

The Vine at Home

14th Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year B

Call to worship

Jesus calls us, here to meet him,
And we come – from afar or near, connecting together in this act of worship.

We have been richly blessed, and we come to worship the living God, and to filled again with your Holy Spirit. Amen.¹

Hymn:548 STF Blessed Assurance -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5a0wBF4ok0>

Opening Prayers

From the very beginning, you were there God.

In the first moments of creation, amongst big bangs, creative sparks and a divine word spoken, you were there.

At the very end, you will be there, our God.

When meaningfulness collapses, life ends, universes fade and creation stops creating, you will be there, our God.

You are Alpha. You are Omega.

You are A. You are Z.

You are first and last.

We praise you, God of the beginnings and God of the endings.

God of the first breath, and God of the last.

God of the labour pains and God of the dying moments.

We praise you, God of all time, in this moment, this time.

Come amongst us, spirit of the living God.

For our prayer of confession, we are just going to pause for a moment to reflect on some of the ways in which we have not been our best selves, ways in which we have let ourselves down. If it helps you to write, or draw, as you reflect, then by all means do that. Let us just be still for a moment, and reflect on the places where we are not living up to our true potential.

[Hold quiet for a few minutes. You might like to play some quiet reflective music, and it may be helpful to have pen and paper on hand for people to use if they wish or would be more comfortable doing so].

Living God, we want to be better, we want to be our best, for you and for your world.

Move within us, transform us, change us.

Challenge and inspire us, by your Spirit, to fulfil your desires for our lives.

We are sorry, for all the times we've turned away from that desire, all the times we've let each other down.

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

And even as we say sorry, we know that you forgive and accept us, you accept us just as we are. We see in you the love we wish to reflect into the world – a love that always accepts, and always hopes for better.

May we be reservoirs of that love, overflowing out into a world in need.

In Jesus' name, Amen.²

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 – David Anointed King of All Israel

5 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. **2** For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." **3** So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. **4** David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. **5** At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

⁹ David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inward. ¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

² I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³ And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— ⁴ was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵ On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶ But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷ even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep^[a] me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.^[b] ⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹ but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power^[c] is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1-3 - The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. **2** On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! **3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary^[a] and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense^[b] at him.

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

Reflections on the reading

For a full edition of this week's reflection, subscribe to The Vine – find out more by emailing thevine@twelvebaskets.co.uk

Today is a day of celebration for some of our sisters and brothers across the Atlantic, but may well be an unremarkable day for many in the UK. It's Independence Day! Recounting the story of the independence of America can be heard differently and remembered differently by various people throughout history. As a university student, I, a British citizen, was shown an American cartoon about this historical event by an American lecturer, to see how our student cohort would respond to the way the British were depicted – this was not an exercise in flattery!

How is God using you today? This passage is not an exercise in Biblical flattery, but an invitation to reflect on our place in God's big story. How will we respond?

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray,
God of our hearts,
Come into our feelings, our emotions, teaching us the art of love.

Show us how to embrace your world and your people, with arms of grace.
Guide us in each moment, that the very impulses of our bodies might be tuned to you.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of our minds, come into our thoughts, our intellects, and help us to focus the work of our brains on you. Show us how to be agents of love in the workplace, at school, in our reading, our writing, our thinking.
Guide us to come to know you more, through the power you have given us in our minds.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of our families,
Come into the places we call home, that we might show and discover something about you in our houses, at our mealtimes, in our beds.
Show us how to love each other, and reveal your nature of love to us, through our relationships with those closest to us – our family and closest friends.
Guide us in the difficulties and struggles that come with our family lives, and the suffering of those closest to us – bring them your love.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of the Church,
Come into the midst of your people, come to bring healing, to bring unity, to build a movement that can shape the world for good.
Show us how to love each other, to heal broken rifts within churches and between denominations. How to reach out into the world around us, bringing peace, not division, bringing love, and not conflict.
Guide us in our decision making and our worship, our committees and young church, our church councils and prayer meetings, bring the church closer to your design, your hopes for
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humanity.

We pray for the circuit, for all those looking for a fresh start. Lord, bring your newness, your refreshing and re-charging love. We pray for this church, as your people here begin afresh their journey with you.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of this country,

Come into broken Britain, bruised Britain, bringing healing and comfort.

Show your love to those suffering in this country – the elderly, those suffering with mental illness, those without homes, those carrying a disease, those struggling to make ends meet, and those suffering from damaged relationships.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of the world

Come into your suffering, unequal planet, bringing peace and harmony where there is war and discord.

Show your love to those who cannot see it this morning – those tied up in war and conflict, battling with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, those struggling with a life of poverty.

God of love, enter our hearts, and tune your world to love.

God of our hearts - help us to be agents of love across your world, in the way we live our lives, in the people we meet and the situations we hold influence. Amen.³

Hymn: 455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRw8uxyN1Rc>

Blessing

Go and enter into the flow of love that is at work in the universe.

Go and discover that God is out there, moving, transforming, touching lives and all creation.

Go and encounter the Spirit of God.

Amen.⁴

³ Prayers of intercession written by The Joint Public Issues Team

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

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