

twelvebaskets



EPIPHANY 2C

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

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Second Sunday After Epiphany - Year C
16th January 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

33 STF – O Lord we are always in your presence OR

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Hymn:

228 STF – Hail to the Lord's anointed OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

101 STF – Before the world began, one Word was there OR

689 STF – Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

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Call to worship

Here we are Lord, your people, gathered in your name on this Lord's Day.
Here we are Lord, stepping aside from the world 'out there' to meet as your church.
Here we are Lord, seeking an encounter with you again, a fresh taste of grace.
Here we are Lord, we have come. Come amongst us, by your Spirit, we pray,
Amen.¹

Hymn:

33 STF – O Lord we are always in your presence OR

83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Opening Prayers

Prayer of Approach

In our worship today, let us remember that the love of God for God's people and church knows no limits. The psalmist talks of God's love reaching up to the heavens and justice to the depth of the ocean, and yet God blesses us as individuals with the gifts of the Spirit so that the church, might be a light in this place to his glory.

Father God, we bring our offering of worship and, with it, the service of our lives through this coming week. May we go from this place knowing that we have met with you and been blessed by your Spirit, to live and work to your glory.

Amen.

A prayer of adoration

God, whose love reaches to the highest heavens, how can we keep silent?
God, whose righteousness stands like the tallest mountain, how can we keep silent?
God, whose justice is deeper than any ocean, how can we keep silent?
God, whose grace flows like a never ending river, how can we keep silent?

How can we not proclaim your majesty from generation to generation?
How can we not raise the lamp of your salvation for all the world to see?
God, whose love reaches to the highest heavens, we lift up your mighty name!

Amen.

A prayer of confession

We pray for confidence to share your word with others and for the opportunity to proclaim it. Forgive our reluctance, our timidity.

We pray for wisdom to know what should be said and the moment in which to say it. Forgive our reticence, our anxiety.

We pray for knowledge of the fullness of your grace and the willingness to live it. Forgive our ignorance, our self-reliance.

Be the centre of all we are, the light by which we walk, the grace by which we talk, the blessing that we share.

Amen.²

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Think of a time when you made a promise.

Perhaps it wasn't an easy promise to keep, perhaps – in the end – you couldn't keep it. But hopefully, in making a promise, you made a commitment to at least try and keep it. Whatever it was you offered or said, you then went out of your way to try to live up to your word.

Perhaps already this year you have made promises – to your friends, to your family, in work or school, or perhaps to yourself in the form of a New Year's resolution.

Every year, the Methodist Church has what is called 'Covenant Sunday' at the beginning of the year, when we reflect on the promises we are each making to God, and the promises the whole church can make to God. I wonder what those promises are for you today...

In our service, we will have the chance to hear about the different gifts we have and the different ways we can respond to God's call on our lives. Each of us is different, and God is calling us to 'be ourselves' and to be the very best version of ourselves that we can be. What does that look like for you? How can you take the 'next best step' towards being a better person, a better member of your family, a better colleague or classmate, a better friend, a better disciple of Jesus?

We can't fix all of our issues overnight, and we all have a long way to go on our walk towards being the best we can be, but let's just try to take the next step in the right direction.

I invite you to spend a few minutes just sharing with those near you about one thing you could promise to do this week, to take the next step forward. Perhaps it is pray for someone, visit someone, make a phone call, or something else altogether...

[Give a few minutes for discussion. You may wish to spend timing hearing people's views from around the congregation, or simply announce the next hymn].

Amen.³

Hymn:

134 STF – Christ, whose glory fills the skies OR

610 STF – Best of all is God is with us

Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Hymn:

228 STF – Hail to the Lord's anointed OR

661 STF – Give me the faith which can remove and sink the mountain to a plain

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

Reflections on the readings

The wedding at Cana, and Jesus' miraculous production of additional wine, is a great example of the sense of joy in the character of Jesus. Often, when we depict him and read stories from later in the Gospels as he runs into trouble with the religious institution and faces the pain of his own death, we see only the more austere, severe, troubled face of Jesus. In Cana, here at the beginning of his ministry, he is the guy who provides a free bar at the wedding!

Of course, there is more going on here than simply more booze, the miracle is a response to a certain social situation and to the request of his mother – what son would be foolish enough to ignore one of those! However, it helps to add more range to the Jesus miracles: he is healer of those in agony, but also provider for those wishing to celebrate.

In the Corinthians reading we hear that same message – that there is a wide variety in our skills and our responses to God, and to the ways we live out the Spirit within us. Whatever your gifts are, whatever you have been blessed with, whatever opportunities lie ahead for you – can you use them to help build the Kingdom of God? Can you make the world a better place, in Jesus' name?

[This section of our worship assumes that the church has already had a covenant service this year, and provides an opportunity for the congregation to discuss together what the Covenant Service means and how we respond.]

At the beginning of every calendar year, churches all around the Methodist Connexion share in the Covenant Service, where we commit ourselves to God again. It is one of the great gifts of Methodism to the Ecumenical liturgy, a powerful service in which we pray the Covenant prayer:

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

However, because of the nature of the Covenant service, we don't often get the chance to discuss it. In light of our reflections so far in this service, and our exploration of Jesus' 'first miracle' and Paul's description of the various gifts we have each received, this is a chance for us to reflect on what the Covenant service, and the Covenant Prayer in particular, means to us.

So, firstly with the people next to you (and then we can share together as a whole church), let's think about two questions:

- 1) What do you find difficult or challenging in the Covenant Prayer, which words or sentences are hard for you to say?
- 2) How can you be encouraged and inspired in your journey of discipleship by the Covenant Prayer – where are the words and phrases that can help you?

I'll just read it again, then we can have our discussion:

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
exalted for you, or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

[Leave time for conversation, then suggest a few people share their thoughts or reflections].

[Once the conversation has moved towards a natural conclusion, and making note of anything you'd like to discuss further as a church, with your minister, in another church meeting or after the service, you might like to close with this reflection].

We now hear a brief reflection on the covenant, in the form of a poem by Marjorie Dobson:

A covenant of love
is made between two people
who are committed to each other
and want to share their lives with each other.
Each enters into the covenant
with the intention of giving all
to a lifelong relationship.
All is done in good faith
and with the best of motives.

But relationships break down
and promises are not always kept
and commitments become a burden
and the covenant is shattered.

God's covenant with us
is based on grace and love.
Our side of the covenant
may often be broken
by our behaviour,
by our neglect,
by following our own wilful ways,
by direct disobedience,
or by desertion.

But God continually renews
the covenant with us,
as forgiveness is offered,
repentance accepted
and behaviour is understood.

For when we make our commitment
to this covenant,
God's conditions and promises
are written in our hearts,

so that we can never completely forget them –
even if we don't always remember
the vows that we made.⁴

[Pause]

Let us pray.

Thank you Lord, for all the gifts and graces each of us has received. Help us to use
these for your glory,

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen.⁵

Hymn:

101 STF – Before the world began, one Word was there OR

689 STF – Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity

Prayers of intercession

Ever-present God, help us to be thankful for all that you have given us, especially
during difficult times. When we enjoy times of great happiness, celebrate our
accomplishments and achievements, Lord may we gratefully give you thanks and
praise.

Help us to remember that in the difficult and painful times in our lives, you are there
with us.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to us we pray.

[Pause]

Ever-present God, be with us, throughout the race, and the struggles along the way.
You promised to complete the good work you have begun in us. For our world we
pray;

Wherever good works have begun to help the poor in our world, to help the sick, to
help the needy, we pray that you will help to complete those good works.

Where good work has begun to tackle climate change, we pray that you will help to
complete that work.

Lord where good work has begun to bring peace where there is war, love where
there is hatred, provision where there is hunger and starvation, we pray that you will
help to complete those good works.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the world we pray

Lord for the church we pray.

[Pause]

We pray that you will help the church to remain true to you, true to your gospel and
true to ourselves. Unite your church in love, mission and in the desire to fight the
good fight of faith. Give us the grace and courage to speak up against injustice,

⁴ Taken from Full Worship Service by Marjorie Dobson and Andrew Pratt

⁵ Reflection written by Tim Baker

hatred, bigotry, racism, discrimination and all forms of bullying and abuse. May the church continue to be the salt of the earth and the voice of the voiceless.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the Church we pray

[Pause]

Father we pray for our friends, family, loved ones and we bring to you the names recorded in our prayer book...*[insert as appropriate]*

We thank you for the gift of life, for your provision, for shelter, food, and every blessing. For the sick, we pray for your healing, for the lonely we pray for your peace and presence. For the bereaved, we pray for comfort, for the lost we pray for salvation.

For young families, we pray for your guidance, for ourselves we pray and present our individual needs to you in this moment of silence

[Quiet]

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to us we pray

Amen.⁶

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

God of this Sunday,

We commit to you this day, and these gifts – which we are grateful to have received and want to commit to you and your Kingdom again, in Jesus' name.

Amen.⁷

Hymn:

664 STF – Lord, you call us to your service OR

503 STF – Love divine, all loves excelling

Blessing

May we go with the courage of Christ in our hearts.

May we go with the fierce energy of the Spirit in our bodies.

May we go with the God of love streaming through us and out into the world.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.⁸

⁶ Prayers of intercession written by Lansford Penn-Timothy

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁸ Additional prayers by Tim Baker