

# twelvebaskets



## LENT 2A

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

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

**Lent 2 - Year A**  
5th March 2023



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**552 STF – Here am I, Lord, I've come to do your will OR**

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

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**17 STF – With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing OR**

**247 STF – I danced in the morning**

Readings: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 OR Matt 17:1-9

**Hymn:**

**370 STF – Breathe on me, Breath of God OR**

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

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**481 STF – The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want OR**

**94 STF – To God be the glory, great things he has done!**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**566 STF – Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee OR**

**345 STF – And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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## Call to worship

Gracious God, your love has called us here, and here we come, gathering in your name.

Gracious God, we open our hearts and minds and eyes up to you again this day, as we come to you in worship.

As we worship, Lord, transform and renew us. Awaken our spirits, show and inspire us to respond to your love by spreading love into the world, in Jesus' name

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

552 STF – Here am I, Lord, I've come to do your will OR

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

## Opening Prayers

O Lord my God,

We have gathered here, in awesome wonder,

To worship and praise your name.

Not because you need our worship, but because the joy of your love for us flows out of us, in song, in prayer, in how we respond to our gathering today.

O Lord my God,

We have gathered here, to give you thanks, for the many blessings we have received.

Let us share together what we are thankful for – please call out the things that you are giving thanks for today.

*[Invite people to share what they are thankful for. You might like to share your own.]*

Thank you.

Loving God, amongst all that has been shared out loud, and thought in our heads, and felt in our hearts – we know that you can hear our praise and thanks.

Loving God, help us to live a life of gratitude. To say 'thank you' for all that we have received, over and over again this week.

Living, loving God,

We come to you in worship, knowing that there have been times this week when we have fallen short of your glory,

When we have failed to live up to your hopes for our lives,

When we have said and done things we regret, or have stayed silent or inactive when we could have spoken up or stood up against injustice.

In the stillness, we bring our 'sorries' to you, Lord God.

*[Pause].*

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

Even as we confess our sins, we know that you have already forgiven us,  
That we are loved and accepted just as we are,  
But we keep up this practice of naming our mistakes, because it helps us to grow, to  
be accountable, to be honest with ourselves and with you, Lord God.

Thank you, for your grace, already reaching out to us for the week ahead.

Bless us now, as we worship, in Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord's Prayer**

### **All Age Talk**

I see they're off again! That couple next door. Some families always seem to be on the move, don't they?

Of course they're not really from round here anyway. They're foreigners. Been here a long time mind, but they still don't really belong. Not like us natives.

It was this bloke's father that brought them here in the first place – a whole family of them – father, son, grandson and son's wife. Mind you, she was probably glad to get away from wherever they'd come from, 'cos she didn't have any children – couldn't, they said. A bit of a disgrace all round, that kind of thing. Maybe they thought a change of air might cure it, but it never did. No, they're still childless.

Anyway, they're moving on again now. No idea where they're going and I don't know whether they do either. I understand it's because of the god they worship – and religion does funny things to people, doesn't it?

But that family really are a bit odd. The god they worship doesn't have a name, at least not one that they're allowed to speak – yet they believe that he can speak to them. Very funny way of going on, to my mind.

But, each to his own – and they're a pleasant enough couple. No bother at all.

Certainly not like the neighbours on the other side – but we'll not talk about them.

And as I was telling you – it's because Abram's god is supposed to have spoken to him – that's why they're moving. It certainly can't have anything to do with this neighbourhood.

Everybody's very respectable around here. Well, most of them are. Maybe the ones on the other side act a bit funny from time to time, but that's not the point. Abram's got it into his head that god wants him to move and that's really all there is to say about it. If god says go, they pack up. I would think it might be a bit of a strain on them both – because of their age, if nothing else. He must be seventy-five at least and she doesn't look that much younger. But they seem very determined.

I'll try to get out to see them off when they leave tomorrow. They've been good neighbours over the years. They'd do anything for anybody. I'll miss them.

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

And I do hope their god doesn't let them down, for their sake. It's a big risk, trusting in a god you can't see. I hope they're doing the right thing.

Blind faith's all very well for some people, But I'd rather see where I'm going, thank you very much!<sup>3</sup>

*[Pause]*

This story, offering an outside perspective on Abraham's story of call, which we will hear in a few minutes, challenges us to think about how we see our faith. Are we listening for God's voice? How might we respond to being called or challenged to do something radically different with our lives in order to pursue God's plan for our lives?

How are we listening?

*[Quiet]*

**Hymn:**

17 STF – With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing OR

247 STF – I danced in the morning

**Readings:** Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 OR Matt 17:1-9

**Hymn:**

370 STF – Breathe on me, Breath of God OR

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

### **Reflections on the readings**

I'm not a natural 'planner' – I enjoy spontaneity, space to be impulsive, freedom from the constraints of a diary! That is unless I'm going on a journey. Then I need to have a map (preferably paper, as I have a deep distrust of Google maps), a bottle of water, a flask of tea and snacks! I prepare what I need the night before, write lists and know, before I set out, how long the journey is going to take me. This need to plan journeys, I've realised, which is counter to my natural inclinations, is because of bad experiences. Travelling with 3 small children and running out of pacifying snacks on journeys longer and more tedious than expected, getting stuck on a motorway for 4 hours on a very hot day with no drinks, trusting a SatNav which hasn't been updated to include a new road layout and towing a caravan down completely inappropriate lanes. All of that when a bit of planning could have avoided the ensuing stress – that's when I say, not doing that again!

Emerging from the effects of the Pandemic, and with church membership falling, we are facing more challenges with the cost-of-living crises and exorbitant fuel bills impacting us as individuals of faith, our church community and how we share our faith

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from Full Worship Service by Andrew Pratt and Marjorie Dobson

in the communities where we live and work. The cry of the Psalmist ‘Where is my help from?’ seems an appropriate response – and planning isn’t always possible!

Our first reading, the Call of Abraham, sees him setting out on a journey without knowing where he’s going – that takes faith! Let’s take a look at our own Methodist heritage; Hugh Bourne was one of the founders of the Primitive Methodists (or Prims as they are often referred to). Hugh was initially converted by the thinking of John Wesley, but he became disillusioned with the move away from Wesley’s radical stance of taking the message of God’s love outside and beyond the walls of the Parish Church into the fields and amongst the poor. Following the death of Wesley the Wesleyan church continued to prosper, taking its message of radical love into the ‘safety’ of church buildings. Hugh Bourne felt that nudge of the Holy Spirit, calling him to a return to John Wesley’s ‘primitive’ way of Methodism and was heavily influenced by the founder of the Camp Meeting movement in the US, Lorenzo Dow

It was said of Lorenzo Dow that his ‘...fanciful style of dress, along with his extraordinary appearance, his eccentric doings, and his extravagant speech, were the means of awakening the attention of the slumbering multitudes. They were the means of bringing thousands of people to attend his ministry.’

How many times are we dismissive of those who look and sound ‘different’? Might we be missing God’s help? Recognising that Lorenzo’s style of Camp Meetings, lasting several days, didn’t fit the English working pattern of only having Sundays off work, Hugh Bourne instead held all day meetings of praying, singing and preaching, which were supported by mid-week gatherings in member’s cottages. So if we don’t know where we’re going, a willingness to adapt and look in the unlikely places for help is one strategy to assist us.

If we take the Psalmist’s response at face value, it seems to suggest that in looking to the hills, he ‘found his help’ – and I’m sure, like me, you have seen those posters with this verse superimposed on a dreamy image of a mountain with the sun setting behind it. More likely, the hills were the remote, uninhabited land populated with wild animals and represented danger and threat to the Israelites. The fear of the unknown is often those dangers lurking, threatening to derail our journey of faith. Hugh Bourne’s camp meetings were viewed with suspicion. The government of the time (early 1800’s) was very repressive. Having observed the French revolution a few years before, the government was fearful of poor people meeting together in the open air. The Wesleyan Methodists, as they became, feared support of the camp meetings would set them against the government of the time and their desire to be respectable and accepted by the established church, so declared at the 1807 conference that no Methodist must go to a camp meeting. In 1808, Hugh Bourne lost his membership ticket – and the Primitive Methodist church continued to grow. I wonder if the fear of losing our respectability is holding back our journeying forward as a church? Are we afraid to volunteer at the local homeless hostel and mixing with ‘disreputable’ people? Are we afraid we aren’t good enough? Not experienced enough? Not respectable enough? Our Methodist heritage is built on risk-takers, with their eyes fixed firmly on God for their help.

Our gospel reading, the Transfiguration, tells of the 3 disciples, who not long before had been told by Jesus that he was going to die. We can only imagine how fearful the disciples must have been to hear Jesus predict his own death – indeed, they come across as offended and scandalised but there was doubtless a real fear about what this might mean for their journey of faith – would it end? And yet they trusted Jesus enough to accompany him up the mountain, where they witnessed his transfiguration, and their view of Jesus changed.

Despite the dangers of persecution faced by the early Prims, this revival movement grew and developed. As people from working class and deprived backgrounds began to hear and experience the Love of God in their lives, and feel valued for who they were, taught to read and write in Sunday Schools and given opportunities to take leadership roles in the church, so they began to use the gospels as a filter to see the world around them. George Edwards, began his working life as a crow scarer at the age of 5. In spite of not being able to read and write, George became recognised as a Local Preacher, learning the Bible passages by heart. His Christian faith led him to devote himself to improve the social and economic conditions of agricultural workers, became heavily involved in the Trade Union movement and ultimately became one of the first working class MPs. George Edwards could never have known where his journey of faith would take him, yet as he grew in faith, like the disciples, he was changed, and his view of Jesus changed. How might we 'see' Jesus differently on our faith journey? How can we keep alert to glimpses of God's glory in our walking and talking, and be changed?

The church today is on a journey and we don't know where we're going – these lessons from our readings and our heritage might help us to trust, and find God anew, as we navigate the daunting unknown. But don't forget to pack some snacks!<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

481 STF – The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want OR

94 STF – To God be the glory, great things he has done!

### **Prayers of intercession**

*[Please add a said or sung response to adapt to local situation. You might like to play, read, and/or sing a verse and chorus of STF 693 – Beauty for Brokenness]*

Let us pray for all those on an unknown journey,  
For those ill and in strange places, fearful of an unknown future,

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

For those affected by the cost of living crisis, fearful of the next bill

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

For those with a sense of calling to ministry, unsure of what the future holds

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

For politicians and those in power, who know that their decisions shape the future of many

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

For the church and its mission in turbulent and changing times

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

For all those grieving, facing a future without a loved one

*[Pause – with reflective song/space/response]*

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Ruth Hilton

For ourselves and the fears within that sometimes we cannot speak even to ourselves,  
stopping us taking steps on an unknown journey

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

We are your people Lord, accept again the offerings we make.

We are your disciples Lord, use us to build your Kingdom.

Bless these gifts, and may they become tools for your grace.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

566 STF – Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee OR

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood

### **Blessing**

We go out, with an open-hearted God at our side,

We leave here, with a loving God in our midst,

We face the week ahead, with the Spirit of God amongst us.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Ruth Hilton

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

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