



## ORDINARY 26C

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

**Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C**  
**28th September 2025**



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR**

**103 STF – God is love: let heaven adore him**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

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

**80 STF – My God, I am thine**

Readings: Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

**Hymn:**

**455 STF – All my hope on God is founded OR**

**249 STF – Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise OR**

**256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there?**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR**

**696 STF – For the healing of the nations, Lord we pray with one accord**

Blessing

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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](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).**

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## Call to worship

Holy, precious and gracious God,  
Thank you for this day, and for bringing us together again to worship you.

As we come to know more of your word, and your calling on our lives,  
So help us to receive the grace and love that is waiting for us, all around us,  
By your Holy Spirit we pray,

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR

103 STF – God is love: let heaven adore him

## Opening Prayers

Living, loving God,  
We take this time, away from the relentless pace of life:  
To turn to you in worship.

As we pause a moment, help us to turn away,  
Away from the everyday stresses, frustrations and endless to-do lists,  
Help us to be present to you, and to take this time to sit in your presence, Lord, and just breathe,  
Just be.

We all have our roles to play,  
As parents, friends, neighbours, colleagues, teachers, leaders or companions,  
In this moment, we are simply your children,  
Loved for who we are, just as we are.

May each of us gathered here today know that,  
And know something of what it means, simply to be loved.

In this moment, we find peace and strength,  
We find the comfort and love we need, in exactly the way we need it  
Your love meets us where we are, calls our name and speaks a language we understand.

Lord, in this moment:

Hold us,  
Accept us,  
Validate us,  
Inspire us,  
Guide us,  
Fill us up,  
Renew us,  
Challenge us,  
Strengthen us.

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

And may we know ourselves forgiven, loved and set free by your grace – this and every day.

In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord's Prayer**

### **All Age Talk**

Hello everyone! It's wonderful to be worshipping together. Today, we're going to talk about what it means to find real treasure: not the kind you keep in a box or a bank, but the kind that makes our lives rich with love, kindness, and generosity.

Let's start with a question:

Raise your hand if you've ever dreamed of finding buried treasure or winning the lottery!

*[Pause for show of hands, let kids and adults react.]*

Now, if you won a huge treasure, what's the first thing you think you'd do with it?

*[Encourage a few quick responses.]*

Two of our readings that we will hear later in the service give us two important perspectives on money and what we value. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul tells Timothy that true richness doesn't come from having lots of stuff, but from being content and sharing what we have. He says, "We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."

Then, in Luke 16, Jesus tells a story about a rich man who lived in luxury and a poor man named Lazarus who was sick and hungry right outside the rich man's gate. The rich man ignored Lazarus. But when both men died, their situations were reversed: Lazarus was comforted, but the rich man was left in torment.

Let's try something together:

I want everyone to hold their hands out like they're holding something really valuable. What does it feel like? Heavy? Important?

Now, open your hands wide, like you're giving it away. How does that feel? Freeing? Scary? Exciting?

*[Give a moment for reactions.]*

Jesus' story isn't about saying wealth is automatically bad. It's about what we do with what we have. Do we open our hands to share it, or do we keep it clutched tightly for ourselves? Paul tells Timothy to encourage people to "be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share." That's what makes life truly rich: not piles of money, but acts of kindness, generosity, and justice.

Is there someone in our community we walk past or ignore, like the rich man ignored Lazarus?

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

Are there ways we can use what we have: our time, talents, or treasures, to help others, especially those who might be hurting or left out?

Jesus reminds us that what we do with our hearts – and how we love others – matters far more than what we own. When we live generously, we're building a treasure in God's kingdom that lasts forever.

Let us pray:

Loving God, thank you for every gift you've given us. Help us to open our hands and hearts to share with others. Teach us to see those who are in need, and to show your love in the way we give, serve, and care. Amen.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

**Hymn:**

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

80 STF – My God, I am thine

**Readings:** Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

**Hymn:**

455 STF – All my hope on God is founded OR

249 STF – Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love

**Reflections on the readings**

*"I don't like to commit myself about heaven and hell - you see, I have friends in both places."*

Mark Twain

At first glance today's gospel passage is all about this thorny topic that Mark Twain tells us is worth avoiding - Heaven and Hell.

- Do you agree that it's a good topic to avoid?
- What are your thoughts about Heaven and Hell?

*(You may wish to open these questions up for discussion)*

Whatever your views, the things that Jesus says in this passage are at the very least controversial. There are some angles here that are tough for some people to stomach, and for those denominations that insist that every word in the Bible is "true", it can be especially problematic, not least because of the inherent contradictions that are within this passage alone.

Let's stay with this thread for a moment and look at some of the aspects of these two eternal places which Jesus points out to his audience, and of course that audience most definitely includes us.

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

We are told about the deaths of a rich man, and a beggar called Lazarus who the rich man knew well as he resided at the rich man's place, and we are told about the massive difference between the lifestyles of both men.

In an immediate twist in the tale, we are told the rich man is languishing in the torment of Hell, while Lazarus is basking in the beauty and joy of Heaven, where he is enjoying the company and comfort of none other than Father Abraham himself.

We are told there is a "great chasm" between the realms, yet despite this, the rich man can call across to Abraham and talk to him, and they can all see each other.

Now, I'm not sure what thoughts you had earlier when I asked you to ponder this, or indeed thinking about the "classic" views of Heaven and Hell that most faiths maintain, but it's very possible this description from Jesus is somewhat at odds with some of those thoughts?

One view of Heaven and Hell which it was most definitely at odds with was the views held by the Pharisees who Jesus was very much talking to and with during this exchange.

And here is the clue to what is going on here I feel.

What if this story was merely a set up by Jesus designed to ensure he had the attention of those Pharisees by making sure he said something highly controversial, to be sure they were listening. I can imagine him thinking to himself: "Now I have got your attention..."

This struck right at the heart of all they believed. They thought, and taught, that if you had money and wealth this represented righteousness, and you could rely on the assurance you would be looked after when it was all over and you could relax in an eternal heavenly realm because you have behaved well and lived life correctly. The scenario Jesus told them about with these two men was a diametrically opposite viewpoint to the views that they held.

Having challenged their world view in this shocking way he taught about what I think was the real point of the story all along. The killer blow is at the end of the passage.

In the rich man's agony he started to show some compassion towards his other family members - his other five brothers – and was concerned no longer for himself but for their fate should they continue to live as they did. How could he get the message out to them before it was too late?

Once he knew his fate was supposedly eternally determined, he then wondered if Lazarus could somehow go from where he was (in Heaven?) and convey the warning message on his behalf.

The story is filled with crazy ideas and contradictions, presumably designed to disarm, until the final point is driven home. Abraham points out the simple truth that the rest of the world – including the five brothers – have all the information they need in the teachings of "Moses and the prophets" but for some reason they are not reading and understanding well enough.

So in desperation the man suggests they will certainly sit up and listen if Lazarus visits from them from beyond the grave...

And we all sit with the echoes and the irony of the fact that the Christian faith has strived to get people to listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ... who was "raised from the dead" as the story goes... for a couple of thousand years now...

The irony of Jesus telling everyone that the people won't listen to someone who is raised from the dead is palpable and chilling given what was about to unfold in the next little while in Jerusalem

But here is a truth. As we sit here today, we are all the "five brothers". We are the object of the message in this story.

Are WE listening...?

We need to listen and get the message before it's too late.

We have the words of "Moses and the prophets". We have the precious words and teachings of Jesus himself.

Are we listening?

One of the "prophets" today has a message for us within our lectionary passages. Jeremiah brings us a story filled with hope, wrapped up in the apparent banality of a story about a field.

This field that Hanamel was trying to get his cousin Jeremiah to buy from him was, on the face of it, useless. The land it was on was under occupation by the Babylonians and the chances at that time of being able to do anything with it were slim, to say the least.

Hanamel must have been rubbing his hands at the thought he was about to sell it, and more to the point the people must have thought Jeremiah insane for going ahead with it.

But Jeremiah decided to do it. He must have been a laughing stock.

He trusted the message he was getting from God, that God would guide them to reclaim the land, and seventeen shekels of silver later the deed was done.

He believed.

He had hope and faith.

Are we hearing this message today? Are there situations where we could benefit from having a little more faith and confidence that things might turn out in a positive way, however unexpected that may seem? Do we know and trust we have a part to play in these situations?

We, like the rich man's five brothers, have the same messages of Moses and the prophets to help us on our way. To help us live a life that is fulfilling and beneficial to those we share our life with. To help us relieve any sense of "torment" we may feel in our lives. To help us reach out to those around us who may be struggling with their lives.

So today may we worry less about the timeline and domestic arrangements for any life we may experience in the future, and instead concentrate more on making the life we have, here and now, something which may offer us and those we live with something approaching peace and love.

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

55 STF – Immortal, invisible, God only wise OR

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

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

## **Prayers of intercession**

*Jesus teaches today that we all have the words of “Moses and the prophets” to help guide our lives in the right direction. We also have the teachings of Jesus from our gospels to help us in a similar way.*

*As we pray today, can I encourage you to think about the words of wisdom you have heard in your life. Those things that resonated with you simply because you knew they made sense.*

*Let those good thoughts circulate as we think about those we share our world with, and those who find themselves in challenging circumstances.*

*There will be silences during the prayers.*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom as we look out onto a world gripped by the love of power and greed. There are so many innocent people caught up in the repercussions of this, and whose lives are suffering in so many ways as a result.

*Silence*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom as we listen to the arguments and fights about the rights and wrongs of our politics. Leaders who lie and leaders who speak truth. Commentators who divide, and those who instil calm and positiveness. Help us breathe slowly and listen for truth.

*Silence*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom as we think about groups of society who are persecuted through prejudice. Help us to see the human being in everyone, regardless of how they look, how they sound, how they dress...

*Silence*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom as we look upon a planet in peril. We are sometimes overwhelmed by opinions and explanations about climate, geography and the future of our world. Help us listen for truth and common sense

*Silence*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom as we think about the tension in our close relationships. Help us celebrate those close relationships that are wholesome and loving. Help us know what next steps to take in all these differing scenarios. What can we do to heal and nurture?

*Silence*

Lord God, help us hear your wisdom when we think about the stresses and strains in our own lives. Help us to value ourselves well. Help us to be kind to our own souls. Help us to dare to know we are loved. Help us to make calm, peaceful and positive decisions about our own lives.

*Silence*

In the name of Jesus, we ask for your mercy today,

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

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



Let us give thanks, for God is good,  
Let us give thanks, for we have been richly blessed,  
Let us sing praise, for you have cared for us, O God.  
Bless these gifts, to help us change the community around us for the better, we pray,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn:**

459 STF – Captain of Israel's host, and Guide OR

696 STF – For the healing of the nations, Lord we pray with one accord

**Blessing**

May we go out today rich in kindness, generous in spirit, and full of God's love.  
May we go out, aware that your Spirit is already there, ahead of us, inviting us on, by your  
grace,

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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

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