

twelvebaskets



ORDINARY 13C

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

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Ordinary 13 - Year C
26th June 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

61 STF – Our God is a great big God OR

473 STF – ‘Moses, I know you’re the man,’ the Lord said

Opening Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

463 STF – Deep in the shadows of the past OR

162 STF – The prophets’ voice comes down the years

Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

673 STF – Will you come and follow me? OR

674 STF – Would I have answered when you called

What are you being called to?

Hymn:

396 STF – Spirit who broods, Spirit who sings OR

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

62 STF – Our God is an awesome God OR

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

Blessing

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Call to worship

Gracious God,
Your love has called us here,
And we come,
To receive of that love,
And to go out into the world, to share and spread that love.

Come Lord Jesus, by your Spirit,

Amen.¹

Hymn:

61 STF – Our God is a great big God OR

473 STF – ‘Moses, I know you’re the man,’ the Lord said

Opening Prayers

God of each moment, we give to you this moment of prayer at the start of our service,

We bring to you all that we are,
All that we feel,
All that we think.

Move in our hearts and minds today.

God of each hour, we give to you our time of worship this day.

Use this space to fill us again with your love,
That we might be champions of love in the world around us,
And that we might sing your praises.

Move in our hearts and minds today.

God of each day, we give to you this day,

The opportunities that will arise to share your good news with the people we meet,
The failures we are already aware of, or live in fear of.

Forgive us for our failings this day, Lord God,
Move in our hearts and minds, by your grace.

God of each year, we give to you this year,

The days and weeks to come,
The hopes and anxieties we hold in our hearts.
Even as we thank you for all that we have received,
We look to trust you for all that is to come.

Be the way maker for us today, O God,
And move in our hearts and minds,
By your Spirit.

Amen.²

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Last year the country was gripped with Euro fever. Even if we weren't big football fans it might have been hard to not support and be a fan of the England football team.

How many of you supported the England team last year? Also how many of you would call yourself a fan of something e.g. a club or maybe even a type of food. In our bible reading Jesus is talking about what the difference is between a fan and follower. A fan, is "a person who has a strong interest in or admiration for a particular person or thing."

Jesus, had lots of fans that loved what He did. Why? Well its hard not to see why people would love him because he healed the sick. He fed the hungry and did things that challenged the norm. However, Jesus didn't want fans, he wanted followers.

Followers means- "a person who supports and admires a particular person or set of ideas". "Or furthermore- a person who moves or travels behind someone or something."

However being a follower is not easy and that is what Jesus is advising about in this passage.

We can pray and ask for guidance in recognising and following His instructions. When we are loving Him and acting in His will, wonderful things will result. It isn't always easy at first, but we can rest assured that it is the best thing for us, because it is what He asked. He has our best interests in mind, whether we always understand them or not.

Let us pray.

God, help us not to just be fans but followers of you. Help us to do this through the good and bad times of our lives. Amen.³

Hymn:

463 STF – Deep in the shadows of the past OR

162 STF – The prophets' voice comes down the years

Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

³ All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

Reflections on the reading

Pilgrimage is very much back in fashion in Britain today and not only as a religious practice. Television schedules include a variety of programmes in which celebrities and others are challenged to make a pilgrimage of some sort. In particular, the ancient pilgrim paths to Santiago da Compostela in Northern Spain have become immensely popular, with around 350,000 such pilgrims in 2019. Of course, numbers were drastically reduced by the Covid-19 pandemic but are now building up again.

In planning a pilgrimage, two key questions need to be considered – ‘Where am I heading?’ and ‘How am I going to get there?’ Luke’s Gospel is often seen as a gospel of journey, of pilgrimage, and today’s passage offers some interesting answers to these two questions. Luke makes it very clear that for Jesus, the destination is not in doubt – indeed, the whole gospel can be seen as a journey to Jerusalem, and here we are told that Jesus, knowing that the end of his life is approaching, ‘set his face to go to Jerusalem’. That expression suggests mixed emotions – both longing and resignation perhaps. We know that Jesus felt compelled to go to Jerusalem and that he felt great love and compassion for the city; a few chapters later (13:33-34) Luke records Jesus saying, ‘... it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’ It is clear too that Jesus knew it would be in Jerusalem that he would face the final challenges of religious and political opposition and that it would be in Jerusalem that he would die. Luke tells us that Jesus sent messengers ahead of him – the reason for this is not clearly explained – was it a way of ensuring that he didn’t change his mind?

Let’s pause for a moment and consider any journeys we have made with that mixture of longing and resignation, of anticipation and apprehension, of hope and fear... perhaps to a meeting which we knew would be both joyful and difficult... perhaps to a funeral... perhaps, after the lockdowns of the past two years, to a much-postponed event or gathering where we would rejoice to see family or friends, but would also be all too aware of those no longer with us, or no longer able to travel... Perhaps, in such circumstances we might, like Jesus, need to ‘set our face’ to make the journey and not allow ourselves to be deterred or delayed.

It seems that the body language of Jesus makes clear to all those he encounters that he is a man on a mission. The Samaritan village does not receive him, which the disciples James and John find insulting; they want to punish the village, but Jesus rebukes them and moves on.

Along with the questions of destination and route, a pilgrimage also raises considerations of company – will this journey be made alone, or in the company of others? If others are to be part of the pilgrim band, who will they be? Jesus is already travelling with his disciples; and along the way he encounters a series of three people, or types of people who could become fellow pilgrims. Firstly someone who declares they will follow Jesus wherever he goes – enigmatically, Jesus replies that ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has

nowhere to lay his head' and we assume that this deters the follower. With the next would-be pilgrim it is Jesus who takes the initiative, calling someone to follow him, but this person can't – or won't drop everything to follow and so is left behind; a third person makes a conditional offer and this too is rejected. Some of this sounds quite harsh to us – surely it is natural for people to want to bury their parents, or say farewell to their families before embarking on such a pilgrimage? Perhaps Luke just wants us to realise the level of determination and even discipline which Jesus is under at this point – perhaps he too would like to procrastinate and delay the journey, but he knows he daren't. This is no longer the time for looking back, this is the time for moving forward.

Again, let's pause and reflect on our situation now. Today within British Methodism is Conference Sunday. Those who will be received into Full Connexion and ordained this very day have, in a way, set their faces towards a particular destination and may need something of this sense of resolution themselves as they travel a path which will not always be smooth. Indeed, all of us, ordained or lay, are pilgrims on a journey. Over the next few days, the representatives gathered in Telford from across the Connexion will be considering all sorts of questions about our journey, our pilgrimage, as a denomination. Both connexionally and locally we all have to return again and again to the same two pilgrimage questions, 'What is our destination?' and 'How are we going to get there?' They are not easy questions to answer at a time like this but do we need to hear something of the commitment and urgency of Jesus' replies to these would-be followers? Do we need to note the willingness of Jesus to embrace sacrifice and rejection? If we are going to travel the same path as Jesus, we too need to set our faces towards a future which might involve challenge, change and conflict.

Today's lectionary also points us towards a strange incident from the 2nd book of Kings. Here it is the prophet Elijah who, as he makes a physical journey to Bethel and then to the Jordan river, is also, like Jesus, journeying towards the end of his life, for, we are told, 'the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind'. In parallel with the disciples James and John, Elisha, the disciple and ultimate successor of Elijah, doesn't fully understand what is going on, but grasps eventually that his master is about to leave him and so asks that he may inherit 'a double portion' of Elijah's spirit. It is a bold request and even Elijah is not sure if it can be granted, but it seems that it is, for after Elijah has disappeared into heaven, Elisha picks up his fallen cloak and is able to use it, just as Elijah had, to part the waters of the River Jordan and cross in safety.

Pause again, imagine the feelings of Elisha as he faced the departure of Elijah, such a giant figure in the religious landscape of his day. As Elisha realises that he is going to have to carry on the task of proclaiming God's purposes to his generation, he also realises that what he needs above all is the same Spirit which has enabled Elijah, in fact, he feels he needs that even more than Elijah did, asking for a double portion! As we face a daunting spiritual landscape in our day, do we, like Elisha, acknowledge that what we need to ask for more than anything else, is the Holy Spirit of God?

So from our readings today we have two pictures projected into our minds... Jesus on the road to Jerusalem with an expression of determination and commitment, travelling with resolution to whatever the future brings... and Elisha, crossing the river Jordan in awe at the realisation that God's Spirit has been poured out upon him and wondering, I suspect, what will happen next. Can we see ourselves in both pictures? Can we catch the urgency of Jesus who bids us not to look back in our pilgrimage towards the Kingdom of God? At the same time, can we ask for and then breathe in, with Elisha, the gift of God's Spirit – no longer rationed to individuals but freely given to all who ask - and trust that, living by the Spirit, we will be guided by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25) to discover more and more of that Kingdom?⁴

Hymn:

673 STF – Will you come and follow me? OR

674 STF – Would I have answered when you called

What are you called to?

Some questions for discussion or reflection:

- Do you think it is always necessary to have a destination in mind for a pilgrimage?
- Is there a sense in which your local congregation (or the wider Methodist connexion) is on a journey? Where do you feel we are going?
- How do you feel about the way in which Jesus answered his would-be followers in Luke 9:57-62? Are you aware of a sense of urgency about the church's mission at this time?
- Put yourself into the shoes of Elisha in this story – did he ask for the right thing from Elijah?
- What does it mean to 'live by the Spirit'?
- Do you find yourself 'looking back' at times? How does this affect your mission?

Hymn:

396 STF – Spirit who broods, Spirit who sings OR

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples

Prayers of intercession

Loving Father,

We live in a world spoiled by hatred and violence

We pray for those who are suffering from persecution,

For those experiencing conflict and war

And for those suffering from poverty and injustice.

May your Holy Spirit pour your love into their hearts
strengthening and sustaining them.

⁴ Reflection written by Jill Baker

We ask for an end to hatred and violence,
for vehement tongues to cease,
for weapons of war to be laid down
and for just practices to be taken up.

Loving Father,
Thank you for the gift of your Son and his work of reconciliation.

We pray for the minds of those in positions for power – politicians, business leaders
and those with influence – to be enlightened by truth through your Holy Spirit. May
the knowledge of who you are and all that you have done for us, lead all to act with
love and mercy, reflecting your good, perfect and pleasing will.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Heavenly Father, mysterious God, we offer you our lives – the gifts of our time,
energy and ideas, as well as these gifts of money. Use us, and use them, that we
might create a different kind of world, in Jesus' name.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

62 STF – Our God is an awesome God OR

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

Blessing

There is a world out there, just waiting for the good news we carry.
There are people out there, hoping for the kind of hope we have.
There are lives out there, waiting to be shaped and changed by our love.
Let us go out and seek to serve the God who loves us.
Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession by Claire Welch

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker