

twelvebaskets



EASTER 3B

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

Produced by **twelvebaskets**. Subscription available from **theworshipcloud.com**

Third Sunday After Easter - Year B
14th April 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

364 STF – O for a thousand tongues to sing OR

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

82 STF – O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder OR

327 STF – Jesus is King

Readings: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

Hymn:

526 STF – Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy OR

338 STF – There is a Redeemer

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

317 STF – At the name of Jesus OR

296 STF – Christ has risen while earth slumbers

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

347 STF – Crown him with many crowns OR

313 STF – Thine be the glory

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

Here we are gathered, and the Spirit is amongst us.
Here we come to worship, and God is here with us,
Here we come to be challenged and inspired, and the Christ-light goes before us.
Come, Lord Jesus, this and every day.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

364 STF – O for a thousand tongues to sing OR
148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise

Opening Prayers

God of all time – we worship you today as the Author of Life, the Source of all that is good.

As we reflect on the works of your hands, we pause in wonder; we gaze in awe, we catch our breath: you created a world in which we can live in beauty and harmony, we offer you our thanks.

God of all time – we worship you today as the Incarnate Word, the One who knows what it is to be human.

As we reflect on your life on earth, we are overwhelmed by grace, amazed by such love: you defeated death by your glorious resurrection. We offer you our thanks.

God of all time – we worship you today in the power of the Holy Spirit, poured out on us now.

As we reflect on our own lives, our weaknesses and failures, our weariness and selfishness you come to us afresh with power and strength, with courage and grace. We offer you our thanks.

As we worship, we lay before you today all which fills our hearts with doubt or fear,
all which disturbs your peace, in us and in the world,
all which denies your grace, your compassion, your love...

With thankful hearts we see you stretch out your hand to us, we hear your words of forgiveness, we receive your touch of healing, and we are transformed, cleansed and made new by your love. Thanks be to God. .

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Jill Baker

All Age Talk

The love that has been given to us. We are declare to be children of God. There is no qualifier for that love, it is already bestowed on us.

Is anyone here a member of a group or have a subscription to something? For example are you in a car club, in a supporters club, in a music group, or something similar? Does anyone want to share the membership and the thing you enjoy about it?

(Hopefully there will be volunteers, but just in case prompt a couple of people beforehand if need be and have an example of your own!)

Belonging to a group is exciting. You can talk and share your interests, learn new skills, or even get excited when that thing you are subscribed too arrives! There is though one group we are all a member of that we haven't mentioned: Children of God.

Being a Child of God means that you get some amazing benefits, some of which we are experiencing right now! We're here together, united in love to worship God, praying for one another and sharing the Good News. The best thing of all? We didn't need to sign up for this group! There are no online forms, re-subscription notices, or even qualifications for membership! We are already members of this group because God shared his love with us, isn't that amazing?!

The more we learn about Jesus and God, the more we can recognise the love that God has shared with us. In fact, if we followed the example of Jesus, we'd be sharing the love of God with everyone we meet!

What is one way we can share the love of God with others? Following Jesus' example of standing up for the marginalised and the oppressed, standing up to authority, and loving each person you meet with no qualifications. What does that mean? God loves you no matter how tall or short you are, how much money you have or not have, if you're the strongest or fastest or can jump the highest, or anything like that. God loves you just as you are.

Prayer

God who knows us and has shared your love with us. May we be emboldened to go from here and share your love with others, to follow the example of Jesus, and be unashamed of belonging to the group known as Children of God.

Amen.³

Hymn:

82 STF – O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder OR

327 STF – Jesus is King

Readings: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

Hymn:

526 STF – Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy OR

338 STF – There is a Redeemer

Reflections on the readings

If today's sermon has a title, I think it is 'Embracing Radical Peace'.

How does that sound to you? How do you respond to the word 'radical'? Does it put you off, or entice you in? Just notice how your body reacts to the invitation into a radical way of thinking...

Today, as has been the tradition for thousands of years, we mark the Lord's day by gathering – we gather in the spirit of unity and inclusivity, seeking to explore the transformative power of peace as proclaimed by our Lord Jesus Christ. In today's gospel reading from Luke 24, we encounter Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to his disciples, where he greets them with the words, "Peace to you."

Let us delve deeper into this passage and discover how Jesus' message of peace challenges and inspires us today.

Radical Peace Amidst Fear and Doubt:

We note in the Luke passage that Jesus' disciples were filled with fear and doubt, grappling with the reality of his resurrection. Did they believe? Did some of them, and not others? Were they fearful that they might have got themselves caught up in something rather bigger than they had realised?

Perhaps they also had mixed reactions to the recognition of how radical this Jesus message was... If the rumours were true, the Jesus really was coming back from the dead (or already had), then this might well be the revolution, it might just change everything... surely a time of great uncertainty, conflict and pain was ahead, even if it was to bring about the change they wanted... Maybe some of them were energised by this, but most – we can see – were full of fear and doubt.

Yet, in the midst of their turmoil, Jesus offers them peace. This radical peace transcends circumstances and transforms hearts. It is in this context of potential revolution, political unrest and radical change that Jesus begins with peace. The resurrection, remember, was illegal... Jesus' body had been condemned, and was now no longer dead. But this was not an act of war, rather one of ultimate, deep, radical peace.

Peace as Reconciliation:

Jesus' message of peace extends beyond mere absence of conflict. It embodies reconciliation - reconciliation with God, with others, and with ourselves. Jesus' invitation to the disciples is the same invitation he makes to us today: come and be a part of this. This isn't a revolution – at least not in the traditional, political sense – it's a movement of peace-spreading. It's an invitation to make peace with yourself, with your neighbour, with the world.

As followers of this same radical, peaceful Christ, we are called to be agents of reconciliation, breaking down barriers and building bridges of understanding and love. In a world torn into division by big political issues like Brexit and Trumpism, but also in our communities – driven into silos and dividing lines by the social dividing lines that are emerging all around us. Jesus's invitation into peace isn't just to find a way to stop arguing or fighting with those we disagree with, but to enter into proper, deep, reconciliatory

conversation with them. To learn to listen. To change a bit of who we are, and learn to work together.

Peace as Justice:

True peace cannot exist without justice. Jesus' ministry was marked by a commitment to justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed. As followers of Christ, we are called to work towards a world where all are treated with dignity and equality, where justice flows like a mighty river. Not that we continue to invest in the status quo, because it's 'easier', but we work for those who do not get a good deal at the moment, and ensure that peace also brings justice.

Peace as Transformation:

Finally, Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" signifies more than a mere wish for tranquillity. It is a proclamation of transformation - a transformation of hearts, minds, and communities. As we embrace Jesus' message of peace, we are called to be transformed ourselves and to be agents of transformation in the world around us.

Before we conclude, we have made some space for a conversation around these issues. You might like to use these following four questions, or you might like to think up your own. It would probably work best in groups of four or five people – or feel free to have a conversation as a whole congregation if that's easier. It might help for one person in each group to have the questions (maybe even in advance) to act as facilitator.

- What does "peace" mean to you, and how does Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" challenge your understanding of peace in today's world?
- How can we embody Jesus' message of peace as agents of reconciliation in our communities and in the wider world, particularly in the face of division and conflict?
- In what ways can we as a church work towards justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed, following the example of Jesus' ministry? How are we already doing that? Is there something different or more we could be doing?
- Reflecting on the concept of peace as transformation, how can we allow Jesus' message of peace to transform our hearts, minds, and actions, and how can we be agents of transformation in our communities?

As we reflect on Jesus' words, "Peace to you," let us be challenged and inspired to embody radical peace in our lives and in our world. May we be instruments of reconciliation, justice, and transformation, spreading the transformative peace of Christ to all we encounter. Let us go from this place, empowered by the peace that surpasses all understanding, and may our lives be a testament to the transformative power of Christ's peace.

May the peace of Christ be with you all. Amen.⁴

Hymn:

317 STF – At the name of Jesus OR

296 STF – Christ has risen while earth slumbers

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Prayers of intercession

God of all grace,
We come to you to seek justice, to pray for peace, to long for love.

In a moment of stillness, we bring to you a world in pain.

You may wish to picture or think about:

- A place or country where war is raging...
- A place or country where people seeking for power or control has caused instability and destruction...
- Individual situations where greed and consumerism leave others hurting...
- Businesses and institutions where the people exploit others for personal gain...

[Hold a period of stillness]

In the darkness, Lord, shine your light. As we pray and hope for change, we ask you to come close to those who are victims of the greed and violence of others, holding in our prayers all who are injured, despairing, exploited, at risk.

God of all grace, we cry to you today for the church around the world, called to spread your Good News of a new Kingdom built on justice and righteousness.

- We pray for this congregation, as we seek to rise to the challenges of our community. *[You may wish to name any specific ones that you are aware of, or invite contributions from the congregation]*
- We pray for this circuit and our district, and for the wider work and mission of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- We pray that the church may be a means of grace for all who encounter it – around the world, by your love, Lord God.

As we pray and hope for change, we ask you to come close to all who hear your voice today, calling them to follow, for all church leaders and members, for each and every one of us gathered here today.

God of all grace, you know our needs, and you know the needs of those on our hearts, in the stillness, we invite you to come close, to show us how to be an answer to prayer to those in pain in our own lives, families and communities today.

[Hold a period of stillness]

As we pray and hope for change, we ask you to come close to all in need this day, remembering that you have called us to share your Good News – may we know how to follow in your way and be guided by your Spirit today

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

Thank you God, for this moment, for this day, for this time.
Thank you for the gift of my life, and of all the talents here in this room.
Thank you for the gifts we have just made to you. Bless them now, and use each and every one of them, and each and every one of us, for your glory, we pray.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

347 STF – Crown him with many crowns OR

313 STF – Thine be the glory

Blessing

We will go out with joy and be led forth with peace, and the streets and houses will be filled with hope, and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

Let us go and be that people – a joy-filled, joy-giving, joy-bringing kind of people, an Easter people!

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker