

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 12B

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

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Ordinary 12 - Year B
20th June 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

609 STF – As we gather in your presence now OR

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you

Readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-49; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

395 STF – Spirit of the living God OR

632 STF – I've had questions without answers

What are you being called to?

Hymn:

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

645 STF – Will your anchor hold in the storms of life OR

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell

Blessing

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Call to Worship

Lord you have called us here,
And we have come, to worship you.

Your Spirit is already here amongst us,
And your love is all around us.

May we know your presence Lord, during this time together.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

609 STF – As we gather in your presence now OR

89 STF – Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord

Opening Prayers

In the storms of life Jesus you say 'Peace, be still.'
So as we begin our worship, we say 'Peace, be still.'

Thank you for this day and for the blessings that you bring to us this new day.
'Peace, be still.'

Calming God, who speaks peace over the raging sea, we invite you into our worship.
'Peace, be still.'

Caring God, who encourages us to trust, may our ears be attentive to listen to your voice.

Open our hearts to receive so that we might leave changed.
'Peace, be still.'

Ever present God who is with us in the boat of life, open our eyes so that we can see your presence.
'Peace, be still.'

As we navigate the storms of life together, we say Jesus we need you and we need each other.
'Peace, be still.'

Strengthen and embolden us during this journey and breathe wind into our sails.
'Peace, be still.'

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Matthew Forsyth

All Age Talk

Today is Father's Day! I hope you hadn't forgotten!

A very happy Father's Day to all the dad's here today, and to all our dads, wherever they are.

Today is a day for celebrating those relationships we have with our fathers. Perhaps for some of us – it is a difficult day. Those of us who had difficult relationships with our fathers – or no relationship at all. Those of us who wanted to be fathers but never got the chance, or who are grieving the loss of our children. Those of us who never wanted to be fathers, but have carried the stigma of that for years. If that's you – today is a hard day for you, but this day is here for you too.

We hold the spaces that are painful, and invite God to work through them to bring us peace, and harmony, and hope.

In this space, which may be painful, or may be a celebration, we think again of our relationship with God. Often, God is described as a 'heavenly Father' and this can bring up all the difficult emotions we've already begun to explore. But it is intended as a step towards understanding the divine.

God is like a father in the sense that the divine is always seeking out the best in us, seeking ways to help us flourish and grow, protecting us against our greatest fears and inviting us to see the best in ourselves. If that's the kind of father you had, or aspire to be, or know – then you are some of the way there!

What is your relationship with God like? Are you listening to the divine today – listening out for what we might be being taught?

Today is also another important day, it is World Refugee Day. Even as we give thanks for our fathers, and reflect on those very personal, local, familial relationships – we think too of our relationships with the whole world. We recognise that our God is not just 'like a father to us', God is also a 'migrant God'. Always on the move, always inviting us on to the next place.

And as so many people around the planet are living as refugees, or forced to leave their homes in some way or other, today we stand in solidarity with them. We pray for safety, for hope of a better, safer world, and for a chance for everyone to have somewhere to call home.

As we reflect on these two special days, we see the whole challenge of living as a Christian disciple. We love the Lord our God – our heavenly Father – and from that love, we seek to love our neighbour, to make the world a better, safer, fairer place. May you be a people of justice and love this week.³

Hymn:

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you

³ All Age talk written by Tim Baker

Readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-49; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

Reflections on the Readings

Henry Stewart, the business leader, writes in his book 'The Happy Manifesto' about the limitations of always focusing on our weaknesses. Rather, he invites us to think more about what we are good at, and spend our time and energy on that. For example, he highlights the typical 'appraisal' process in a business setting, where people discuss their strengths and weaknesses and then spend the rest of the time concentrating on how their weaknesses can be improved, worked upon, trained out of them, etc.

Of course, there are merits to this approach, and we all have things to 'work on'. But Henry Stewart's point is that we have become obsessed with weakness, rather than thinking about strength. In the company he runs, they have redesigned the appraisal process so that rather than trying to 'work on' people's weaknesses, they are trying to make sure people don't have to do much work in their areas of weakness. If, for example, people love delivering training but are not so good at the accountancy that comes with billing their clients – they try to redesign the role so the person can focus on what they are good at (and what they enjoy – strange how they overlap so often, isn't it!)

And this is not just true in business life, is it? It's true in our whole lives, and in our Christian discipleship. How often do we spend all our time and energy on our perceived weaknesses, when we could be focusing on our strengths, our gifts, our own role within the larger body of Christ. More about that shortly...

We are hearing about Henry Stewart and The Happy Manifesto today because our Old Testament reading - the David and Goliath story – speaks to this same truth. Of course, our usual interpretation of this passage is all about how the 'little guy' stands up to the 'giant', but there is one line in the story that really stuck out to me this time as I read through it again. When David first suggests going into battle, Saul and the other Israelites offer him the best armour they can find. It's grand, it's strong, it's designed to protect the wearer from harm and to give him the upper hand. In the right hands it is a brilliant asset. David, however, says: 'I cannot go in these, because I am not used to them'. Instead, he takes five smooth stones from the stream and his slingshot. Hardly the weapons of a mighty warrior, these are the everyday tools of a shepherd boy. But they are his, he knows them and is skilled in using them.

Despite his apparently inferior apparel and armoury, he wins the battle against the mighty Goliath. He picks his battle, and his tools, carefully, and saves God's people.

How often have we found ourselves operating in totally the wrong environment, or with the wrong tools? Perhaps this past year, you've had experiences of that – as you've had to get used to Zoom, or Facebook, or WhatsApp, or one of the other tools we've used to get to maintain community online during this pandemic. Perhaps you have not been able to engage with any of those tools. Or perhaps you have found you are skilled in those tools and been able to use them to great effect.

Maybe it's how you feel about church: that singing hymns together, or bowing your heads in prayer, or knowing when people seem to stand up and when they sit down, is confusing to you. It puts you off and gets in the way of connecting with the base-note of spirituality that is all around you. Or maybe you need that rhythm, those familiar tunes, that liturgy, in order to connect with the God you wish to worship and encounter.

I wonder how this story speaks to you today. I wonder how you feel about this invitation to use what you are good at in order to further God's kingdom. Of course, this is not an invitation to rest on our laurels, or enjoy the comfortable life – David hardly did that! He could have stayed in the hills and avoided the conflict all together. Rather, it is an invitation to each of us to know what we are called to, to ask God in the simple prayer, 'show me what is mine to do' – and to play to our strengths!

Do you have a particular skill for and love of baking? How could you use that to further God's kingdom of justice and joy? Who is going hungry right now that you could feed? Who could you invite to be part of a community of discipleship-formation through the temptation of your fresh scones... or who might enjoy joining you next time you make banana bread?

Or perhaps your skills are tinkering with old cars? Are you a dab hand with knitting needles? Do you love playing football or cricket (other sports are available) with your friends? Do you want some company when you go out for long walks or head into the hills to go bouldering and rock climbing? Are you a gifted public speaker? Do you have lots of followers on Twitter? Are you a particularly safe-driver with a large car and plenty of time to offer others lifts? Are you an accountant-by-trade who could help a church or small charity with their books? A lawyer who could help those seeking legal advice to help with their debts, their housing situation, their families...

The list goes on. Do any of those chime with you, or is it something completely different?

And what Jesus shows us in the gospel reading from today's lectionary, is that we are encouraged to step out in faith. As Jesus says to the disciples, after he has calmed the storm: 'why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

Yes, we can play to our strengths, but we are encouraged to take the leap of faith and make use of those strengths to make the world a better place, to spread love, to bring grace. David takes his slingshot from the hilltop, doing the important work of looking after sheep, to the battlefield – doing the vital work of defending the Israelites against a real threat.

Where can you take your skills and strengths? How can you make better use of them to calm the storms of life? To spread the love of God? To bring more people into encounter with the Spirit of God? To build the Kingdom, here on earth?

This is our moment. Are we still afraid? Or do we have faith to step out into the storm?⁴

Hymn:

395 STF – Spirit of the living God OR

632 STF – I've had questions without answers

What are you being called to?

Use this time for a quiet meditation to challenge yourself to take an action this week to help respond to today's message. As you listen to the words, and reflect in the pauses, try to come to at least one concrete action that you can take this week, something that will make a difference.

Let us sit for a moment, and in the quiet, I want you to imagine yourself doing something you love, and something you think you are quite good at. Perhaps you are on your own, or perhaps with others. Perhaps it is a particular task, or leisure activity. Perhaps it's taking place in one particular location, which is what makes it so special.

As we hold the quiet, just continue to imagine yourself doing that activity. Enjoying it. Flourishing...

[Hold a few moments of quiet].

I want you to remember what this feels like.
I want you to hold the strength of this feeling.
This is your strength, lean on it.

[Pause].

Now, how can you use this feeling of strength in your life? How can you use it to face the storms that are coming this week, this month, this year?
How can you take your strengths, and make them tools for making the world a better place?
Use these next few moments to decide – what can you do?
What can I do?
What can each one of us do, that will make use of our strengths this week?

[Hold a few moments of quiet].

Holy God, take these moments, take this energy, take these commitments, and use them for your mission here on earth.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Hymn:

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Prayers of Intercession

Jesus, you calmed the storm

Commanded the waves to become ripples, and the wind to fall silent,

Your words calmed the hearts of your friends.

Be still.

Be still and believe.

Be still and know.

Jesus, calm the storms in the hearts of your people.

In the hearts of those who do not feel safe in the place they should call home,

In the hearts of those who live in war-torn nations, fearing for their families,

In the hearts of those whose loved ones are far away, fighting in the midst of conflict,

Jesus, calm the storms in the hearts of your people

In the hearts of those whose lives have been torn apart by grief,

In the hearts of those who live with regret,

In the hearts of those who feel helpless in the face of impossible circumstances,

In the hearts of those who worry about someone they love,

Jesus, calm the storms in the hearts of your people,

Jesus, help us to calm the storms in the hearts of your people.

Compel us to speak peace,

Embody peace,

Make peace,

In all we say,

In all we do,

In all we are,

In your gracious and beautiful name, we pray,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Emma Dobson

Blessing the Offering

Take my moments, take my gifts, take my heart and take my body.

Together, may our offerings be used to show the love, peace, hope and grace that comes from you, O God.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

645 STF – Will your anchor hold in the storms of life OR

409 STF – Let us build a house where love can dwell

Blessing

Go with courage, followers of the Christ.

Go into a world crying out for love and hope.

Go to spread peace.

Go, and the Spirit of God goes before you.

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker