

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 12C

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

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

**Ordinary 12 - Year C**  
19th June 2022



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord OR**

**110 STF – In the wonder of creation**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**157 STF – God has spoken - by his prophets OR**

**163 STF – When listening prophets dare to speak**

Readings: 1 Kings 19:1-15a; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**101 STF – Before the world began OR**

**651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you**

What are you being called to?

**Hymn:**

**693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR**

**655 STF – We cannot measure how you heal**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy OR**

**685 STF – In Christ there is no east or west**

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 Lord,  
Seeking you in worship.  
Here we are God,  
Coming to confess, to be forgiven, to give thanks.  
Here we are, Jesus the Christ,  
Looking to follow you and know you more.  
Here we are, Spirit of the living God,  
Listening to your promptings and your call on our life.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord OR

110 STF – In the wonder of creation

## **Opening Prayers**

Great Creator God, as we worship you today our hearts are filled with awe:  
we see your glory in the night sky, the moon and stars shining on, century after  
century,  
we see your glory in the land around our feet, beauty and abundance to sustain life,  
we see your glory in all people, humankind made in your image,  
we worship you.

Jesus Christ our Redeemer, as we worship you today our hearts are filled with  
praise:  
you are the timeless Word of God, through whom all things were created,  
you are the incarnate Word of God, demonstrating life in all its fullness,  
you are the eternal Word of God, present with us now and to the end of the age,  
we worship you.

Holy Spirit, Energy of God, as we worship you today our hearts are filled with  
wonder:  
we feel you sweeping across the earth now, as you swept over the waters at  
creation  
we feel you stirring your church now, as you first stirred the church at Pentecost,  
we feel you connecting your worldwide family now, as we are joined with one  
another,  
we worship you.

Gracious God, One-in-Three and Three-in-One, accept our worship, our praise and  
our wonder.

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

Reveal again to us your great glory through your Living Word, as we are transformed by your tireless Spirit.

We worship you.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

### **All Age Talk**

Today's Bible passage can be a little scary. Have you ever been scared? What sort of things scare you?

*(Wait for some answers)*

Well, in our story today, there is something that is kind of scary...but through it we see how awesome God is. In our passage it says:

"They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs."

Demons are not goodies, they are not on God's team. So it's not nice for the man in the story to have demons bothering him at all.

Jesus knew what was happening, and tried talking to the demons. They recognised Him, too, and they were scared. Jesus asked the demon's name, and they said "Legion", which meant there were a lot of them. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into some pigs instead. There were a bunch of pigs in a field, right next to the demon man. Now, in Jewish times pigs were considered dirty and untouchable.

Jesus told the demons they could leave the man and enter the pigs...so they did! So, what do we learn from this? For one thing, we know that we don't have to focus on our fears, because God has overcome them and is more powerful than them. If we have His love in our hearts, it should cover and protect us. Even when things are scary, we can talk to God about them and ask for His help.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

157 STF – God has spoken - by his prophets OR

163 STF – When listening prophets dare to speak

**Readings:** 1 Kings 19:1-15a; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

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

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

## Reflections on the reading

Our lives have been turned upside down, in more ways than we can articulate, for the past two years. We're all sick of hearing the word 'unprecedented' by now - what we wouldn't give for just a few months of "precedented" events, boringly predictable news. It's easy to get overwhelmed, to feel like we just want to get off the train for a little while, and pop back on the next one after some time to catch our breath. It's equally easy to feel a bit stuck for answers, to wonder what we should do. We find ourselves asking how we can really make a difference. We find ourselves wondering, whether we admit it to ourselves or not, where is God?

In times like these, especially when it's hard to feel God close to us, it's comforting to be reminded that a gift from God moves among us. It's everywhere we go, whether we feel its presence or not. It's the gift that Jesus first spoke of to his followers before his ascension, which was another time of great fear and uncertainty. The disciples, tasked with building Jesus' church, were facing the prospect of losing the man who had led them, taught them and changed their lives. They were preparing to enter a new phase of their lives, one without Jesus by their side. Not only that, their new life would be founded on the vital, world-changing, boundary-breaking, radical work the very same Jesus was calling them to do.

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear", Jesus said. "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth." As he prepared to go and sit at God's right hand, Jesus reminded his friends they would never be alone. Here is the mystery and wonder of the Trinity; the man Jesus would no longer be among them, but the Spirit of God would be. Last week, on Trinity Sunday, we gave thanks for the gift of the God who is Creator, Spirit, and Christ. Today, we celebrate that Spirit again. The Spirit who - through Jesus - is driving out 'demons' as appears to happen in today's gospel reading. The Spirit who holds us all together, overcoming the barriers of Jew and Greek, slave and free, etc in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Through the Spirit, we are brought into closer relationship with God, and connected to the man who came in human form to minister to the world over two thousand years ago. The Trinity spans time and space, bringing God close to God's people wherever and whenever they are. Jesus always has so much more to say to us than he shares in the moment, and the changes develop over a lifetime; this is where the Spirit comes in. It is our constant companion through life's changing scenes, always there to guide us into the next phase of truth.

The Spirit moves with us and, through its power and presence, we can refine what we knew before, or challenge what we thought we knew. What is God saying to us in the midst of these turbulent times? What is our challenge for today? How do we move forwards? What is the Spirit trying to show us?

One of Paul's great themes is the outpouring of love and grace we experience through the Spirit. We know we are called to share this love, and tell of this grace, to all we meet. Does the Spirit call us to consider how we have been "gatekeepers of grace" before? Have we been reluctant to extend the hand of welcome? Have we let our prejudices affect the strength of our welcome? Have we welcomed people on the condition they do things our way? Do we still see the old boundaries that Paul seeks to tear down in his reflection in Galatians?

Professor Anthony Reddie, in his work on Black Theology, developed an activity to conduct in a group setting, perhaps in a Bible study or other gathering. In it, he would traditionally play the role of host, presenting the gathered community a scenario: Our church is hosting a fellowship meal. The menu has two choices: the “standard meal”, which is available to everyone, or “your favourite meal”. Each member of the community is asked individually to choose whether they would like to have the standard meal or their favourite meal. As the exercise progresses, the leader approaches each person, who gives their answer, and then challenges them on it. Are you sure you want the standard meal? Imagine how good it would be to have your very favourite meal in front of you. Or... Are you happy with your choice? Do you know what the standard meal is? It’s probably really good, and everyone else is having it. The whole point is to make them doubt themselves, think again, before sticking by their choice or going for the other. Reddie describes the various permutations of the exercise, highlighting the parallels with church community.

Perhaps these are questions the Spirit is guiding us to ask ourselves. Does our church make everyone show up and act in a certain way? Does our worshipping style force people to adapt to something very different from what they grew up with? Do our traditions make people feel like outsiders? Conversely, do we give everyone who enters our space the room to be themselves? Do we let everyone have their “favourite meal”, and sit together at one table, sharing in each other’s uniqueness? Is the Spirit moving us to consider how we extend the hand of welcome? Can we hear it challenging us to question whether we have made our siblings in Christ feel that they are truly included, truly loved and truly free?

### **‘We’ve always done it this way’**

Is the Spirit moving us to rethink how we preserve our traditions? Are there questions we should be asking ourselves about our activities, and even our Sunday morning worship routine? Even before the pandemic, the signs have been there. For families, the Sunday morning setup is more of a challenge than it used to be. Whether it’s the football matches that invariably take place at this time, or just the simple fact that parents are pretty busy these days and the weekend is the only time the family can really spend quality time together. The pandemic has highlighted yet more ways in which we can rethink Sunday worship. Switching to online meetings during lockdown opened up doors we hadn’t realised were closed; people who were once unable to join us for worship now found themselves included. Can we build on the quick adaptations we originally made to keep one another safe, and be brave enough to make them part of how we worship on a regular basis? Perhaps this is the key to ensuring all are truly welcome, so we can maintain that wonderful feeling of inclusion we had before.

Whatever this means to us, one thing is clear; we have a Spirit that moves among us throughout our whole lives, across the world and through the generations. Its powerful presence challenges us to keep moving forwards, as the world changes and evolves. It strengthens us to read the signs and make bold steps in radical love. It moves us to extend the hand of welcome, learning to listen and make room for those whose voices have previously been drowned out.

Whatever the Spirit may be calling us to reconsider, question or renew, we live in the sure knowledge we are loved by a God who will never let us go. This radical, all-encompassing love should be enough to empower us to be bold, not to hide in the

safety of tradition and familiarity. The love we are called to share with the world is liberating, freeing and life-changing; in an ever-changing world, we simply must learn to tune into how and where such wonderful love can be poured out. We are called to listen, to adapt, to be brave enough to go wherever the Spirit calls us next. Can we bravely open our hearts to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, and answer the call?<sup>4</sup>

**Hymn:**

101 STF – Before the world began OR

651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you

**What are you being called to?**

How comfortable are you with the idea of the Holy Spirit? Are there ways in which you listen to the Spirit's prompting?

Many Christians describe finding this third element of the Trinity to be the most difficult to grasp or understand, but perhaps that is the point...

This week, and in the weeks ahead, see if you can find out a little bit more about the Holy Spirit. You might like to find some books or a podcast that discuss the role of the Spirit in different traditions, or ask some people in your church to try to find words to describe who the Spirit is and how She fits into the wider image people have of who God is.

As you learn, listen, be still, make space...and let the voice of God-who-is-Spirit speak to you.

**Hymn:**

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR

655 STF – We cannot measure how you heal

**Prayers of intercession**

Loving God: our sanctuary and our hope,  
We lift before you a world in need.

For all those living in the midst of conflict, we pray for peace, comfort and hope. We give thanks for the courage of the people taking to the streets in protest, for those who have opened up their hearts and homes to refugees, and for the peacemaking efforts we see in action all around. May we seek to be peacemakers in all we do, no matter how small our actions may seem.

Holy Spirit, move us  
Holy Spirit, strengthen us  
Holy Spirit, open our hearts

We lift before you all our siblings in Christ living in poverty. We think of those facing the worst effects of climate change, at the mercy of extreme weather and food shortages. We bring before you those who find themselves choosing between heating the house and cooking a hot meal. We give you thanks for the courage of

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Emma Dobson

lobbyists and campaigners; may their voices be heard and taken seriously. We give thanks for the generosity of volunteers and aid workers; may their work inspire others to do the same.

Holy Spirit, move us  
Holy Spirit, strengthen us  
Holy Spirit, open our hearts

We think of those known to us, struggling with illness, bereavement, loneliness, fear or anxiety. In a moment of silence, we bring before you the people and situations on our hearts at this time.

*[Silence]*

Lord, we know that you hear us when we pray. We ask for the courage to be your hands, feet and voice in this world. May we be bearers of your light, sharing your hope and everlasting love with the world.

Holy Spirit, move us  
Holy Spirit, strengthen us  
Holy Spirit, open our hearts

In Jesus' name, we pray

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

**Blessing the offering**

Accept us, O God.

Accept all that we have to offer.

Accept us just as we are, and use us – and these gifts – to build your kingdom here on earth.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn:**

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy OR

685 STF – In Christ there is no east or west

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession by Jill Baker

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

## **Blessing**

We will leave here, never the same again.  
We will follow you, our God, into the week ahead.  
We will go where you will lead us.  
Lead us, heavenly father, lead us.  
Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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