

# twelvebaskets



## EPIPHANY 5C

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

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**Fifth Sunday After Epiphany - Year C**  
9th February 2025



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**493 STF – Come, Lord, to our souls come down OR**

**499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise OR**

**558 STF – Lord, you have come to the seashore**

Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

**Hymn:**

**60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour OR**

**88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I OR**

**503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**654 STF – The love of God comes close OR**

**293 STF – All heaven declares**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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## Call to worship

Holy Lord, be with us, in our singing, our prayers and meditation, and as we meet together bless and encourage each other.

May we become a blessing for those outside these walls, we pray.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

493 STF – Come, Lord, to our souls come down OR

499 STF – Great God, your love has called us here

## Opening Prayers

*Leader:* God of the heavens and the earth, we come to you today as clouds in the sky– drifting with the whims of the winds and moving across the wide expanse of your creation.

***All:* Help us to remember that weather is temporary,  
and that your love holds us like the blue sky sitting beyond the changing conditions  
– present and vast even when we cannot see it.**

*Leader:* When we are scared, worried or anxious about what is behind us or what is to come,

Help us to know that we are not alone and that the sun will rise again.

***All:* Help us to remember that weather is temporary,  
and that your love holds us like the blue sky sitting beyond the changing conditions  
– present and vast even when we cannot see it.**

*Leader:* When the rain pours and we see no signs of it letting up,  
Help us to seek refuge in spaces filled with your love.

***All:* Help us to remember that weather is temporary,  
and that your love holds us like the blue sky sitting beyond the changing conditions  
– present and vast even when we cannot see it.**

*Leader:* And when the sky is clear and the sun is shining,  
Help us to give thanks and sit with a truly grateful heart.

***All:* Help us to remember that weather is temporary,  
and that your love holds us like the blue sky sitting beyond the changing conditions  
– present and vast even when we cannot see it.**

God of the seas and the skies, come amongst us today,  
reminding us of your constant love and its victory always over the ever-changing nature of  
what it means to be human.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

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

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

### **All Age Talk**

Has there been a moment in your life when, suddenly, everything changed?

Perhaps it was a good thing. Perhaps it was a bad thing. Perhaps it was a bit of a strange mixture of both?

For today, I'm inviting you to think about your own life, and the big moments of change that might have happened to you. Maybe it was meeting someone who became important in your life, maybe it was the death of a loved one, maybe a particular place you visited, an encounter you had, the day you first heard a particular piece of music...

Perhaps other, less dramatic moments too: when you've found out what school you are going to, when you've moved house, when you've got a promotion, or said 'yes' to a new opportunity.

These moments can be unsettling, and they can change how we interact with the world. But they can also be exciting, and create new opportunities for us to grow and flourish.

What about your walk of faith? Do you have a moment, or a series of moments, that you can look back at where you see God at work? Where you sensed an encounter with the divine? How are you enabling those moments to shape and change you?

Today, we hear the stories of 'calling' from across both the Old and New Testaments in the Bible. What are you being called to? How are you being open to what God might want you to do with your life?

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

148 STF – Come, let us with our Lord arise OR

558 STF – Lord, you have come to the seashore

**Readings:** Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

### **Hymn:**

60 STF – My soul rejoices in God my Saviour OR

88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

### **Reflections on the readings**

*Today's words come to us from Reverend Catrin Harland-Davies. Let's listen to her reflections now:*

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

Like many others who have been ordained, the moment I remember most powerfully from my ordination is the point at which the congregation are asked, “Do you believe and trust that they are, by God’s grace, worthy to be ordained?” I felt anything but worthy, but the congregation replied, with roof-lifting gusto, “They are worthy!”

What happened in that moment, as part of a particular celebration of a specific kind of calling, represents something that is true of all Christian journeys. Were I not a good Methodist, I would be willing to place good money on the idea that very few, if any, of us feel worthy of God’s love. I imagine that most of us don’t feel worthy to be entrusted with our place in God’s mission, or worthy to be called to follow Christ.

Paul certainly doesn’t seem to have felt worthy. He’s not usually shy about proclaiming his credentials; as a good Jew, a true apostle or a hard worker for Christ, he is happy to show off his CV. But, when it comes to declaring his worthiness to be called in the first place, even he shows some reticence. “For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” Isaiah, too, encountering the glory of God and its call on his life, cries out, “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips.” And Peter, finding himself the recipient of Christ’s generous grace and a huge catch of fish, falls at Jesus’ knees and says “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!”

It’s a basic fact of life and of discipleship, that those who are called are rarely – if ever – worthy to be called. And, fundamentally, that seems to be because God calls people. Ordinary, human, fallible, frail people. When I was exploring a call to ordained ministry, a wise minister and mentor told me, “In the church, you’ll find some of the best people you’ll ever find. And you’ll find some of the worst. Because what you’ll find in the church is people.” And I have always found that to be true. Those aren’t even necessarily different categories of people; I may show my best side one day, and my worst another, because we humans are capable of great inconsistency. I can get it very right, and I can get it very wrong. I can cause great good, and I can cause great hurt. Surely only a fool would rely on me, and call me to be part of anything important. Does that resonate with you?

And yet, somehow, God has chosen us – you, me, the church. God has chosen us as wonderful, fallible, sometimes messed-up, gloriously unique individuals and communities. Not only that, but God has somehow managed to find us worthy of that call. That, I think, is what is so mind-blowing. This isn’t an unwilling, grudging consent to tag along, or permission to apply for the post, but an open, generous and wholehearted invitation to be part of something amazing!

And we have the testimony of our three unworthy invitees, that somehow worthiness was part of the deal. Isaiah experiences a ritual of forgiveness, in which his lips are touched with a live coal and his sin is removed. Then, immediately, he is invited to respond to an invitation, and allows himself to be sent out as God’s prophet. Simon Peter is reassured by Jesus, and invited to join him in his ministry – an invitation he immediately accepts, leaving everything behind to do so. And Paul says, “For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” God has invited him, and worked wonders in him, through grace. By grace, he is able to accept the invitation and allow himself to be declared worthy to participate. By grace, he is able to work hard at the task of deserving that honour.

Because that’s the second miracle. Not only does God declare him worthy of the call, but by God’s grace he is given all that he needs to become worthy of it. Where God calls, God equips, and Paul finds that he has what he needs to live up to God’s invitation and to participate in God’s mission. Not that he always gets it right, of course. There is a difference between worthiness and perfection, and a huge difference between forgiveness and

sinlessness. But that, again, is the joy of God's call. It's not just a one-off declaration of worthiness that either sticks or doesn't, so that we are either completely transformed or we're thrown back out of the missional task. Instead, it's a journey of ongoing transformation. The process of becoming more Christ-like takes a lifetime. What we are offered at the start is the strength to try, the opportunity to keep trying again, and the courage to see it through. The path is not always smooth, and nor is our progress. But we are also promised God's companionship throughout it all.

Simon Peter is an interesting example of this. He notoriously keeps getting things wrong, even up to the point of abandoning Jesus at the point of his arrest, and denying every having accepted this invitation. But getting it wrong is, for him, never the end. It's a chance to start again, to learn and grow, and to become a little more deserving of (and equipped for) the call for which he is already declared worthy.

Up to this point, I've spoken of 'the call' as if it's a one-off, once-in-a-lifetime event. For some, it may be. You may be able to point to one moment where it all began – a clear first step on a journey from which you've never looked back. You may be able to echo Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. But for others, it's much more gradual – a journey made up of a hundred new starts, missteps and wrong directions, which begins before they've even realised where they're walking. You might feel more like that. If so, perhaps you can relate to Simon Peter. In Luke's account, at least, he's already got to know Jesus before this dramatic decision to leave his boat. Jesus has been a guest in his house, has healed his mother-in-law and eaten his food. And the invitation takes place in his boat, which Jesus has borrowed as a handy pulpit. He's called precisely in the context of his daily work, among his nets, at the end of a fishing trip, and he's invited to bring his transferrable skills to the work of 'catching people'. This invitation feels like the next step in a journey of discipleship on which he's found himself. And Isaiah is, perhaps, somewhere in between. He's in the Temple, worshipping God. If you were going to encounter God anywhere, the Temple would be a good bet! Perhaps he even went there hoping and expecting to receive some affirmation of his prophetic call or some new message to proclaim. But even so, I doubt he really expected the kind of vision and call that is described in our reading.

I wonder where you are, in your journey of faith? Perhaps you're just at the stage of asking questions and wondering if it's all real. Or maybe you've been going to church all your life, and are just looking for a bit of encouragement or renewal on the way. You might be wondering what's next – is God inviting you to something new. Or perhaps you're asking yourself how you might be able to use all your skills and experience in God's service, in a changing church and world.

The answers will be different for each of us. But we journey together, in faith and in the confidence of God's grace. And we declare of one another, with the full-voiced assurance that each of us needs to hear, "They are worthy!"

- Who resonates most with you – Isaiah, Paul or Peter?
- What was the first step of faith you remember taking? Or the most recent? What will be the next?<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I OR

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Catrin Harland-Davies

## Prayers of intercession

God of grace,  
we pray for all who are walking the journey of discipleship –  
those taking a faltering first step,  
those halting or turning back,  
those running or skipping along the path,  
those pausing, or changing direction.  
We pray for your church,  
and for all the fallible souls of which it is made,  
journeying together in our frail humanity.

*[Silence]*

Give us courage when the path is rough,  
give us wisdom when the route is unclear,  
give us grace to support one another.

Merciful God,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of humility,  
we pray for all in power.  
We pray for governments and rulers,  
for those controlling the world's wealth,  
those making choices which affect the lives of millions.  
We pray for those suffering the consequences  
of the greed or selfishness of others –  
living in war, poverty or the effects of climate change,  
living in fear or oppression.

*[Silence]*

Give us courage when we encounter injustice,  
give us wisdom as we use the power we have,  
give us grace to put the needs of others first.

Merciful God,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of compassion,  
we pray for all who suffer,  
in body, mind or spirit.  
We hold before you those who are far away from the place they call home,  
those facing their own death, or that of a loved one,  
those who are lonely, isolated or bereaved,  
those who are ashamed of their past or fearful of their future.

*[Silence]*

Give us courage to embrace the stranger,  
give us wisdom to recognise where we may be the answer to a prayer,  
give us grace to speak love where there is emptiness.

Merciful God,  
**hear our prayer.**  
Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Catrin Harland-Davies

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

We each have much to give, Lord God, help us to recognise our gifts and use them for your glory.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

## **Hymn:**

654 STF – The love of God comes close OR

293 STF – All heaven declares

## **Blessing**

Sent by the Lord am I! And out into your world we go, O God.

May you go in peace, transformed by God's Spirit within you, to hear the call and respond simply: 'here I am, send me'.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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

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