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ORDINARY 32B

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes

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Opening Prayers

Loving God, I open myself up to your presence today,
As I mark aside this space and time in your house,
This house,
This space in which you are present, and we are present.

In the midst of the busyness and uncertainty in our world, in our families, in our neighbourhoods and in our own lives, I mark out this space as sacred, this moment as one in which I will be open to the divine.

Come here, Holy Spirit.
Nurture my flickering faith,
Breathe on my wilting hope,
Spark the flames of our love for you.

As I pray today, I give thanks for all the ways in which we have been blessed by you,
For all that I have received, all that I have and am,
We give thanks for your gifts, your grace, to us, your people.

And as we pray, we also take a moment to let go of all the shame and guilt that we carry around. I know that I have fallen short of your glory, and I come to you now, knowing that you have already forgiven me. You have already set every single one of us free.

Help me to live freely, by your Spirit, O God.

Amen.¹

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Bible reading: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Reflections on the reading

In today's reading, from Ruth, we read about an immigrant in a strange land, a refugee widow with very little means of her own. In the society at this time, it wasn't easy being a woman, or a widow, or a refugee, or a single woman without a father-figure. Ruth is all four. She could easily have been overlooked by society, and many people in her position and similar positions are still overlooked today.

And in the story we heard earlier she meets Boaz – her kinsman redeemer – the person who, by marrying her, gives her a way back into society and a way to fulfil her potential again.

Perhaps, in that moment of redemption, of the outsider finding their place, of the unnoticed widow stepping into the light, we are reminded that, however outcast we feel, however unworthy, however much we don't think we can earn our place in

¹ Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

God's Kingdom...there is always a space for the outsider. Jesus, our very own kinsman redeemer, welcomes us back into the fold, into the family, into his kin-dom.

And then the challenge to us is, how does that affect how we treat others?

Wherever Jesus goes, and throughout the Jesus story, he is always making space for those who others would have considered outsiders. Can we do the same?

So today, let us make a little space for grace and give up a place for those whom others would disgrace. Just as Ruth refused to let the vulnerable Naomi suffer alone, let us stand by the vulnerable in our society today.

Let us pray.

God who goes to the margins,

Whose heart is with the vulnerable and oppressed,

Move our own hearts to love our neighbours as ourselves.

God whose love is all-encompassing,

Whose grace abounds without end,

Move our priorities from our own desires, to the needs of those around us,

So that in loving them, we might serve you.

Amen.²

Prayers of intercession

This week, we have celebrated Guy Fawkes Night or Bonfire Night – I wonder if you have been celebrating over the weekend? You will all know the famous rhyme that begins 'remember, remember the fifth of November' and we are going to take inspiration from that for our prayers of intercession.

Let us pray.

Loving God, you call us to remember – to remember you at the Lord's Supper, to remember your life here on earth, to remember your death and resurrection. We pause now, to remember you.

[Quiet]

Loving God, we remember your world – people far away and in very different circumstances to us, people without the luxury to meet in comfort on this Sunday. People without food, shelter, support or peace. We remember all those affected by Universal Credit across this country, and those suffering the effects of poverty around your world.

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Loving God, we remember those affected by conflict today – the wars that are still going on, and those carrying physical and mental scars from wars long finished. Amongst the pain, the uncertainty, the violence, we pray for your peace.

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Loving God, we remember those close to us, our friends and family, the people we cherish most. In a moment of quiet, we offer their needs, their worries, their concerns, to you.

[Quiet].

² Reflection written by Tim Baker

As we remember, Lord, show us how to act with love.

Finally, loving God, we take a moment to pray for ourselves. Show us how to be those that respond to your offer of grace, help us to be good neighbours to those we find ourselves alongside, help us to show the self-sacrificial love of Ruth.

As we remember our act of worship today Lord, show us how to grow more in tune with you, and act with your love for your world.

In the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Spirit we pray.

Amen.³

Hymn:

Finish this time of focused worship by playing, singing or listening to this ancient hymn – also an invitation for God to be our guide in the hours, days and weeks ahead.

465 STF – Guide me, O thou great Jehovah - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Guide us, great Jehovah, as we seek to respond to your love to us. Help us by a shining example of love in a world crying out in need. May we be Christ's hands and feet, by the power of your Spirit.

Amen.⁴

³ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker