to stand up fearlessly for their faith in you. We pray for those overwhelmed by life, lonely, frightened, lost, sick, exhausted, homeless, all migrants, with many dreading what the next day might bring!

We pray for the work, mission and ministry of our individual churches. As a Church Family, teach us to walk together in unity of purpose, and enable us to build loving fellowships between us.

We bring to you, Lord, the needs of our fragile and broken world, all those who work to bring healing to your creation.

We remember Governments and Leaders of our world working hard through COPs and other Climate Change Conferences to address wildfires, storms, flooding, air pollution, and unpredictable weather that is causing untold damage to many homes and livelihoods. As we yearn for our world to be restored to a greener, cleaner planet for our children, youths and future generations, we pray for your wisdom and guidance.

We pray for a world free from exploitation and corruption, especially in human trafficking. A world free from prejudice and discrimination, for the healing of our broken and fragile world, for peace where there is war, love where there is hatred, co-operation where there is conflict, and good where there is evil.

Bless our nation, its people and leaders. Direct our governmental system and those of other countries, through the enabling power of your Holy Spirit, to lead and govern justly, fairly and compassionately.

In silence, we pray for all who are sick and for those who mourn. For the dying, we pray for your abiding peace to journey with them.

*[Silence]*

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Lansford Penn-Timothy



Living Lord, come again in your great power, and bring new life to all. Equip us to live as your people, not just this day but every day, to reflect your glory and proclaim your love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

Gracious God,  
We thank you for the gifts you have given us.  
As we make these token gifts to you today, we give you thanks and we bless your holy name.  
Come, work with us, inspire our decision making and our meetings,  
That your grace might flow through us into the world.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

564 STF – O Thou Who Camest From Above OR  
250 STF – Jesus call us! O'er the tumult

### **Blessing**

Holy God,  
As we leave this place and this time of gathering,  
Your Spirit travels with us, ahead of us,  
Ignite in us a desire to follow in your way, O God,  
Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Lansford Penn-Timothy

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

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