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ORDINARY 26A

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes while churches are closed.

A Free resource part funded by



as well as donations from Individuals, churches and **twelvebaskets**.

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For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Call to worship

Father, Son and Spirit,
Holy Trinity,
present wherever hearts
are open and souls laid bare,
bless those gathered here today
for worship, fellowship and prayer.

Bind our hearts as one
as you are one—
Father, Son and Spirit,
Holy Trinity.

Amen.¹

Hymn: 455 STF – All my hope on God is founded - [YouTube](#)

We will now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Exodus 17:1-7 - [Click for Reading](#)

Video meditation - [Download from Worship Cloud](#)

[If you have the option, play the video Water from the Rock. The full text from the video is below: if you are not able to use the video, you could read these words out as a kind of meditation].

Can you remember a time you've been thirsty? Really, really thirsty? Parched.

Desperate for water.

How does it feel?

It's not pleasant, is it?

In the desert, we are thirsty, Lord.

Can you remember a time when you've really appreciated a drink? Perhaps after a long day, perhaps in the hot sun, perhaps after going for a run or doing some exercise.

How does it feel?

¹ Call to worship by Tim Baker

The cool, refreshing feeling of water on a dry, parched tongue. The way a long drink gives you energy and renews your strength.

In the desert, we are thirsty, Lord. Imagine a rock. A large, hard, dry rock.

It's not really the place we'd expect water to come from, is it? It doesn't look much like a tap.

Then, in this story from Exodus, the rock becomes the place where thirst is quenched, where water flows, where refreshment reaches the people of Israel.

In the desert, Lord, you provide water.

Has this happened for you?

Have you ever found something you needed in an unexpected place?

Have you, in the midst of a really difficult time, found someone being extra-especially kind to you?

In the hard times, God is still with us, God is looking out for us.

In the desert, Lord, you provide water.

May your refreshing, cooling, inspiring water flow through me today, Lord God.

Amen.²

A prayer of praise

Living God, you are the most high,
We praise you in the desert places of life,
And we praise you when we are richly fed and all our needs our met.

We praise you in this storm,
and when all is calm around us.

Living God, most high, we praise you.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

Here I am, most high God.
Here I am, present to you, open to you,
Knowing that there is much I wish I had done,
And much I wish I hadn't.

This day, in this moment, I am sorry.

² Reflection written by Tim Baker

And even as I say the words, O God,
I know I am already forgiven, loved, set free.

To you be all the thanks and praise,
Most high God.

Amen.³

Readings: **Matthew 21:23-32** - [Click for Reading](#)

Philippians 2:1-13 - [Click for Reading](#)

Reflections on the readings:

So often it's hard to do the right thing, isn't it?

It always seems to take energy and effort, a commitment beyond what might be involved in just watching one more episode of our favourite show or breaking out of our comfortable patterns and rhythms of life. Most of the time, we want to do the right thing, but how?

How do we discern what is the next best step forward?

How do we discover the direction of travel?

What about all the obstacles and difficulties in the way?

Where will the energy come from?

Are we prone to be a risk taker or are we more risk adverse?

Every time we say the Lord's Prayer we say your kingdom come, your will be done...but I'm really busy this week, so can we look at finding a date next month when I might have a few hours to help out?

We say the words, but how easy is it to postpone Kingdom-living?

In today's Gospel reading, we read this classic account of Jesus going toe-to-toe with the chief priests and elders – as he did several times during his ministry. They are trying to trap him with clever words and get him to say the wrong thing. I wonder, however, if many of us don't have a dialogue rather like this one going on inside our heads all the time as we wrestle with what it means to be a person of faith?

Are we constantly challenging our own motives? Do you hear the little voices of doubt, challenge and discomfort piping up every now and then to hold us back, to keep us from taking that next best step forward?

Are we caught in this trap that Jesus describes in the parable of the two sons: sometimes saying good things or having good intentions and doing nothing about it,

³ Prayers by Tim Baker

and sometimes the opposite? Do we talk a good game, then drift back into our old, selfish, self-centred ways?

Jesus is calling us out today, in the way he so often called out the religious leaders and super religious-types of his day. Can we respond to the challenge?

As Paul puts it in Philippians:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

May it be so, and let it begin with me.

The resources around A Methodist Way of Life offer us a helpful way to wrestle with our inner-Pharisee, with those voices of doubt and selfishness. Do you have a close friend or small, trusted group that you could introduce to the Methodist Way of Life? The commitment to daily actions and the questions of spiritual accountability help us to seek the clarity about what our next step is, and the courage to take it.

[Find out more and download some of the resources here](#)

God out in peace, surrounded by love, emboldened by the Spirit, and take the next step of faith.

Amen.⁴

Intercessions

God of all grace, I come to you in prayer again.

God of all hope, I pray today for a world in need, and world full of stories of despair and pain.

God of all love, show me what is mine to do amongst all the uncertainty and fear in my community, my nation and my world.

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

As the Coronavirus rumbles on and continues to dominate our news agenda and affect much of our way of life, I pray for all those most affected, most isolated, most vulnerable. As support systems, charities, churches and infrastructures all feel the pressure of this prolonged time of lockdown, show me how I can be a force for love.

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

As many of the other injustices and inequalities of our world are not receiving the attention and focus that they should be (because we continue to battle the Coronavirus), I pray for all who are victims of injustice. Show me how I can bring hope, bring change, demonstrate your love.

⁴ Reflection written by Wayne Grewcock and Tim Baker

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

Today, I pray, where, O Lord, are you calling me?

Amen.⁵

Hymn: 41 STF – Blessed be your name - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go in the name of Jesus, who stands amongst us and changes the story for humanity.

Go in the name of the Creator, who breathes life into all creation, even today.

Go in the name of the Spirit, moving alongside and within you, this day and forever.

Amen.⁶

⁵ Prayers written by Tim Baker

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker