

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 16C

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

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**Ordinary 16 - Year C**  
17th July 2022



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**544 STF – As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you OR**

**254 STF – Seek ye first the kingdom of God**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**67 STF – This, this is the God we adore OR**

**362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity**

Readings: Amos 8:1-12; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

**Hymn:**

**293 STF – All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord OR**

**498 STF – God of all power, and truth, and grace**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**633 STF – My soul finds rest in God alone OR**

**319 STF – Christ triumphant, ever reigning**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**489 STF – All I once held dear, built my life upon OR**

**495 STF – Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways**

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**

Across the miles, we gather this Lord's day.  
Across the ages, we have gathered to meet and pray.  
Around your world, dear God, we keep this day as holy.  
As we meet, we are united with people meeting to worship and pray across the globe.  
Come amongst us, your church, and transform us by your Spirit.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

544 STF – As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you OR  
254 STF – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

## **Opening Prayers**

A week has passed since we last gathered in this place. We come with heavy hearts and minds from the week just gone. The anxiety for the coming week, the sorrow for what we see in the news, the concern we have for our neighbours.

But here, we're invited to share our burdens with one another and with Jesus. Find comfort and rest here and be reinvigorated for the week to come. Find joy and rest in the Lord and peace in this community.

May the love of Christ open our hearts today.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

## **All Age Talk**

Today's All Age reflection comes to us from the team at All We Can – an international development charity seeking to see 'every person's potential fulfilled' on behalf of the church.

Later in our service, we will hear the immortal words from Colossians 1, verse 17: 'In Christ, all things hold together'. This is one of the great sentences in the New Testament which, if you sit with it long enough, can encapsulate the whole gospel message. That somehow, in Christ, we are held together. Across the miles, across time, across all the divisions and boundaries that stand between us – the cosmic Christ is bringing us together, holding us together, inviting us into unity.

At All We Can, over the last couple of years (since March 2020 when you-know-what happened!), we have become extra-invested in this verse. All We Can has run a regular

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

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

broadcast at 17 minutes past 1 (1:17), inspired by these words from Colossians and acting as a place where people can ‘hold together’ – during the social isolation of lockdowns and government restrictions, but also connecting with the communities and partners that All We Can works with around the world. It has become a space in which the spirit of Colossians 1-17 is lived out. If you’d like to tune in, head over to All We Can’s Facebook, YouTube or Twitter accounts – just search for ‘allwecanuk’.

One of the things that 1-17 has become famous for is the game, ‘All the questions you can’. It’s a simple format, introduced to help viewers get to know the guests who appear on 1-17, in which the guest has to answer as many questions as they can in 90 seconds. Why don’t we try it out today – as a chance to find out a bit more about all of you. The questions are silly, and light hearted, but the ‘top score’ via the internet is 23, so it would be interesting to see if (without the delay caused during conversations online) – we can beat that here today! *[At this point, see if at least one person is willing to volunteer to be the ‘guest’ in All the questions you can, and ideally 2 or 3 people, who can go one after the other in an effort to see who can answer the most questions in 90 seconds. You just need a timer – using a phone is ideal – set to 1 minute and 30 seconds and the list of questions below. Run the game as often as you think is helpful, pick up on any particularly surprising answers – it’s amazing what people will say under pressure! - then use the reflection at the end.]*

All The Questions You Can – suggested questions (you might want to change these, or change the order around, if you are asking more than one person. Remember, you stop asking new questions after the 90 second timer is up so you may not get to the end of this list!):

1. What is your full name?
2. Where are you now?
3. Do you prefer hymns or modern worship songs?
4. What are you doing after this?
5. What is your favourite food at a BBQ?
6. Ketchup or mayonnaise?
7. Tea, coffee, or hot chocolate?
8. Would like a biscuit with that?
9. Do you have a favourite theologian?
10. Should ministers be allowed to wear shorts and a dog collar at the same time?
11. Would you rather have arms for legs or legs for arms?
12. Should pineapple be allowed on a pizza?
13. What’s your favourite flavour of ice-cream?
14. Do you care who wins the men’s football premier league?
15. Do you have a favourite verse in the Bible?
16. Do you have any pets?
17. What is one thing you would change about society if you could?
18. Would you rather trek in the mountains or holiday by the beach?
19. Would you rather meet Martin Luther King Jr or Martin Luther (the Reformationist)?
20. If Covid disappeared off the planet tomorrow, what is the first thing you would do?
21. What is one thing we could all do to help tackle the climate crisis?
22. Do you prefer Christmas, Easter or your birthday?
23. If you could relive any day of your life so far, which one would it be?
24. Do you have a favourite pair of shoes?

25. What is your favourite shape of pasta?  
26. What is the best book you have read so far this year?  
27. What is the weirdest thing that has happened on a Zoom call you have been on?  
*And if you got this far – you are already the ‘best in class’!*

Well, that was fun, wasn't it! Hopefully our 'guests' don't feel too much stress, and thank you for playing! This is a silly way to get to know what people think about some of these issues – most of which don't really matter. But, amongst all the silliness, there is a helpful reminder of the gospel message – that we are connected across the miles as we play this game: connected with dozens of people who have competed in the official All We Can 1-17 (tune in to a future episode to compare our scores to the official leader board!), with others using the Vine service today or in the coming weeks, and with all God's people, everywhere.

Let us 'hold together' this week, and in the weeks to come. In Christ, all things hold together.<sup>3</sup>

**Hymn:**

67 STF – This, this is the God we adore OR  
362 STF – Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity

**Readings:** Amos 8:1-12; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42

**Hymn:**

293 STF – All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord OR  
498 STF – God of all power, and truth, and grace

**Reflections on the reading**

Is the world burning? Is it all about to end? How do we preach the gospel in the context of a climate crisis?

Well, as the Climate Coalition resources say, "Hope is not lost: it is not too late to tackle climate change and the destruction of the natural world." They go on to demonstrate how lots of people are already part of trying to build a different and more hopeful narrative about how we can and are making a change. Can we, the church, lead the way on social change, as we have so often before in our history?

Our Bible readings today, combined with recent news events and a growing sense that combating global heating and the climate crisis might be the defining move of our generation, help to create a space where it seems appropriate to engage with this issue in our worship. Amos, one of the most outspoken and regularly challenging of the Minor Prophets, is presenting a critique of a society in breakdown. Writing – we believe – around the eighth century BC, Amos is regularly critical of the political and religious establishment

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by All We Can

in Judah and Israel. He observes the failings of the current society, and prophesizes about many future disasters that will occur if people continue on the path they are on – in particular he seems to have foreseen or predicted the invasion and captivity of Judah by the Assyrians in about 721 BCE.

Perhaps our task looks rather similar – to recognise the failings of our society (particularly how we treat the environment, but there are many others too) and to demonstrate how if we continue down this road we are headed for disaster.

Amos is also regularly critical of what one commentator calls a ‘spiritual smugness’ in Judah at the time – a sense that ‘we are alright thank you’. I wonder if sometimes we need to hear that message again too: a challenge to us in the church to recognise our place in the world and the importance of responding to the world we find ourselves in. It’s up to us to model a different way of being.

In these verses, the prophet is particularly critical of the corruption and mistreatment of the poor that is going on, demonstrating that this is not how God desired societies to function. And then he picks up on the issue of the land, in a poetic if confusing image:

“Will not the land tremble for this, and all who live in it mourn? The whole land will rise like the Nile, it will be stirred up and then sinks like the river of Egypt”.

Perhaps this is where we are now – lamenting for a trembling land, stirred up and sinking (under the rising sea levels), with all the unpredictability of weather systems and all the damage to people and landscapes that comes with violent climate crises. This is a time for wailing against the way things are, and recognizing the dangers of the road we are on.

Roughly 20 percent of the Amazon rainforest has disappeared in just 50 years.

About half of all shallow-water corals have been lost in the last 30 years.

Since the 1950s, every continent has warmed substantially and the 21st century has seen the most temperature records broken in recorded history.

The Earth's temperature will continue to rise so long as we continue to produce greenhouse gases. The estimates for how much temperatures will increase by 2100 range from two degrees Celsius to as much as six degrees Celsius.

Rising sea levels is caused primarily by the added water from melting ice sheets and glaciers, as well as the expansion of sea water as it warms. Levels are currently rising at their fastest rate for more than 2,000 years and the current rate of change is 3.4mm a year.

Displacement of people as a direct result of climate change is not a hypothetical, it's already happening. Around 24 million people have been forcibly displaced since 2008 due to climate changed-related weather hazards.

David Benjamin Blower, the Christian musician and writer has recently said: “hope is on the other side of lament.” This rather appealing phrase was part of a wider discussion around climate change, and the importance of entering into the ‘lament’, the grief and the pain of the current situation. Blower observes that our most natural reaction to statistics and stories about large issues like global heating or the refugee crisis is to turn aside, to put it to the back of our minds, to focus on other, smaller, less-scary things. In some of his work, however, he invites us into the painful but essential process of lament. He reminds us that it is important to sit with the pain, in order to find true hope.

His logic is messianic: Jesus did not leap from the highest point of the temple in order to claim instant fame as the devil offered, nor did he ‘come down from the cross’ as those

around him taunted him to, nor did he burst straight from the tomb within minutes of his burial. The Jesus story, the resurrection narrative, has to include the pain of Good Friday and the lament of Holy Saturday. We have to weep with the terrified disciples, the confused women, Cleopas and his companion walking the road in despair. The story invites us to lament.

And, as David Benjamin Blower recognises, it is in this process that we find hope. It is in the act of grieving and grieving thoroughly for a world in need that we start to recognise the potential for change, we catch a glimpse of a God who moves in mysterious and revolutionary ways. We experience resurrection.

That's what Paul is beginning to understand at the beginning of Colossians. That the hope of Christ in you is transformative – not just for us, but for the whole of creation. "In him all things hold together" might just be my favourite phrase in the whole of the New Testament. The Christ of Paul's vision is so much more than a man who lived in Palestine and was part of a few remarkable stories – this Christ is cosmic and transforms everything.

And Paul means, everything. Not just the socially acceptable things. Not just the sort of things we usually think about in church. Not just the things we like. Not just the people we like. In fact, not just the people – but *all things*. This is a universal Christ, who is holding all of creation together. God's plan is for the entirety of creation and the cosmos.

Is ours? Are we able to think beyond our human all-too-human imaginations and see God at work in all things, seeking to bring all things back to Godself, desiring a radical transformation of the whole of creation?

If we can, or if we can begin to stretch beyond politics and personal worries, into a God of the whole universe, perhaps we can take our responsibilities for the planet more seriously. Perhaps, too, we can experience hope in that act – for if we believe God has something still to do in our lives, in our families, in our communities, then we can believe that for the whole of creation too. Perhaps God has a plan to redeem a polluted, overheating, frenetic world – and perhaps God requires you and me to be a part of seeing that plan come to fruition. If so, perhaps this is our moment. If God is 'reconciling to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven', then we need to do be in the business of reconciling too.

What are you being called to do, to change, to transform, in Jesus' name?

In today's Gospel reading we heard Luke's version of this familiar tale of Mary and Martha. In the context of climate change and the societal breakdown that Amos is warning us about, perhaps we can re-examine our typical interpretations of this passage. We often try to redeem Martha – perhaps out of our desire to defend the Protestant work ethic or even the important role of 'housework' which doesn't always get a good reputation. And of course, there is much work to be done on recognising different calls to ministry, different impulses around caring or listening.

However, perhaps Jesus' rebuke for Martha is born out of his understanding of timing, of waiting, of reflection – even of lament. In the face of so much social change, is Jesus inviting the two women who are hosting him to just sit with that for a moment? Perhaps what we can hear from this reading is the invitation to pause, to sit at the feet of Jesus, to learn something new, to enter into the pain of the world we live in...and to believe that sitting there long enough that might give us hope.

Perhaps, or perhaps he meant something else all together...

The great joy and challenge of the Christian faith, and of all our work to attempt to make sense of our place in it, is that we do not *know*. We believe, we hope, we pray, we reflect on and we learn – but we can never know. As we trust in God's future for this planet, and our

own lives, we embrace the uncertainty of Paul in Colossians: “The glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

May that mystery be true for you, and for all of us. Christ is in us – the hope of glory.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

633 STF – My soul finds rest in God alone OR

319 STF – Christ triumphant, ever reigning

### **Prayers of intercession**

We live in busy times. Wake. Wash. Eat. Rush out the door. Get to work. Work. Lunch. Work. Leave. Eat. Wash. Relax. Sleep. We do this every day. There is much to be done.

***Root us in love, help us find time to pause.***

We see those hurting around us. Our friends. Our neighbours. Those we see but do not know. We hear the news from places near and far, the pain and injustice. But we're busy and don't have time to think about it.

***Root us in love, help us find time to pause.***

We get impatient on the bus. The check-out scanners keep saying “Unexpected Item in Baggage area.” We stepped in a puddle in a rush. We can't find the keys; we burnt our dinner. We snapped at a friend, we ignore that phone call from family.

***Root us in love, help us find time to pause.***

We lashed out in anger; we sent a message we regret. We pointed fingers and spoke ill of others, rather than listening and hearing. We falter in our support for others because we feel stretched thin.

***Root us in love, help us find time to pause.***

Often, we are more like Martha when we know we should be more like Mary. God, give us the strength to know when to pause, to respond with love. To enjoy the moments in life that come from love. And that we find time to pause and remember that these come from you.

***Root us in love, and help us to find time to pause and be thankful.***

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Tim Baker

<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession by Tim Annan



## **Blessing the offering**

God of all creation, we give you these gifts now – and invite you to bless them and to use them for your purposes. May we bring about redemption for a world in disaster, hope for a people in despair.

By your Spirit and in the name of Christ,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

## **Hymn:**

489 STF – All I once held dear, built my life upon OR

495 STF – Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways

## **Blessing**

We shall go out with joy, and be sent forth with peace.

We shall seek to know you more, Lord Jesus, and to follow in your way.

We hold together, in you.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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

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