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ORDINARY 18B

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A short act of worship for use in peoples homes

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Call to worship

We are the people of The Word,
And we gather this day, to hear words, to pray in words,
And to connect with The Word who is all around us.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen.¹

Hymn: 28 STF – Jesus calls us here to meet him - [YouTube](#)

Opening Prayers

God of all wisdom, we give you thanks for the times in which we have experienced your wisdom in our lives.

Let us be still and gather ourselves in the space.

Let us seek to open ourselves out to connect with the Spirit of God who comes amongst us, by some mystery.

[Pause]

Forgive us for those times where we've failed to recognise your presence and give us the courage to walk away from situations that prevent us and others from receiving all that you have to offer us.

Open our eyes to new and exciting ways of being so that all who we encounter, will experience your wisdom and love.

Amen.²

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a – [Click for reading](#)

John 6:24-35 – [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the reading

[You might like to use the video version of this spoken word piece by Becki Stennett – <https://theworshipcloud.com/view/store/twelvebaskets-vine-video-putting-ourselves-in-the-story-becki-stennett-the-vine-video-1st-august-2021>].

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Ramona Samuel

[Hold a Bible]

When we pick up this book,
Let it open in hands,
Do we expect only to find ancient people in far off lands?
Is it ancient wisdom, okay for a time long past,
Quaint in prose and rhyme,
Or does this book – this word –
Live in ways we can't always know?
Does it give to us new life, these words written long ago?

If these words are only ancient,
Consigned to a past long dead,
We ought perhaps leave them there,
Or we could delve into it instead, and see that
All humanity is written on these pages,
The story of God at work throughout the ages
And recognise there are no new stories really,
But tales repeated often of God's glory,
And our attempt to worship, follow,
Sometimes successfully, and sometimes less so.

When we read the story of King David,
The rich man, the poor man and the prophet named Nathan,
Do we leave it there in history and declare ourselves
By some mystery – far beyond, above,
Such abuse of power and ignorance of the law of love?

Or are we prepared to see ourselves in the writing,
As abusers of power, willing to let others suffer in the fighting,
To sweep our ill behaviours under the rug.
Or to see ourselves – or others – as the abused who becomes a mother,
In the line of Jesus:
Yes! But so vulnerable nonetheless.
As we look into the story and consider it a mirror,
Do we wonder how David treated her, how we treat others like her?

David couldn't see himself within the story,
Only sat a while, basking in his kingly glory,
Until his eyes were opened and he saw the truth in the allegory,
Saw his behaviour was so terrible, awful
Unlawful in the eyes of God, who surely gave David all his might
And authority, and who amazingly
Forgave him so that David might be the king from whose line the Saviour would
come.

If we leave the holy tales to simply fade and pale,
Into a history we've moved on from,
Then we have forgotten that this work of ages,
Is our story too, splashed across the pages.
It's the story of a people trying to get things right

And being reminded, sometimes, that they might
Just have strayed, forgotten God, hurt others, not lived as sisters and brothers
As they should.

And for us, who live by the Word of God, there is no new story
There is us, and God, and world which needs to see God's glory,
And just might see God's glory if
When we pick up this book, let it open in our hands,
We begin to understand that we are in these stories
We are on these pages
Written in long-past ages.

Their story. Our story.
Our past and future glory,
In a Word which lives,
And longs for conversation with us,
Speaking to us today,
If only we can let it.³

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray.

God of all grace, we bring you ourselves.
We bring you our lives, as they currently are, with all that is broken and wrong, but
also much to be grateful for and to celebrate.
Use us, O God, to build your kingdom, to seek peace in our world, to build
communities of love.

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we bring you our churches,
Caught in this strange 'in between' time, as we reflect on the painful experiences of
lockdown, and how we can best serve our communities and our world over this
summer and into the year ahead.
Show us how to create safe spaces, spaces where people can grieve, can find
healing, can meet with you and be transformed by your grace.

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we bring you our nation,
We bring to you all who have been working overtime to see us through this time of
crisis, and all who will need to work overtime as we seek to rebuild our communities,
our economy, our relationships and our livelihoods.
We bring you our leaders and all who must face difficult decisions or face up to
inadequacies in our systems exposed by the process of lockdown and pandemic.
Show us how to be a people of grace.

³ Reflection written by Becki Stennett

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we pray for our world.

As we look out on a global pandemic, and a world in which we have gone backwards in tackling poverty and reaching those most in need during this time of pandemic, which has affected the most vulnerable in our world more than many of us.

As we rebuild, show us how to build a world in which every person's needs are provided for. A world where every person's potential is fulfilled.

May we follow in your way, O God.

May I follow in your way, O God.

Show me what is mine to do.

We bring this, and all our prayers, in Jesus' name,

Amen.⁴

Hymn: 239 STF – Sent by the Lord am I - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Arise from this place and go out into the world.

A world of so much division and pain,

A world crying out for love,

You, each one of you, can be that bit of love for someone this week.

Amen.⁵

⁴ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

⁵ Additional prayers by Tim Baker