

twelvebaskets



EASTER 3A

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

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

Third Sunday of Easter- Year A
26th April 2020



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR

313 STF – Thine be the glory

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

519 STF – Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do OR

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Hymn:

450 STF – Open, Lord, my inward ear OR

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

445 STF – He came to earth, to be served OR

673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

492 STF – Christ be my leader by night as by day OR

322 STF – How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

Blessing

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Call to Worship

Risen Lord,
be the presence we feel,
the love that we share
and the focus of our prayer,
in our gathering for worship
on this your day.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine OR
313 STF – Thine be the glory

Opening Prayers

A prayer of adoration

It was always your will
that Israel should find
in Jesus Christ
the one who would bring them home,
lost sheep returning
to the shepherd who is their king.

And to that fold
would come others
from every nation upon earth,
as prophets had foretold,
including those gathered here today
in honour of your name.

Gracious God, we praise you
for the promise of scripture,
the depth of your love
and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

Lord, we bring to you
the load we carry,
burdens that weaken,
all that makes us stumble.

¹ Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

But we shall not be overwhelmed,
for we come to you in prayer
knowing that you hear our cry
and, having heard, will answer.

Lord, we bring to you
the sin we carry,
our envy and pride,
all that drags us down.

But we shall not be overwhelmed
for we come to you in prayer
knowing that you hear our cry
and, having heard, will answer.

Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Whether we are strong or weak,
whether we are rich or poor,
whether we are wise or not,
whoever we are,
there is nothing we can do
to deserve that which was accomplished
for us on the cross—
nothing we can do
except bow our heads in worship.

For sins forgiven
and the Spirit given, we simply
and humbly thank you. Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

'Do this in remembrance of me'.

What do you think of when you hear those words?

Perhaps you are reminded of the communion service, which is a regular part of our church life. We say those words at many of those services, how often have we stopped to consider them?

Often, the main focus is on remembrance – is on the act of thinking back to Holy Week, to the Last Supper and to the way Jesus shared bread just before he died.

² Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

How often, I wonder, do with think of the other simple, communion meal that will be a part of our Bible readings later today – the meal at the end of the Emmaus Road, where Jesus breaks bread with Cleopas and his companion. In that moment, they recognise him as the risen Jesus...

Today, however, rather than focusing on the remembrance, let's turn our attention to the first two words in that simple sentence: 'do this'.

These two very short words are a crucial part of Jesus' ministry. In the time that he was on earth, and in the stories he left for us to get to know him more, we see that Jesus is an activist, an action man, a get-up-and-do-things kind of guy.

So, today, that poses the question – what are we *doing* about our faith? How does the experience of all that happens to us in church, with our Christian friends, in prayer, in reading the Bible and in seeking to know more of God actually move us to action?

When you leave this place today, what are you going to *DO*?

Are there actions you need to take that will make the world a better place? That will share joy, peace, love, hope, justice and all the things that Jesus stands for?

Let's not just be a people who sit and remember – important though that is. Let's not just be a church that talks and sings without anything changing. Let's be a people of action!

At the end of the Emmaus story, Cleopas and his companion are so moved by their encounter with Jesus that they run all the way back to Jerusalem to take action, to spread the word. Where will you take a message good news this week? To whom?³

Hymn:

519 STF – Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do OR

156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun

Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Hymn:

450 STF – Open, Lord, my inward ear OR

513 STF – Take this moment, sign, and space

³ All Age Talk by Tim Baker

Reflections on the readings

It was no good, I just had to get away – get away from the pain and suffering; get away from the madness and chaos; get away to grieve the unjustified killing of a good man; get away to try and make some sense of what had happened. We probably should have stayed with our friends in Jerusalem to share in the mourning rituals, but the other women turning up this morning gibbering on about angels was the last straw! Peter and some of the others then went off to check and came back saying that the tomb was empty. Perhaps it was the disappointment of finding nothing of value in what looked like a rich man's tomb that made grave-robbers take the body. Not that I'm sure how they would have got in. The last we heard, soldiers had been stationed at the tomb to ensure that we – Jesus' friends – didn't steal the body. As if we would do such a thing! It was bad enough that he had to be buried in such haste that we couldn't prepare his body properly. That was what had taken the women off this morning; they wanted to go and anoint his body. They asked me to go with them, but I couldn't face it and part of me was afraid to tell the truth.

Cleopas could see my distress. "Let's go and stay with your sister for a day or two," he said. So there we were, on our way to her place in Emmaus, so busy talking about everything that had happened that we hadn't even noticed the stranger who'd come alongside us. "What are you talking about?" he asked. How rude! I would have given him a piece of my mind if Cleopas hadn't got in first with his, "Are you the only person who doesn't know what has happened?" I groaned inwardly knowing this was going to draw the man into our conversation, but as Cleopas told the story it helped get things a little straighter in my own mind: Jesus really was a prophet who had taught with authority and healed many people; yet our chief priests and leaders had connived to get him crucified by the Romans just a couple of days ago. And that was that, our hopes of redemption dashed. That is unless you believe what happened this morning. The women said that angels had told them that Jesus was alive, but Peter and the others didn't see him when they went and looked.

Then suddenly this stranger who hadn't seemed to know all this had the impertinence to call us fools! Again my hackles were rising but before I could say anything, he said, "How slow you are to believe the prophets. Was it not necessary that the Messiah should die?" As he said that, I recalled some of the uncomfortable things Jesus had said about dying and rising on the third day; things we hadn't wanted to hear. The stranger then went on to interpret all the prophecies about the Messiah, and somehow, amidst all my anguish, a light was beginning to dawn. It was as though the stranger was opening a door in my mind. By this time, we were almost at my sister's. To my surprise, I found myself asking the stranger to stay with us. It was at supper-time that the most remarkable thing happened. Before my brother-in-law could say the blessing, the stranger said it, taking the bread and breaking it. I didn't react this time to the impertinence for there, standing before my very eyes, was Jesus! Yes, can you believe it, Jesus! My mind had no sooner processed what I was seeing when he vanished! Yet I knew my eyes hadn't deceived me without having to look to see if the others had seen what I'd seen, and I

recalled how I'd felt as the supposed stranger had talked to us on the road. Cleopas summed it up when he said, "Were not our hearts burning within us?"

Now the race was on, we had to get back to Jerusalem to tell the others. My sister tried to press us to stay for it was now fully dark, but we wouldn't hear of it. She kindly let us borrow a couple of donkeys so that we could make the return trip both quicker and safer than on foot. On the way back, I berated myself for my lack of faith but, at the same time, I had the sense that Jesus was telling me he understood. Obviously, I hadn't known what had gone on while we'd been away, but there was quite a commotion when we arrived. We'd left the others despairing, not really believing that Jesus was alive because, like me I think, they hadn't really expected Jesus to rise even though he'd told us he would. At first, I thought the noise was the cry of lament but I soon realised it was the sound of joy. We couldn't get a word in edgeways at first in all the excitement. Anyway, the upshot was that they too were convinced that Jesus was indeed alive and had appeared to Simon, that is Peter. We were then able to tell them what had happened to us and how Jesus had been made known in the breaking of the bread.

[Questions for discussion – break into groups and give people 5-10 minutes to reflect on these questions].

1. Jesus was made known to Cleopas and his wife through the breaking of the bread. To what extent do you have an awareness of Jesus' presence in Holy Communion? Where do you find Jesus?
2. The cross is the Christian symbol of salvation. Arguably, the cross represents death and the empty tomb represents resurrection. To what extent do the images of the cross or the empty tomb resonate with you as symbols of salvation?⁴

Hymn:

445 STF – He came to earth, to be served OR

673 STF – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name

Prayers of intercession

As we gather here in worship we gather before the ultimate creator and in this moment of quiet we reflect on our world.

[Pause]

As we wonder at your creation we cannot help but see that through our actions and inactions, our desires and our greed we have caused our world to hurt, for that God, we are sorry. As fires burn and sea levels rise help us to be a people who treat your world as the precious life-giving gift that it is with fairness, responsibility and love.

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, your love endures forever.

⁴ Reflection and questions for discussion written by Angie Allport

As we gather here in worship we gather as members of your family, a people called to worship you here, and in this moment of quiet we reflect on our community.

[Pause]

Thank you God that you don't call us to journey alone, we pray for our community, for those who are hurting may they feel your comfort, for those who are leading may they feel your guidance, for those who are ill may they feel your healing. Call us ever deeper into community with each other, may we truly be one body with many parts all working together for your glory.

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, your love endures forever.

As we gather here in worship we gather before your cross and your throne and in this moment of quiet we reflect on our own thoughts, words and actions.

[Pause]

Forgive us or the times this week where we have not thought the things you would have us think, have not said the words you would have us say and have not acted in the way you would have us act. In our moments of humanity where we have fallen short we ask for your mercy. Help us to see the world the way you see it, to recognise your creative, loving hand in all aspects of creation, help us to walk this Earth in a way that shines your light in to the lives of all who we meet.

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, your love endures forever.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Heavenly Father, resurrected Christ, Spirit of God, we offer you these gifts for your mission. Help us to be inspired and transformed by our encounter with you, that we might play our part and use our gifts to build a better world.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

492 STF – Christ be my leader by night as by day OR

322 STF – How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Lauren Brabbs

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Blessing

Go out, you travelling people of God,

And meet with Jesus on the road.

Seek for him, listen to him, and be transformed by the encounter with love.

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker