

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 12C

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

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Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C
22nd June 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

109 STF – In the darkness of the still night OR

101 STF – Before the world began

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

514 STF – The thirsty deer longs for the streams OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: 1 Kings 19:1-4, 8-15a; Isaiah 65:1-9; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

Hymn:

651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you OR

157 STF – God has spoken - by his prophets

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR

655 STF – We cannot measure how you heal

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

685 STF – In Christ there is no east or west OR

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

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Call to worship

The light is shining in the darkness,
Flickering hope, love and possibility onto the walls around us.
Lord, we turn to you again this day,
Show us how to be people of the light, in a dark and dangerous world.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

109 STF – In the darkness of the still night OR
101 STF – Before the world began

Opening Prayers

We join together in prayer,
Let us take some time to gather ourselves in a moment of quiet.

We bring with us our troubles, anxieties, our hopes and joys,
the light and shade in our worlds, the bits we show and the bits we hide.

As we think back over the last few days let us be honest with ourselves.

Look at the times we have fallen short, the things we have said that we shouldn't have, the
times we should have spoken up when we felt unable to,
when our actions or inactions have caused pain.

All too often we are headstrong thinking we know best, and we stop listening to the still,
small voice guiding us, loving us, supporting us.

We are sorry when we turn our back on you,
open our hearts and minds to you, your love and guiding presence.

We give thanks for You and for all you have given us, this planet we call home, those we
share our lives with, work colleagues, friends and family.

In a moment or two of quiet let's consider those things we are grateful for, all those things
that lift us up, give us stability,
Let us use what You have given us and imagine them as a protective shield with which we
can go out into the world, sharing Your love, being Your hands, feet and voices in our lives.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Lorna Dobson

All Age Talk

Today, when it comes to our Bible readings, we will hear a story about Jesus doing something amazing. It is a story about someone who needed help. A lot of help.

There was a man who lived outside the town, all alone. People had given up on him because he was acting strangely, and no one knew what to do. He had no home, no friends, and was very unwell. Many people were scared of him.

But Jesus was not scared.

Jesus saw the man and the pain he was carrying, and he showed him love. Jesus spoke with authority and kindness. He healed the man and set him free from everything hurting him.

When the townspeople came running to see what had happened, they found the man sitting calmly at Jesus' feet, wearing good clothes and looking peaceful. They were amazed.

The man was so grateful to Jesus that he wanted to go with him immediately. But Jesus said something surprising. He said, 'Go back home and tell everyone how much the parental God has done for you.'

And that is precisely what the man did. He became one of the first people to share the good news about Jesus with others.

There are a few essential things we can remember from this story:

First, no one is forgotten by God. Even when others might give up on someone, the parental God's love never stops.

Secondly, Jesus brings healing and hope. When life feels broken or messy, we are not left alone. The Holy Spirit is with us to bring peace and strength.

Maybe you can think about how you might share God's love this week.

- Maybe it is being kind to someone who is feeling left out.
- Maybe it is just telling someone that they are not alone.

When we perform these small acts of love, we are doing exactly what Jesus asked – sharing how much the parental God has done for us.

Amen.³

Hymn:

514 STF – The thirsty deer longs for the streams OR

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Readings: 1 Kings 19:1-4, 8-15a; Isaiah 65:1-9; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

³ All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

Hymn:

651 STF – Lord of life, we come to you OR

157 STF – God has spoken - by his prophets

Reflections on the readings

Today's reflection is written by Kevin Dobson, a local preacher in Yorkshire. Let us listen to his words for a few minutes:

Shortly after I started my current job, I heard my colleague use an expression with one of our clients that I had not heard before. It has been used many times since – in fact I have even deployed it myself. The expression is:

“You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar”

OK – I'd better give some context.

We work with people who are dealing with homelessness and all the life challenges associated with that. As I'm sure you can imagine these are extensive, and above all they can be highly stressful. Clients have to try to reset many of the very basic aspects of life, and this involves a lot of interactions with other professionals and organisations e.g. housing agencies, health services, people dealing with issues such as finance, debt, benefits, employment etc. These interactions can be daunting, worrying and tense especially given the backdrop of chaos which is clearly very often evident.

As an example very often we deal with people who have no money. By that I truly mean “no money”... nothing in their pocket, nothing in their bank account (if they even have one?), no savings anywhere and no family left to turn to (yes, these people really do exist) – and when they are meeting with someone who can help with this, and maybe it is not going well, then this can be a situation which is so stressful that all manner of emotions can come to the fore.

So in order to help prepare our clients for such an encounter, you may often hear us say things like:

- *“When you go in there, take a deep breath”*
- *“Count to ten”*
- *“They are not the enemy”*

And of course...

- *“Remember, you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar”*

It is solid advice. Rarely if you get angry with someone in most situations does it come off well for you. If you can remain calm, quiet and respectful you are in with a good chance of getting somewhere.

I was reminded of all of this when I read the fabulous passage about Elijah's encounter with God in today's Old Testament reading. I love this underlining of how powerful and effective God is in the calm and quiet of life, rather than necessarily in the loud and brash.

It disappoints me that we too often search for God only in the noisy and showy things in life. I think the story of Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus has much to answer for. It's an amazing story no doubt, but when we hear of his celestial conversion with flashes of light and Jesus' booming voice from the heavens, we somehow end up thinking that all conversion experiences should be the same, and this is so unfair. Often our own can seem insignificant by comparison.

When listening to testimony it is more often the quiet, unassuming stories of powerful commitment and love that I find more compelling.

How often do we see parents trying to deal with unruly children and it goes one of two ways – it either becomes a loud and violent clash of raised voices, or otherwise the parent goes powerfully quiet, and tries to talk the situation down. I know which one I think the more powerful and effective, and more likely to bring the right learning experience for the future.

So often in life, the answer does not lie in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but instead in the still, small voice...

Today's gospel reading is one of the most challenging and controversial in terms of how we interpret its meaning.

The process of Jesus' interaction with these demons and the herd of pigs is odd, confusing and can leave us feeling quite uncomfortable in so many ways.

Studies on the passage go deep into the significance of the use of pigs in the story and all the associations there are with that, and also the whole noisiness of how demons manifest themselves, and inevitable questions about how much of the story as told was actually evident in the events of that day. The added layer of complication comes from the fact that three of the gospel writers seem to be telling us about this event with some significant differences between the accounts – and the analysis and questioning of that is endless...

This week I wondered... are we missing the point?

Are the demons and the pigs diverting our attention from what really matters?

In all the associated noise and confusion, have we missed the true heart of this story?

A man was in deep trouble with some of the threatening and dangerous aspects of his life, and through an encounter with Jesus, he found some freedom from those troubles.

That sounds like something worth exploring to me.

I can name a number of things in my life that I might term "demons". Things that scare me, things that haunt me, things that influence my behaviour in unhelpful ways... and they weigh me down and distort my life away from what feels like the preferred or intended arc that my life may take.

- I wonder, can you think of similar things for yourself?
[You could pause and pose this question as a conversation starter for small groups or the whole congregation, or allow people to reflect on it in quiet for a few minutes].

My faith in Jesus is evolving all the time. Sometimes it feels strong, other times it feels distant. My faith in Jesus helps me concentrate on my relationships with those around me (both close and stranger), and crucially my relationship with myself, because it is ultimately through those relationships that I most experience Jesus and his grace.

- I wonder, how do you feel your faith is manifest in your life?
[You could pause and pose this question as a conversation starter for small groups or the whole congregation, or allow people to reflect on it in quiet for a few minutes].

If I am honest and open with myself, and those around me, about these problems in my life, am I able to move to a better place - a place where I can feel some freedom from the tension?

Yes. Yes I can.

And if THAT is what we can draw from this story today, then I feel like we have truly heard some "good news".

Instead of wrestling with the wind, earthquake and fire of angry demons and crazed, stampeding, suicidal pigs we instead listen to the still small voice of a story about a troubled man who finds freedom through the grace of Jesus, then maybe we will find some peace for ourselves today.

Paul gives us a metaphor in his letter to the Galatians today about how we prepare ourselves for life and all it will throw at us.

It is in contrast to another of his lessons (this from the letter to Ephesians, so I suppose it is arguable if it was Paul at all) where he asks us to don the “armour of Christ” to prepare for our spiritual battle.

Today, instead, he suggests we are “clothed with Christ” through our baptism and faith.

This is a quieter and gentler approach, and today, I like it.

As we clothe ourselves for the day ahead, may we surround ourselves with the gentle, powerful grace of Christ so we can carry that with us through the whole day – what a beautiful, comforting, empowering analogy that is.

May we immerse ourselves in the quiet, peaceful authority this gives us to face our demons.

Oh, and may we remember to bring honey for the journey, not vinegar.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

693 STF – Beauty for brokenness OR

655 STF – We cannot measure how you heal

Prayers of intercession

Please take time to share these prayers slowly, and emphasise the pauses...

Pause to think about the noise of the troublesome world events we hear about on our media channels.

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

Pause to think about the noise of the political issues that are causing unrest and ill feeling right now.

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

Pause to think about the noise of the cry for help for the millions of people around the world who are hungry... for food, for justice, for love.

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

Pause to think about the noise of the relationships between faith communities in all places, both locally, nationally and internationally.

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

Pause to think about the noise of the people facing their own “demons” every day. Addiction, burdens, fear, persecution, guilt... the list goes on...

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

⁴ Reflection written by Kevin Dobson

Pause to think about the noise of the stresses and strains your friends and family are experiencing. Think about your interactions with them.

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

Pause to think about the noise of the tension in your own mind. Your worries, your fears...

In the face of the loud voices, **Lord help us to hear your still, small voice of calm...**

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Lord of every time and space,

We turn to you in thanks and praise, for all we have received.

Bless these gifts that they might become, in our hands, in our bank accounts, in our invoices and bill payments,

A means of grace for others to encounter God's grace.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

685 STF – In Christ there is no east or west OR

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky

Blessing

Here we are Lord,

Gathered in your name.

Here we are Lord, seeking to follow your call.

Here we are Lord, guide us this week we pray,

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Kevin Dobson

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker