

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 19B

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

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Ordinary 19 - Year B
11th August 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

36 STF – There's a quiet understanding OR

44 STF – Come on and celebrate!

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

416 STF – There's a wideness in God's mercy OR

407 STF – Hear the call of the kingdom

Readings: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Psalm 130; John 6:35, 41-51

Hymn:

587 STF – I am the Bread, the bread of life OR

254 STF – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

636 STF – O love that wilt not let me go OR

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Blessing

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Call to worship

God who is mystery, God who is Spirit,
God who is Creator, God who is Christ,
This day, we come into your presence,
Open our hearts and our minds that we might receive something of your word for us today,
we pray.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

36 STF – There's a quiet understanding OR
44 STF – Come on and celebrate!

Opening Prayers

Holy God,
As we come before you this morning, we come as a people who wait for you

We look forward to how you will meet us and shape us

We wait with expectation

We long for how your loving faithfulness will sustain our lives and our work

We wait with expectation

We anticipate how in your time you will bring about the peace and justice so deeply needed
in our world

We wait with expectation

We come knowing that you have been present and faithful throughout generations

We rejoice in your promise that through the gift of Jesus and the Holy Spirit we will never be
left alone

And so we praise and thank you for all you are and all you have done,

For all you are and all you are currently revealing of yourself

For all you are and all we will discover about you as we worship, learn and live together.

We wait with patience and expectation

And in our waiting we are reminded of all we have thought, said or done which has hurt
others or ourselves, and we come to ask for your loving forgiveness.

As we accept your forgiveness and are reassured of your neverending love for us, may you
continually shape us and transform us in the loving way of your son Jesus

In whom we offer these and all our prayers

Amen.²

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Christine Dutton

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Materials needed: Preparation: Bring a small bucket of cool or interesting looking shells and small stones, to be shared out amongst the congregation. Have one or two in your pocket to start.

I don't know about you, but when I go for a walk sometimes, I just end up finding the most amazing things on the path!

(Pull out a small stone)

This is one of those amazing things! It's a small stone! Now, it might not be much to look at, nor has it got some inherent value like finding some coins on the ground, but I saw it and thought it was the most brilliant thing ever! Does anyone else get that kind of feeling when they find something?

Perhaps you, like me, find joy in the small, random rocks? Or in collecting shells from the beach? Or various large sticks in the woods? These may appear to be utterly without value, or they are around lots more that are just like them; but we find a particular one and part of us goes "I want to put it in my pocket!"

The value we see in the things we find might only make sense to us, or maybe a couple of others, but brings a great sense of joy when we find them. Perhaps this stone we find is just the right size and shape for us to skim it across water? Or that the different ways it has been worn has given it a cool pattern? Maybe one looks like it was once the tip of a spear, and we found that connection to history! Maybe that stick we find is just the right size, weight, and strength that it would make a great pretend sword, or a wand, or would be perfect to throw for a dog to collect? Or that a shell we see reveals a pattern of colour that is simply awe inspiring.

In all these things, there is a hidden value, a hidden beauty, a hidden worth that we see. We can put only a few things in our pockets as we walk, but I can't help but think the way we see these sticks, stones, and shells is similar to how God sees us. We may look around and think we are just like everyone else, that we are nothing special, or we compare ourselves to each other.

But God sees us and values us deeply. God walks along and picks us up, appreciates us for our own value and worth, loves us for that, and does that for each and everyone one of us.

(Start handing out small stones and shells)

As we pray, I want you all to take a stone or a shell, one that you see as amazing and interesting. I want you to hold it in your hands as we pray, and take that home in your pockets. And over the next few days whenever you see that stone or shell, I want you to remember that God loves you, values you, and thinks that you are amazing as you are.

Let us pray.

God of Creation, be with us. Hold us like a precious object. Reveal to us the hidden value that you see in us, and may we see the world as you see it: full of value, beauty, and worth.

Amen.³

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

Hymn:

416 STF – There's a wideness in God's mercy OR

407 STF – Hear the call of the kingdom

Readings: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33; Psalm 130; John 6:35, 41-51

Hymn:

587 STF – I am the Bread, the bread of life OR

254 STF – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Reflections on the readings

How do you find food shopping? Is it something you look forward to, plan carefully, do you search for bargains, or see what takes your fancy or is on offer before you decide what you are going to eat or cook? The frustrating thing I find about food shopping is the frequency you have to repeat it. Bread or milk never seems to last as long as I think it is going to, so there is always that 'black tea' or 'venture back out to the shops' debate.

And we are aware of the rising costs of food production, the vulnerability of crops dependent on climate change, places in the world where bread flour is scarce and hunger is a reality. And when we are hungry it is hard to focus on anything else but being hungry. We see this in the life of Jesus when he is fasting in the desert and the devil uses the tempting offer of turning stones into bread into to satisfy Jesus' hunger.

Our reading from John's gospel follows the story of the Feeding of the 5000 where the real hunger of the crowd is provided for. In today's reading Jesus declares himself to be the Bread of Life, the living bread that came down from heaven. However, we recognise that we need to be careful not to over-spiritualise these verses in a world where hunger is still a reality and where providing access to simple, wholesome food for our families, our communities and those in need is a priority.

When the crowds come to Jesus, he criticises their motives for seeking him out. He challenges their need simply to focus on the food that perishes, but asks them to raise their aspirations higher. He wants them to understand that what he was offering was so much more than physical nourishment, but a way of living that would offer eternal life both now and in the life to come.

A tradition response of churches to areas such as food poverty is that we have only offered food that perishes. It is life-giving, but temporary, and if we do not offer the opportunity to know Jesus and respond to him, then are we in danger encouraging people to engage with us simply because they need their fill of the loaves.

As I began to discern my call to ordained ministry I spent four years baking bread each week at 'Somewhere Else' – Liverpool's Bread Church. The hours spent alongside others encouraged us to turn to the hard and difficult model of standing together, mixing and shaping the dough and in the process truly listen to the stories of our lives and discover what we were truly hungry for. As we made bread we learnt of each others' lives. We heard each others' hardships and pain, we celebrated and rejoiced with each other.

In communities where we spend time together and trust one another we begin to discover what it is that we hunger for, as we create places to discover, explore and share faith we begin to meet Jesus, the bread of life and find out who he is, and what he requires of us.

In John 6: verses 42 and 43 there is a lot of moaning and complaining which Jesus asks them to stop. He reminds them of their ancestors moaning in the desert despite having been given the manna to sustain them as they journeyed to the promised land.

He invites them to turn from their complaints towards him. He asks them to believe in him, to commit themselves, to turn away from the distractions of the temporary and to hunger for the Bread that lasts. In doing this he assures them that their lives might be given a sense and a meaning that will go beyond this earthly life. He marries this with the sacrifice of his own life, the cost of his life.

What does it mean for us to really hunger for God? To not be satisfied with what we knew in our faith, last week, last year, but to ask ourselves today, are we hungry for an ongoing deeper relationship with God?

Are we finding ways to spend time daily to be equipped and sustained by God, just as we wouldn't wait days to feed our physical hunger?

Are we ready to follow the path of a follower of Jesus whatever the cost? Are we ready to wrestle with things that don't have easy answers, are we ready for people to challenge us and disagree with us, because we follow Jesus. Even in this chapter of John, there are contradictions or at least blurred edges – an insistence on 'only those who believe will never be thirsty' versus 'no-one who comes to me will be turned away'.

And on the ground, day by day, are we prepared to share this Good News with porous boundaries and blurred edges with our family, our friends, those at work, those in the street? And are we prepared to do so in a way which is open and curious, which begins with listening and relationships, which recognises the potentially damaging ways we have engaged in mission and faith sharing in the past?

When our hunger goes beyond what is temporary and superficial we are called to establish and grow deep relationships between us. I believe that trusting one another gives us confidence as we wider our vision, If we add up the encounters we will have this week and multiply it by the number of people who are here, then that is the number of opportunities we have to share this Good News of Jesus the bread of life. A life of hope, a life of love, a way of peace.

We are called to make our voice heard in issues that prevent all people discovering true fullness of life. As a Methodist Church part of our mission is meeting deep and complex needs in our society. How do we hunger for righteousness in our campaigning and challenge unjust structures? How do we use our votes? Does your MP know you are a member of a faith community and the issues that you care about which are shaped by your following the way of Jesus?

So, to conclude, I invite you shop, cook, eat, pray and share your faith in the days to come and may Jesus, the Bread of Life, sustain you, feed you, and encourage you for the journey ahead.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

636 STF – O love that wilt not let me go OR

615 STF – Let love be real, in giving and receiving

⁴ Reflection written by Christine Dutton

Prayers of intercession

Living, loving God, as we turn to prayer, firstly we bring before you our concerns for your world, naming in our hearts, places and situations of conflict and violence.

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life'.

Holy God show us how to pray, live out, work for, and speak of Christ's life-giving hope and peace in your world.

Secondly, we bring before you our concerns for those who today do not have the luxury of choosing what or when to eat but whether they can afford to eat.

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life'.

Holy God, as Jesus offers the world the bread which does not perish show us how to pray, live out, work for, and speak of your justice in our world and our communities.

We bring before you our concerns for those who are lonely, forgotten, rejected or isolated.

Jesus said 'I am the true vine'.

Holy God, show us what it means to build and live in true connected communities where we know each other, listening and serving our neighbours, speaking of your love in our world.

We bring before our concerns for our those who are sick, those who are dying, those who are living with loss, those who are fearful.

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world'.

Holy God, shine the light of Christ into the lives of those we love, care for and name.

Show us how to pray, live out, work for, and speak of your comfort to those in need.

We bring before you ourselves, our joys and our sorrows, the work you call us to do, the people you call us to be.

Jesus said 'I am the way, the truth and the life'.

Holy God, this morning let us hear Christ calling us again to follow him in his perfect way, show us how to live out our faith in our homes, our work, and our communities of faith.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Thank you, God of this day,

For the blessings I have received, for the blessings represented here in this room today.

Thank you God, for all I am and have.

May these gifts be used to support those most in need and build your Kingdom here on earth,

Amen.⁶

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Christine Dutton

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Hymn:

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

Blessing

Make me, make each of us, into a channel of your peace – a reservoir of your love, your hope, your joy.

Help me, help each of us, to be an answer to your prayer,

This and every day,

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker