

twelvebaskets



LENT 6C

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

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Sixth Sunday in Lent - Year C
13th April 2025



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

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

1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

263 STF – Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest OR

276 STF – Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim

Readings: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29, Luke 19: 28-40

Hymn:

265 STF – Ride on, ride on in majesty! OR

264 STF – Make way, make way, for Christ the king in splendour comes

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

277 STF – My song is love unknown OR

318 STF – Christ, our king before creation

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

593 STF – Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Blessing

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Call to worship

Here we are to worship,
Here we are to learn and reflect,
Here we are to turn aside from the business of this week,
To encounter you afresh, O God.
Come amongst us, by your Spirit we pray,

Amen.¹

Hymn:

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you OR
1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell

Opening Prayers

Lord of all time and space,
Lord of this moment, and this gathering,
We give our time of worship over into your hands this day. Come
amongst us, as we pray, read, sing, listen, learn and reflect, That
we might know you to be already here,
Already amongst us,
Already shaping and guiding our lives.

We thank and praise you, O God,
For you are a loving and peace-filled God.

Lord of our church and our home,
Lord of this community and our whole world,
We know there is much that is not as you would have it be,
Including within us.
We know we have fallen short of your glory,
And we come to you to say sorry this day.
Hear our prayers of repentance we pray.

We know too, that even as we come to you in prayer,
You have already forgiven and accepted us,
That we are set free by your grace,
And on that we depend.

May we be people who bring that freedom,
Your life-giving freedom,
Into this act of worship,
Into the week ahead,
And into our whole lives.
In Jesus' name we pray,

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

I'd like to start with a question, when was the last time you properly shouted in celebration?

Was it over sport? (like during a football match). Or at a family celebration? (such as a birthday cheer or at a wedding). Receiving good news? A significant moment or achievement?

Take some responses.

Sometimes it's easy to whoop and cheer and celebrate, sometimes it can be quite hard. There is a British stereotype that suggests that the nation are sometimes rather shy and embarrassed when it comes to public shows of affection, I wonder where do we settle with this?

Are we a whooper and cheerer OR are we someone who avoids eye contact and looks firmly at our shoes?

When it comes to today's gospel reading, I often wonder what it'd be like for the first disciple to start celebrate? Who joined in? Who was the first person to throw down their coat in celebration?

A bit like starting a conga (dance) I'd love to know how it began. Would you join in?³

Hymn:

263 STF – Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest OR

276 STF – Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim

Readings: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29, Luke 19: 28-40

Hymn:

265 STF – Ride on, ride on in majesty! OR

264 STF – Make way, make way, for Christ the king in splendour comes

Reflections on the readings

Music is a cornerstone of our faith. The opening sentence of the preface to the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book declares that, "Methodism was born in song". It's true that we love a good singalong. No matter your church tradition, I imagine this is a familiar notion. I am hugely grateful that this world has the gift of music. My faith is also a gift, but it can be hard work sometimes. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the weight of the world, the confusing questions rolling around my head, and the fact that things sometimes simply don't make sense. There are times when words simply fail me. There are times when I can neither find the words that get to the heart of what I really want to say, nor take in words that are being

³ All Age Talk written by Mark Stennett

said to me from the pulpit. In those cases, having regular music breaks is a game-changer. Having the opportunity to sing or listen to words written by someone else, beautifully packaged with a melody and a sense of flow, can give me the chance to reconnect in the most wonderfully surprising way. To be clear, this isn't exclusive to worship music; in fact, I can recall feeling God's presence possibly more keenly than ever while at a Hozier concert, or when I was fortunate enough to see Hadestown in the West End. Music is a powerful thing, and can transcend denomination, faith and language to unite us all in a common experience. The most beautiful thing is the way music can speak to each of us in different ways. You might be someone who connects with music through the lyrics, or you might be carried along by how the chords and notes are weaved together. Isn't it amazing that a group of people - a congregation, an audience at a concert, a group of strangers in a waiting room - might be hearing the same piece of music, but experiencing it in totally different ways?

Sometimes the music we hear is polished, painstakingly rehearsed and mixed to perfection, and sometimes it is raw and imperfect but no less beautiful. There can be something quite awesome about the joyful noise of happiness expressed through a rough-and-ready sound. I love the way the psalms can give us a taste of this raw and beautiful outpouring of emotion. By a similar token, our gospel reading - a very familiar one - brings us the story of some very joyful noise indeed. After sending his disciples on a somewhat unexpected journey to fetch a noble donkey, Jesus enters the city to the most glorious reception. Whether we're watching the scene play out in one of the many versions of Jesus Christ Superstar, or hearing a preacher or choir recreate the *Hosanna!*, it can't be denied that this crowd of people are sharing in a moment of beautiful music, and allowing their own voices to join the melee.

There's more to it, though; it turns out it's not just the human participants who fancy adding their voices to the throng. There's something much deeper and more visceral going on. Jesus says something powerful when the priests moan and call for the disciples to be silent: "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." This tells me that this is more than just a gang of people who decided to get together and get excited about this strange man who chooses a donkey to help him make his grand entrance. This tells me that nature itself is bursting into song, and nothing can stop the earth shattering movement, of which these people are a small part. Jesus is conducting a new song, and everyone and everything in existence has a melody, a harmony, a rhythm, a set of chords to play.

The song goes on. The song is still playing today, conducted by the Spirit. What can we do to join in the song? What kind of song can we hear the world singing?

Perhaps it's a protest song, a la Martyn Joseph, Grace Petrie or Billy Bragg. Perhaps we can tune into the anger of this world as history repeats itself and we seem to have learned so little. Perhaps we can hear the angrily strummed guitar chords, feel the pounding of a foot into the floor, and mimic the plaintive cry of a harmonica. Perhaps it's a heart wrenching ballad of pain. Perhaps we can hear nature crying out in agony as we continue to drill for resources, blast plane and factory fumes into the atmosphere, and let our trash poison the oceans. Perhaps we can harmonise with the desperate falsetto, feel the pain of the minor chords, and hear in the key change an attempt to shout louder in the hope that someone - anyone - will hear. Perhaps it's a rousing song of hope, reminding us to keep our heads up and keep seeing the good in the world. Perhaps we can bob along to the jaunty drum beat, tap our feet to the bright guitar chords, and sing along with the bright, positive vocals.

May we learn to tune into the song that even the rocks and stones are singing. Whatever style that song may be, may we sing it loud and proud. To make heaven on earth happen, it takes boldness. In the words of Emeli Sande:

*I want to sing, I want to shout, I want to scream 'til the words dry out
Put it in all of the papers, I'm not afraid - they can read all about it*

It also takes an insistence that this song is for everyone. Instead of questioning whether a saxophone, marimba or djembe really fits with our arrangement, we make it fit and make it beautiful. Our world needs to learn how to join in the song, and bring everyone along for the ride.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

277 STF – My song is love unknown OR

318 STF – Christ, our king before creation

Prayers of intercession

Lord,
Stopping to breathe is always a good idea.

It's good, from time to time, to be aware of our breathing, to do nothing but draw attention to it.

But right now - in the midst of all of this chaos, when it's harder than ever to find the space - it has never been more important.

So, Lord, make us make the time,
Guide us to slow down, and then come to a complete stop, just for a while
Give us the space just to breathe.

[Pause]

Then, perhaps, we might see more than just the mess of unrest in the world and our own helplessness.

Perhaps, if we remember to breathe, we might just see you,

At work:
Healing
Comforting
Weeping
Amidst us.

[Pause]

We bring before you the parts of our world wracked by conflict and senseless killing.
May we find you sowing seeds of peace
May we see the aid workers, the peacemakers, the compassionate politicians, the people who welcome refugees
May we continue to hope and pray for peace
May we believe that even we can sow our own seeds of peace.

[Pause]

We bring before you the people, those known to us and those we have never met, who are struggling with illness, unemployment, stress or bereavement.

May we find you sowing seeds of love.

⁴ Reflection written by Emma Dobson

May we reach out a hand of friendship and sow our own seeds of love.

[Pause]

We bring our messy, chaotic broken world to you in prayer
Even though it's not news to you
Even though you're already there.

Still, we come, because it matters
Because it keeps us connected
Because it reminds us there is still hope
May we always hold onto hope, and remember to breathe,
In Jesus' name,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Living, loving God,
Thank you for the many gifts we have received.
As we worship you, we know ourselves to be truly blessed.
Bless in turn, we pray, these tokens that we return to you today,
and guide all who make decisions about their use,
that we might build a little corner of your Kingdom, here, in this place, and in the places
we call home,

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

593 STF – Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour OR

486 STF – Who would true valour see

Blessing

The pilgrim road is calling us forth,
We must rise and go from this place,
Out into the day, the week, the month ahead.
As we continue our Lenten journey with you,
Walk alongside us we pray, O God,
And set us free, by your grace.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Emma Dobson

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker