

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 11B

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

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Ordinary 11 - Year B
16th June 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God OR

609 STF – As we gather in your presence now

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

Hymn:

628 STF – Faithful One, so unchanging OR

418 STF – We have a gospel to proclaim

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

494 STF – Come thou fount of every blessing OR

499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain? OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

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Call to worship

In the moments that shape our lives,
be the centre of our existence.

In the silence of our time,
may Your Spirit speak.

In the noise created within this time,
May it bring you glory and honour.

In the melodies of hymns we raise,
the petitions we offer in prayer,
the sacred words we read, and the messages proclaimed.

Speak to us, inspire and forgive us.

In the moments that shape our lives, O Lord, be the heart of all that we are.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God OR

609 STF – As we gather in your presence now

Opening Prayers

God, all eyes turn to You in anticipation, knowing You provide abundantly. Your hand extends generously, fulfilling the needs of every creature.

Once more, we seek You eagerly, craving to be replenished - to partake of the Bread of Life, to drink from Your life-giving streams, to savour Your goodness and thrive.

May our time together in Your presence nourish our souls and intellects; may it fortify our bond with You, and reaffirm our dedication to embody Your teachings in this world.

Forgive us for all our failings and shortcomings. Come amongst us, dear Lord and Saviour of our lives – set us free, truly free.

For You alone are divine, the Originator and Nurturer of existence,

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

It is good to worship God! Today, in our Sunday service, we are thinking about what worship means and how it changes and affects the rest of our life. As we explore one of the famous stories about 'seeds' in the Bible today, I wonder what seeds are being planted in your life?

¹ Call to worship written by Matt Forsyth

² Opening prayers written by Matt Forsyth

Have a think for a moment:

- What new things are you learning at the moment?
- What are you being reminded of that you might have forgotten?
- Who are the new people in your life (perhaps new friends or reconnecting with people whom you have not seen for a while)?
- What do you think might be a 'next step' for you as you try to follow Jesus.
- Perhaps some of these things are the 'seeds' that are being planted today.

As we worship, let's use this chance to reflect and learn more about ourselves and how God might be working through us.

Amen.³

Hymn:

306 STF – Now the green blade rises from the buried grain OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

Hymn:

628 STF – Faithful One, so unchanging OR

418 STF – We have a gospel to proclaim

Reflections on the readings

One of the nation's most popular TV shows is still Britain's Got Talent. It's a show where contestants compete to win a chance to perform at the Royal Variety Show in front of His Majesty and many others. The talents and gifts on show vary, and I wonder what talent you would want to demonstrate yourself? One of the talents that Jesus certainly possessed was the ability to tell a story and tell it well.

Chapter four of Mark is taken up with seed stories: the parable of the sower (4:3-8), the seed growing secretly (4:26-29), and the mustard seed (4:30-32). Parables paint scenes from the natural world, but always with a strange twist or incongruous detail. These parables illustrate the mysterious growth of God's kingdom and the incomparable power hidden within its humble beginnings.

The Methodist President and Vice President of Conference (2023-2024) this year have a theme of 'Hidden Treasure' inspired, by Isaiah 45:3?

"I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name."

President Revd Gill Newton said this- "But note the treasures are stored in darkness, and the riches are hidden in secret places – that must mean these treasures are all around us! God isn't trying to hide treasures from us, instead God is hiding them for us!"

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

So what hidden treasure do we find here in these parables?

Firstly, I wonder if you know how long it takes for a bamboo tree to establish itself? It is said that it can take nearly 3 years for a bamboo plant to establish itself (mostly underground) until you get rapid growth. So when we consider our first parable, the Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29), Jesus describes the kingdom of God as a seed planted in the ground. Despite its hidden growth, the seed transforms into a mature plant, yielding a bountiful harvest. Our acts of love, kindness, and sharing the good news of the gospel all plant seeds that, just like that bamboo plant, might take some time to show signs of growth outside of one's heart. However, do not underestimate the power your selfless acts of love have on those around you, whether it be for a moment, a season or a lifetime.

Discussion question: What does this parable teach us about the nature of God's kingdom and its growth process?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32) Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds. Despite its small size, the mustard seed grows into a large tree, providing bird shelter.

Discussion question: What significance does the mustard seed's transformation hold for our understanding of God's kingdom and our role within it?

Understanding the Mystery (Mark 4:33-34) One thing that this scripture also informs us is that Jesus exclusively teaches His disciples the meaning of these parables. The mysteries of the kingdom of God are revealed to those who earnestly seek understanding. I am sure the many biblical scholars would have valued this time and would have written a fair few more books if they had. However, the importance of this moment for the disciples mustn't be overlooked.

Discussion question: How can we actively seek to understand the mysteries of God's kingdom in our lives today?

As we reflect on Jesus' parables in Mark 4:26-34, let us be encouraged by the profound truths they reveal about the kingdom of God. Despite its humble beginnings and mysterious growth, God's kingdom is powerful and transformative. May we cultivate faith, trust in God's timing, embrace humility, and seek understanding as we participate in God's love story for all the world.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

494 STF – Come thou fount of every blessing OR

499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here

Prayers of intercession

Holy God, we pray before you, lifting up the worldwide Christian Church, the embodiment of Christ on earth and all its leaders. We especially remember those congregations facing adversity and danger. May they feel your constant presence, granting them courage and fortifying their faith.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, we yearn for the day when all nations will bow before you and every family will find sustenance and satisfaction. We pray for leaders worldwide burdened with caring for

⁴ Reflection written by Matt Forsyth

their people; grant them wisdom and boldness to pursue justice and peace. We particularly lift up regions ravaged by violence, war, and terrorism. In silence, let us lift up any troubled nation on our hearts.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Parental God, we express gratitude for those who strive for the well-being of our local community. Bless our neighbours and empower those serving in your name to bring healing and solace to those in distress. Like the mustard seed, we pray for small beginnings in our community. We lift up our recently elected local council representatives, praying for elected officials dedicated to serving all constituents. In silence, let us offer prayers for any concern weighing on our local community.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we bring before you the struggles of our loved ones, the challenges faced by those in difficult circumstances, the suffering of the sick and lonely. May they find comfort in your boundless mercy, knowing you are ever-present in their trials. In silence, let us intercede for someone in need of God's healing touch today.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Lord, help us to be faithful stewards of the seeds you have entrusted to us, knowing that you are the one who brings about growth and transformation. May we live as signs of your Kingdom, shining your light in the darkness and offering hope to all who are in need.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.** Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Heavenly God, you have called each of us to follow you,
And we seek to do that in any way we can.
Use us today, and use these gifts, that they may be a blessing to others, and to whole of creation.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain? OR
503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

Go from this place full to overflowing with God's grace offered to you through story and song.

May you share that grace so that others might learn how special it is.

May you embody God's radical grace and strive to make the world a better place.

Let us not cease until all are wrapped in the love of God and are able to flourish and grow, until the Kingdom of God is realised as she would want it to be.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Matthew Forsyth

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker