

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 14A

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

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Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A
5th July 2026



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

560 STF – My eyes be open to your presence OR

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love OR

60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour

Readings: Genesis 24: 34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Psalm 45: 10-17; Romans 7: 15-25a;
Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

Hymn:

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand OR

471 STF – Lord, I come to you

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

541 STF – To the river I am going

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling OR

556 STF – Just as I am, without one plea

Blessing

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Call to worship

Come you thankful people, come.
Come to worship the living God this day.
Come, gather in the name of the Christ.
Come, be inspired by the presence of the Spirit, here in our midst.
Come, for the triune God is here, now, with us.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

560 STF – My eyes be open to your presence OR
18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

Gracious God – giver of life and breath, we pause in this moment to breathe in...

- we fill our lungs with your beauty, goodness, grace, love...
- we feel the oxygen of your love bringing us alive, giving us hope, awakening our senses...
- thank you that in you we find all that is good, holy and just.

Companion Jesus – through your death and resurrection you brought life in all its fullness, we pause this *morning* to greet you...

- we note that you have been beside us throughout this past week, however we have responded...
- we rejoice that you are beside us now as we come to worship and to share together – you are in our midst...
- we see you pointing the way ahead, offering us guidance into the next steps, giving us courage to take them...

Indwelling Spirit – the energy of God, we pause this *morning* to invite you afresh into our lives...

- we breathe in again, knowing that you are the energy we need for this day and every day...
- we open ourselves, body, soul and spirit, to be infused by you, spirit of truth and grace...
- we set aside our own self-importance, self-consciousness, self-pity, to be filled with you...

For, as we open ourselves to you, Holy God, so we become more aware of the things of which we are ashamed – the words we wish we hadn't spoken, the temptations we wish

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

we had resisted, the self-centredness we wish we could leave behind... we pause to breathe out all which comes between us and you...

...and now to breathe in again the exhilaration of your forgiveness, the empowering of your grace, the fullness of your love, that we may be transformed into your likeness and so be your body here on earth.

Thanks be to God,

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

There are countless ways that we communicate with other people today.

- We can send a text message to them via a computer or a phone
- We can call them or video call them
- We can send a letter
- We can pass a note to someone
- We can sign to them
- We can change our expression on our face
- We can change the way we sit
- We can use flags to tell people things across ships!
- We can record ourselves and send it to someone
- We can talk to them face to face

And what do we talk to others about? The good things happening to us? A joke we've just heard? A meme that made us laugh? Sharing our anger at someone who annoyed us? Saying that we are scared?

We communicate in all these ways, and more, even at the same time! The way that we can be talking to someone face to face, while messaging someone on the phone, while also calling over a friend is just one example!

Sometimes though its really difficult to hold all these conversations in our heads, and sometimes we switch conversations with people in a group and they don't realise it!

Even Jesus did this a lot with the disciples!

In the Gospel of Matthew, the story today shows us Jesus doing just that.

They are gathered together, the disciples and Jesus, and are talking about many things. We start out with Jesus really frustrated with people. He and John the Baptist haven't been welcomed by people, and when they share and teach about God: No one listens. In fact

² Opening prayers written by Jill Baker

they called Jesus and John names, and in John's case they didn't like what he was saying so much they arrested him and locked him up!

Jesus is venting to his friends. And as they continue talking Jesus suddenly starts praying out loud. Now, we know Jesus prays a lot: Before meals, at the end of the day, with others...but in the middle of a conversation with others?! It's like Jesus had his headphones in and took a call from God and didn't tell anyone about it!

That prayer, that conversation with God, was this:

(Taken from the Message Version but use a version that you are comfortable with!)

Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work."

Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. "The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself; I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen."

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Jesus, in all the frustrations, talked it over with God, then decided on a way forward, and shared it with the other disciples. And the plan? That if people believe in God they wouldn't feel like it was a burden, something heavy to carry. That journeying with Jesus was and is supposed to be in a conversation with one another. And that Jesus wouldn't keep things from you; but talk, teach and learn together.

God, around us and in community with us, you know our frustrations and our worries. You know what makes us excited, and what questions we have. May we speak, sign, dance, text, and sing to everyone around us about the love you are.

Amen.³

Hymn:

443 STF – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love OR

60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour

Readings: Genesis 24: 34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Psalm 45: 10-17; Romans 7: 15-25a; Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

Hymn:

421 STF – Empty, broken, here I stand OR

471 STF – Lord, I come to you

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

Reflections on the readings

At first glance, our readings today may seem somewhat disconnected, yet if we look a little more deeply, we begin to see a shared thread running through them: God meets us in our need. In an age marked by political unrest, global uncertainty, and an unsteady climate, we need once again to be reminded of God's faithfulness to his creation. It seems to me that today's readings gather around three themes: God calls us to trust in his leading, invites us to be honest about our need, and welcomes us to rest when we are overwhelmed by the world. All of these are part of the Christian journey and essential to the life of discipleship.

First let us look at the passage from Genesis 24 which calls upon us to trust even when we do not know what lies ahead. Abraham's servant has set out on a journey over which he has no control. He is in search of a wife for his master's son. Whilst on his search he reaches a watering hole and, in his quest, sets God a challenge that the one who responds to his request for water might be the one he is looking for.

Here are two Biblical examples of trusting in God's lead: the servant and Rebekah. The servant trusts in God's provision and answer to his prayer, and when Rebekah is asked if she will go with the servant to her new life she responds with, "I will go." The servant did not know how his quest would end, whether it would be a success, but in faith he stepped out and through prayer and trusting in God's provision he was successful. For Rebekah the journey has just begun, but she too in faith trusts in the unfolding story. She becomes the wife of Isaac and mother of Jacob and Esau. She could not have foreseen that she would play a vital role in the foundational story of Israel by her display of great courage, initiative, and faith.

Whilst this story might not feel relatable culturally, the trust and faith in the unfolding story speaks to us still. We too are called to be open to the possibilities of what God can do in our lives. This is about hope in the God who keeps his promises.

Our second passage from Romans reads a bit like a confessional. Paul honestly lays before the reader his recurring sinful behaviour. He is honest that whilst he longs to be different he finds it difficult: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

Not to be too flippant about it, it is a bit like standing in the kitchen, fully intending to eat sensibly, and then somehow finding yourself with an open biscuit tin in your hand. You knew what you meant to do: eat just one biscuit. You had every intention of doing the right thing. Yet something in you pulled in another direction and suddenly half the packet has been consumed. Or think of a driver who knows the sat-nav is correct but keeps ignoring the turn, convinced that their own way will be quicker. Before long they are lost, frustrated, and blaming the road. That is the absurdity Paul is describing: not ignorance of the good, but inability to live it consistently.

It has been said that when Paul uses the word "I" here he is expressing the experience of the whole of humanity. We too have similar experiences: we want to be less self-centred and more God-centred, and yet somehow along the line we keep falling back into old ways and old habits which are hard to break. The significant part of this reading for us today is not necessarily the nature of sin—that would be another sermon in itself—but the moment when Paul makes the bold statement, "What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is through Jesus, Paul says, that we are given life and that we are liberated. When we come before God and say, "I can no longer do this alone," grace begins to do its work. Healing or change begins when someone says, "I cannot manage this on my own." That is not failure; that is the doorway to grace. Instead of defending ourselves, comparing

ourselves, or hiding behind appearances, we are invited to bring our real selves before God. Through prayer, speaking truthfully with a trusted Christian friend, or simply naming before God the habit, resentment, fear, or wound we have kept hidden, Jesus' work of liberation can begin.

Lastly, in a frenetic world that seems ever more fractured and disturbing, we can so easily become overwhelmed. Burnout is often a word used when people have not had the space to deal with past experiences. What are we striving for? Why all this angst? Jesus' invitation is to come and be at rest, but perhaps it is more than that. It is about balancing the significance and importance of life, asking what is truly important and what in fact makes us whole. Most children carry an innocence and are not yet overwhelmed by the complexities of life. Jesus suggests that his yoke is easy and his burden light.

It is a bit like trying to leave on holiday with far too much luggage. Ever done that? We begin with good intentions: one sensible bag, perhaps two. But then come the extra shoes "just in case," the waterproof that might be needed, the snacks, the charger, the book we may never read, and somehow, we end up wobbling towards the car like a badly balanced pack mule. Something is slipping, one handle is cutting into our hand, and we are still insisting, "No, no, I've got it." Until everything tumbles to the ground. Sometimes life feels just like that. We keep adding more, keep carrying more, and keep pretending we are fine. Yet Jesus does not laugh at our weariness or shame us for the weight we carry. He simply says, "Come to me," and invites us to let him bear what we were never meant to carry alone.

And perhaps that is where this connects back to Paul's confessional honesty. The burden we carry is not only stress, or exhaustion; sometimes it is also the burden of the habits we cannot break, the guilt we would rather hide, and the inward weight of knowing that we are not as whole as we pretend to be or would like to be. Paul does not hide that burden but names it, and in naming it he discovers that Christ is the one who lifts what we cannot carry ourselves. The invitation to rest is not an escape from reality, but an invitation to bring even the hardest parts of ourselves to God.

When we look to Jesus, we see that life is meant to be lived in faith, in hope, and in love. So, these readings leave us with a simple but searching invitation: to trust God when the road ahead is unclear, to be honest about our need when we fall short, and to rest in Christ when the world feels too heavy to carry all these things. These are not separate parts of discipleship but belong together as the shape of a life lived with God and a life loved by God. Amen

Some questions for discussion and/or reflection in groups or with the whole congregation:

- Where might God be asking me to trust him a little more at the moment?
- What am I carrying in my heart that I need to bring honestly to God?
- How might Jesus be inviting me to lay down my burdens and find rest in him this week?

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us OR

541 STF – To the river I am going

⁴ Reflection written by Ruth Compton

Prayers of intercession

We come now in prayer to the God who knows us better than ourselves,
who understands our needs and the needs of the world we inhabit.

We come before God in openness and honesty,
not with fine language or poetic prayer,
but with a raw, sincere, and authentic desire
to be the people God would have us be.

We come expressing our concerns, first for our world.
How we long for peace, for an end to conflict and pain,
for reconciliation that places people at the centre,
not power, control, or authority.

We seek for a world where all are fed,
where no child goes hungry to bed,
where parents can provide safety and shelter,
where there is a fair distribution of wealth so no one is left wanting.

We yearn for a world where creation is respected
where the ecosystem is not destroyed by human greed.
Enable us to play our part so that all this may become a reality through your unfailing love
for us.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our communities where we live, work and worship.
We go about our daily lives, often not noticing the needs around us,
or they have become so commonplace that we ignore them:
the beggar on the street, caught up in the degradation of society;
the abuse that goes on behind closed doors;
the crime that hides and harms others in plain sight;
the racist comment intended to intimidate or belittle left unchallenged;
those flaws in society which need to be exposed and addressed, so that love can prevail.

May we be able to name them before you and to each other,
so that healing can begin and change can happen.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray now for individuals known to us and also only known by you to be in need.

Those who are burdened by the pressures of the daily grind,
Those for whom a phone call may bring relief or despair,
Those for whom a hospital visit may bring difficult news,
Those who wake yet again to a lonely existence, mourning a loss.

And we name before you now, in the silence of our hearts, those in need of prayer...

Help us to be the hands that help and the voice that speaks into the need for rest.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Finally, our prayers are for ourselves.

May we be honest with ourselves and with you, God, so that in naming before you
our needs, and failings that we may honour you, ourselves, and others.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the power of the Holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus Christ, who showed us the power
of God's love.

Amen.⁵

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Ruth Compton

We will now take up the offering.

Gracious God,
Accept these gifts, and the gifts each of us gathered here today bring.
May these be used to help transform this community and the wider world,
in the name of grace, peace and hope.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling OR

556 STF – Just as I am, without one plea

Blessing

Until we stand before you, O God,
Casting our crowns at your feet,
Help us to notice the presence of your Spirit in our midst.
Come, Lord Jesus,

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker