

# twelvebaskets



## ORDINARY 12B

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

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**Ordinary 12 - Year B**  
23rd June 2024



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**81 STF – Now thank we all our God OR**

**117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR**

**64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you**

Readings: 1 Samuel 17:32-49; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

**Hymn:**

**624 STF – Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm OR**

**250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR**

**486 STF – Who would true valour see**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**713 STF – Show me how to stand for justice OR**

**645 STF – Will your anchor hold in the storms of life**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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## Call to worship

God of grace, hope and love, you have called us here,  
And we have come, to worship you.

Christ of this and every time,  
Your Spirit is already here amongst us,  
And your love is all around us.

May we know your presence Lord, during this time together.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

81 STF – Now thank we all our God OR

117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above

## Opening Prayers

Hands open, hearts open, eyes open, Lord, we come.

*[Pause].*

Heads full of responsibilities and to-do lists, Lord we come.

*[Pause].*

Hearts full of worries, sorrows, hopes, fears, dreams and longing, Lord we come.

*[Pause].*

Just as we are, Lord we come.

Fill us anew with the beauty, power and wonder of your word,  
Prod us with the challenge of your calling  
Strengthen us with the sure knowledge of your presence and companionship.

Lord, as we come, may we know ourselves forgiven, loved and set free,

In Jesus' name

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

### All Age Talk

Let us sit for a moment, and in the quiet, I want you to imagine yourself doing something you love, and something you think you are quite good at.

Perhaps you are on your own, or perhaps with others.

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Emma Dobson

Perhaps it is a particular task, or leisure activity.  
Perhaps it's taking place in one particular location, which is what makes it so special.  
As we hold the quiet, just continue to imagine yourself doing that activity. Enjoying it.  
Flourishing...

*[Hold a few moments of quiet].*

I want you to remember what this feels like.

I want you to hold the strength of this feeling.

This is your strength, lean on it.

*[Pause].*

Now, how can you use this feeling of strength in your life? How can you use it to face the storms that are coming this week, this month, this year?

How can you take your strengths, and make them tools for making the world a better place?

Use these next few moments to decide – what can you do?

What can I do?

What can each one of us do, that will make use of our strengths this week?

*[Hold a few moments of quiet].*

Holy God, take these moments, take this energy, take these commitments, and use them for your mission here on earth.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

545 STF – Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart OR

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you

**Readings:** 1 Samuel 17:32-49; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

### **Hymn:**

624 STF – Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm OR

250 STF – Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult

### **Reflections on the readings**

*I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us! 2 Corinthians 6:13*

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

I find this particular combination of readings very interesting indeed. Our Samuel text will be very familiar to anyone who spent any chunk of their childhood in Sunday School; the story of David and Goliath is classic Junior Church fodder, and the subject of many a catchy song. It is followed by a short text from the book of Job, which presents an image of God I admit to being constantly baffled by. Paul then urges the church in Corinth to receive God's grace and be prepared for all manner of joys and hardships as they seek to fulfil their calling, before we make a final stop in the fourth chapter of Mark's Gospel to experience Jesus commanding the wind and waves to give it a rest for a moment. There is no shortage of questions to wrestle with here, so let's heed Paul's (somewhat pleading) instruction in 2 Corinthians 6:13.

*[Questions for discussion or silent contemplation, with some supporting prompts which may be useful. Present as many or as few of these questions as you feel are appropriate for today's gathering]*

- How do you feel when reading the passage from Samuel about David and Goliath?
  - Perhaps you find it inspiring, and a much needed reminder that, in the words of Greta Thunberg, "no one is too small to make a difference". Perhaps you find it confusing or baffling. Perhaps it makes you question whether everything really happened as the author seems to suggest - does it feel realistic or a little fanciful to you?
  - Can you identify with any of the events or themes in the story? Have you ever been (or witnessed) a David-like figure taking on a giant of a person, company or force?
  
- What impression do you get from God in this speech God gives to Job?
  - Perhaps it is a useful reminder of the ultimate power God holds, and how often we seem to place ourselves too highly in our own estimation.
  - Perhaps it makes you feel uncomfortable. Perhaps it jars with the image you have in your head of who God is. Do you find it comforting or confusing?
  - What image of God do you carry with you in your heart? What or who do you picture when you think of God?
  
- How do you feel about the story of Jesus calming the storm?
  - What do you think happened on that day? A miracle? Divine intervention? A slightly eerie coincidence as Jesus calls out and the storm starts to calm down? A chain of events which unfolded more slowly than the story would have us believe? Disciples who were so wracked with fear and overwhelm that this is how they remember the day?
  - How do you feel about the miracle stories we find in the Gospels? Do they bring insight or confusion? Do you find truth in the miracle itself, or in the various ways the people in the story react and process it?

The Bible is by no means a straightforward read. It's the kind of text that impacts us differently every time we read it. We notice different things, ask different questions and find that the words resonate with us in different ways, based on where we are in life at that time. It's also possible that, when gathered together in worship, each person will hear a given text in a different way to their neighbour. One person may feel buoyed up, inspired and joyous, while another may feel a sense of despair, frustration or cynicism. I will admit that, at time of writing, with all that is going on in the world, reading this particular combination of passages prompts me to fall in the latter camp.

At our school, during the final week of April, we observed Earth Day, and stretched it into a week of dress up days and awareness-raising activities. We made pledges to the planet, and considered what we could all do to save the Earth. It was very hard not to feel disillusioned, which is quite a heartbreaking state of affairs. It was wonderful to hear the kids talking about picking up litter, eating less meat, and recycling more carefully. So many of them are capable of amazing things that will make a difference to this world, but I find it so hard to see the benefits on a global scale. Yes, we can all do more as individuals, but when wonderful young activists like Greta Thunberg are being shouted down and laughed at despite all she has done, it's more than a little demoralising. This world is full of greedy people who are actively fighting against our efforts to keep carbon emissions down; the private jets keep taking off, rich people continue to fill their garages with multiple cars, and the big coal and oil companies keep raking in the profits. I find it hard to read the story of David and Goliath in much the same way that I find it hard to see my lovely students trying their hardest to do their bit for the planet. In today's world, we have no shortage of Goliaths. Is it just me, or is it getting harder to see the potential for someone unexpected and seemingly powerless to make a dent against our world's Goliaths, with their money, power, social media influence and downright dirty tricks?

Miracle stories can be tough for me too. It's easy to be cynical, to wonder if the events really played out in the way the story suggests. I'm not sure how many of us can relate in any meaningful way to this kind of story, short of a situation involving a spooky coincidence. God may help some of us find parking spaces, or make it stop raining just as we're about to leave the flat, but many of us are still wondering when God will offer us the same gift.

As for Job, I find it very hard to read. Much like the passage from 2 Corinthians, I struggle with the idea of being intentionally tested by God. I wonder how many people with chronic illnesses or experiences of horrific bereavement have had people try to comfort them by declaring that God is testing them, and that their suffering is something to be thankful for. This is dangerous theology, and I find it hard to read or preach on these passages for that reason.

What do we do with passages of the Bible that raise uncomfortable questions? It doesn't feel right just to ignore or disregard them. I think that the greatest insight comes from the wrestling, the wondering and the criticism. Amidst our questions and frustrations, green shoots of insight and hope can still come.

Whatever happened on that day, on the boat in the middle of the storm, the disciples saw *something* that had an impact on them. After this day, they believed a little more deeply that this man was capable of great and life-changing things. Our cynicism doesn't have to get in the way of that. Perhaps we can be more present, and look for the things in our lives that bring us closer to God's truth and hope.

Our children will read the story of David and Goliath, and believe that they are not too small to make a difference. It might just fill them with the hope that our world needs. My cynicism doesn't have to (nor should it be) a roadblock. I can be inspired by the hope of my students, whose innovative ideas and creativity might just be what is needed to rescue our beautiful world from destruction.

We may find ourselves concerned and bothered by what we read in Job and Paul's letters, and we can let this spur us on to ensure that we never inflict the dangerous theology of glorified suffering on anyone we meet who is going through a tough time.

Cynicism can pass, and discomfort can lead to loving resistance. Every step in the right direction is worth something, and we never know how far those small wins can take us. We never know what will catch on, or who will end up breaking through and making a huge

impact. Cynicism and doubt are part of life, and nothing to be ashamed of; we are just called not to let them rob us of our will to take the next positive step.

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

### **Prayers of intercession**

Loving God,

Strengthen us to stand in solidarity with your suffering world. It's easy to look out and feel disillusioned, but we pray for your hope that can never be extinguished. Help us to keep the flame burning, and find ways to take the next step as we strive to bring your kingdom closer.

We stand in solidarity with all who live in the midst of war and conflict. Our hearts break for the families torn apart, the people in desperate need of basic supplies, and the civilians forced to flee a place they can no longer call home.

We pray that those in power will be filled with your compassion, and guided to find more peaceful ways of resolving conflict.

We thank you for the peacemakers and peace bringers, sowing seeds of hope in many different ways; may we be inspired to follow their example.

We stand in solidarity with victims of abuse. We pray that your love will surround those whose sense of self worth has been crushed by an abusive partner, a controlling family member or a prejudiced church community. For those slowly building back their ability to trust and advocate for themselves, we pray for your strength. For those who have perpetrated abuse, we pray for your love to guide them towards a sense of self worth that does not rely on suppressing or using others.

We stand in solidarity with those who are hurting. We pray for those who are figuring out life without a loved one. We ask for your hope and peace in the lives of those battling mental and physical illness, whose lives have been turned upside down by a diagnosis or relapse. May we be your hands, feet and voice in the lives of those who may be struggling to reach out for help.

Into your hands, O God, we commit all for whom we pray

In Jesus' name

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

### **We will now take up the offering.**

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Emma Dobson

<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Emma Dobson

Take my moments, take my gifts, take my heart and take my body.  
Together, may our offerings be used to show the love, peace, hope and grace that comes  
from you, O God.  
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn:**

713 STF – Show me how to stand for justice OR

645 STF – Will your anchor hold in the storms of life

**Blessing**

Go with courage, followers of the Christ.

Go into a world crying out for love and hope.

Go to spread peace.

Go, and the Spirit of God goes before you.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker