

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 1B

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

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Sunday After Epiphany - Year B
10th January 2021



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

374 STF – Come, Holy Spirit, descend on us OR

18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

136 STF – Morning has broken OR

495 STF – Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-17; Mark 1:4-11

Hymn:

189 STF – Wild and lone the prophet's voice OR

338 STF – There is a Redeemer

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters OR

113 STF – O worship the King, all-glorious above

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

13 STF – Sing of a God in majestic divinity OR

541 STF – To the river I am going

Blessing

The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on www.theworshipcloud.com.

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Call to worship

As we settle into the rhythm of 2021, we gather in your presence.
As a new week begins, we come to worship you.
As a new service starts, we seek to encounter your grace.
As we enter into this moment, we pray for transformation by your Spirit, O Lord.
Amen.¹

Hymn:

374 STF – Come, Holy Spirit, descend on us OR
18 STF – Be still and know that I am God

Opening Prayers

Lord, as we prepare for worship, let your presence come in Jesus name. We meet as a family, welcoming each other with open hearts and minds.

We ask that your Holy Spirit work within us and make yourself known to us today through our worship, prayers and the reading of your word.

Bless our worship today.

May we hear you speaking.

[Pause]

Help us to have you as the focus of all that we are.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

[This would probably work best as a short monologue, performed by a member of the congregation, or it could be two voices, taking alternate lines, or perhaps a group of younger people with a line or two each.]

We were disciples of John – the John they called Baptist.

We had always followed him. He'd made such an impression on us when we'd gone to the wilderness to see him. People had said he was strange and wild-looking and that he was stirring up trouble, so we had to go to find out what was happening.

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Ruth Hall

When we got there we knew that we'd found what we were looking for. For years we'd been sure that there was something seriously wrong with our religion and its leaders and John put all our fears into words, but talked of a new way of doing things and believing.

He also convinced us that we needed to start again and that the way to do that was to turn our lives around and be baptised.

It was a big step down into that water – in all ways – but the twelve of us had no hesitation – we wanted to start again and to make a difference.

So when we got back to our home town, we were new men. And people could see the change in us and commented on it. We knew we'd done the right thing and we tried to live in the way that John had preached to us. But when we heard of his death, we didn't know what to do.

Would this be the end of this new movement? We'd heard there was another teacher going around with a similar message, but we soon heard that they'd killed him too.

Then Paul arrived in our city. We'd heard of Paul; how he'd been an enemy of the followers of Jesus, but had converted to becoming a believer himself. We understood how that could happen from our own experience.

So we made sure that we met him to find out about him. But he had obviously been told about us and about how we were disciples of John. So he asked us about our baptism and for the first time we heard about the Holy Spirit.

Carefully he explained to us that we hadn't taken in all of John's message. We'd ignored the fact that John was pointing us on to Jesus, who is the one we should have been following..

And the light dawned! By taking on the baptism of Jesus we would also be receiving the Spirit that was in Jesus and that would give us new power and inspiration to do God's work.

What a difference! Now we are no longer struggling on our own, trying to cling on to a dying faith, but we are filled with a new spirit of confidence and vitality. There still may be troubles ahead, but now we have new strength to cope with them.³

[Pause].

A question for us to reflect on this week: what are you learning at the moment, that is helping you to follow Jesus? What messages do you need to hear to help you become a more loving, more helpful person in the world?

Let's listen out for those amazing teachers in life, who teach us how to be better people.

³ Taken from Full Worship Service by Marjorie Dobson and Andrew Pratt

Hymn:

136 STF – Morning has broken OR

495 STF – Dear Lord and Father of mankind

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Reflections on the readings

Today's reflection comes from Revd Carla Quenet.

[You may choose to create a moment when you come to one of Carla's questions for people to reflect on that. Perhaps in quiet on their own, in groups if it is safe to do so, in 'breakout rooms' online, or similar.]

Have you ever noticed how some people's voices simply seem to be able to command a situation instantly? It is not necessarily the person with the loudest, strongest, most booming voice that does this. Rather, it is often the softly and gently spoken individual whose voice demands greatest attention.

It seems counterintuitive to many but adding a raised voice to an already fractious situation seldom brings resolution.

Have you ever heard people of peace speak? What words did they use? How did their physical voice sound? How did you/others respond?

Today's readings remind us of the power of the voice and speech (but not necessarily just that of humans):

In Genesis 1:1-4 we hear how God begins to speak creation into being, first separating light and dark. In verse 3 we read:

*"Then God **said**, "Let there be light", and there was light."*

Notice the creative power of God displayed in the seemingly simple yet profound act of speech. We are then told that God goes on to name the light day, and the dark, night. Fundamental rhythms that we continue to experience as humans and could be defined as the basis of life.

Read Genesis 1:1-4 again and as you do, encourage yourself (and others) to reflect on the passage by asking 'I wonder' questions. For example, 'I wonder if God's voice was audible?' or 'I wonder why God spoke when no other living thing was present?'

In Psalm 29 we hear the voice of God but this time we find it within the context of a storm. The Psalmist raises their praise to God, opening the Psalm with:

*Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendour.*

Or as The Message writes:

Bravo, God, bravo!
Gods and all angels shout, "Encore!"
In awe before the glory,
in awe before God's visible power.
Stand at attention!
Dress your best to honour him!

Both versions clearly communicate the awesome nature of God and recognise what our response ought to be. Yet enveloped within this text there seems to be the feeling that the voice of God is less to be feared and more to be respected. The voice of God alone can do more than humans ever hope to do even if they used all the resources available to them. The Psalm doesn't end with a call for people to revere God, but instead we are offered the prayerful and encouraging words:

"May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11, NRSV).

We are reminded in the midst of the noise, chaos and drama of the storm that God can and does distil peace.

Have you ever experienced the peace of God within a stormy period of your life? How did it feel? How did you respond?

In Acts 19 we meet a group of disciples in Corinth. They have clearly misunderstood the message which John the Baptist proclaimed as they were living out their faith with an obscured understanding. Paul reminds them of the need to be baptised into Christ and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When Paul lays hands upon those gathered they proceed to speak in tongues and prophesied; surely in this act they both praised and were encouraged to point people towards the triune God.

The passage continues, notice, and we are told that Paul goes and **speaks boldly** in the synagogue for three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. Paul clearly perseveres with this congregation, before he finally leaves when people stubbornly refused to listen; but his act of proclamation, alongside these disciples continued until all of Asia had heard the good news.

Have you ever experienced a situation where people stubbornly refused to listen? What did you do? Why? What would motivate you to continue sharing the Good News?

Today's readings beautifully and profoundly remind us the wonder of a voice. We are reminded of the awesome nature of God, that he simply spoke creation into being. We are reminded of the power of God in the way his voice is heard in the midst of a mighty storm. We recognise, through the role of John the Baptist, the part we can

play in proclaiming God but yet we need to be cautious that we share the message in such a way that those who hear fully comprehend.

Communication goes beyond words alone, we perhaps notice this in the very act of creation.

In what ways has God called you to communicate the Good News and point people to Jesus? How will you respond? ⁴

[You might like to watch The Vine Video - Andrew's Story - how would you articulate your story today? Watch more stories at thestoryproject.org.uk.]

Hymn:

393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters OR

113 STF – O worship the King, all-glorious above

Prayers of intercession

Father God, we thank you for your gift of creation. We praise you for the beauty and goodness you have made.

We pray, that we may be filled with a spirit of concern for our environment and resources. Help us to pursue responsible stewardship, protecting and redeeming the habitats of the earth you have created. We pray for those countries in Latin America where extensive deforestation is causing decreasing biodiversity through habitat loss.

We hold in our hearts people involved in agriculture in the UK. Help us continue to provide the best standards of care for our farm animals, advocating for high welfare in our food supply chains even in an uncertain market.

Guide our governments to be key forces in addressing climate change and enabling large companies to be prioritising sustainable methods of production and distribution, leading by example.

Lead our scientists, innovating ways to help reduce our impact on your planet, give them wisdom and keep encouraging their work to restore the planet.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

⁴ Reflection written by Carla Quenet

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Ruth Hall

Blessing the offering

We have received so much, and now, as we celebrate the gift-giving of the magi, we present our own gifts to you. Our gifts of money, presented here to help make a difference in God's world, but also the gifts of our hearts and minds.

We are your gifts Christ, use us as you will.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

13 STF – Sing of a God in majestic divinity OR

541 STF – To the river I am going

Blessing

The God of all mysterious grace go with you,
The Creator, who became human, and who lives as Spirit, go with you,
From the dawning of each new day,
Until the setting of the sun,
May God go with you.

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker