

Proper 16 | Ordinary 21

August 21st 2022

The Rev’d Dr Adam Scott

Call to Worship

The Lord said to me, “I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you to be a prophet to the nations.” *Jeremiah 1: 4 – 5*

Prayers of Approach

We begin our service today in silence …

Loving Creator, you have made each of us in your image,

and like Jeremiah, you called each of us into your service,

so whatever our strengths or weaknesses,

our triumphs or disappointments,

our joys or sorrows,

we come to worship you,

for you created us,

and accept us as we are. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness

In silence, and in the presence of the Spirit, we reflect on our lives:

I invite you to place one of your hands on your lap and to clench it into a fist,

if this is uncomfortable for you, or not possible, you may like to imagine a knotted cord in your mind’s eye.

In a short time of silence, draw to mind those things you are holding on to

maybe feelings of guilt, shame, hurt or anger, imagine these things are in your fist or tied up in the knot.

*Silence*

As we pray the following prayer together, I invite you to open your clenched fist as a prayer action, or in your mind’s eye unravel the knot releasing them to God:

**Merciful Creator,**

**remind us that we are loved,**

**and transformed by love.**

**Help us to let go of the hurt we have caused others,**

**and enable us to forgive those who have hurt us,**

**so that we can flourish. Amen.**

Jesus delighted in setting people free,

may you know forgiveness for the hurt you have caused,

and be able to forgive the hurt you have experienced. **Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination

Spirit of fire,

illuminate for us so we may see the Word within the word,

hear the liberating message of the Gospel

and respond to its eternal call. **Amen.**

Readings

*Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10* | *St Luke 13: 10 – 17*

Notes on the Readings

The Jeremiah reading offers us a window into the call of the prophet Jeremiah. He is a fascinating figure who, like Moses, displays a sense of trepidation at being called into God’s service. God responded to Jeremiah’s lack of confidence by reassuring him that he will be empowered to fulfil his ministry. This is something Jeremiah needed, as his ministry took place in a tumultuous time of upheaval, and led him to receive the nickname ‘the weeping prophet’. There are many avenues for a sermon from this text:

* You could preach about call, and that while we may not feel able to fulfil the demands of following Jesus, we are ultimately held and supported in this through the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, and within the community of faith.
* You could focus on Jeremiah protesting about his age, although be careful here, because he probably was not a child. There is potentially a sermon about those who fear they do not have enough life or faith experience to follow God’s call, but these are not reasons to step back from God.
* There is perhaps a sermon which could focus on verse 9 and 10, especially looking at how we might contextualise God telling Jeremiah that ‘… authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant’. You will need a good commentary for this sermon, but you could explore the place of people of faith in the world.

The Gospel reading takes place as Jesus is travelling to Jerusalem, and is found alongside passages that relate to the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:10 – 17:10). These passages include some well-known parables, healing stories and teachings of Jesus which suggest God’s Kingdom includes those who are seen as outcasts. It is a good idea to read today’s reading alongside verses 18 – 21, as they remind us that the story of the woman being healed is about God’s expansive and expanding Kingdom rule. Here are some starting points for sermons:

* It is possible to take a story telling approach to this passage, and work slowly through the passage unfolding the nature of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leader in the synagogue. My reading of the conflict is that the religious leader does not think Jesus is respecting the law, especially the commandment of keeping the Sabbath holy by not working. However, an overfocus on this commandment means the religious leader misses the Kingdom of God in his midst. We also need to be careful of stereotyping or dismissing ‘the Law’ here, and remember that Jesus argues with the religious leader by quoting the Law.
* You could preach a sermon that relates to the place of disabled people in our church. It would be possible for a disabled person to read this passage and wonder if they need to be healed. It is important that we do not make parts of the scriptures prescriptive when they need to be descriptive. Instead, we could ask, what might it look like for disabled people to be fully included in our church communities, and in light of this, how do we need to make our communities more accessible?
* Another sermon idea could include an exploration of our understanding of the place of healing in the Church today.

An Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God:

Source of all life,

Source of all love,

Creation within our past and our future,

Mother and Father of all that’s to be.

We believe in God:

Christ of our history,

link with eternity,

one with our humanness,

revealing our hopefulness,

traveller before us, the sign of the way.

We believe in God:

Spirit of newness,

Spirit of power,

wisdom and wonder,

mystery and miracle,

God moves in freedom,

transforming the earth.

We believe in the Church:

born of our struggles,

open to changes,

cantered in loving

and moving and growing,

heart of the community turned to the world. **Amen.**

 *Mauri – Inclusive Creed*

*(From* [*https://www.thomasmorecenter.org/resources/prayers/mauri-inclusive-creed/*](https://www.thomasmorecenter.org/resources/prayers/mauri-inclusive-creed/)*)*

Offertory

Let us pray for these gifts, and dedicate them to God’s work:

Loving God, you give us many gifts.

We offer you the gift of this money,

we remember that you told us not to love or trust in money,

so may this money be a symbol of the greater gift of our lives

and be used as a tool to build your community of liberation and love in this place. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

I will pray a short prayer and leave some silence for you to add your own prayer in the privacy of your heart, and then we will say the following response together:

When you offer change God, **give us courage to accept it.**

We pray for your world,

remembering all those who are working for greater inclusion and accessibility,

grant them strength, wisdom and the resources they need to bring about change.

*Silence*

When you offer change God, **give us courage to accept it.**

We pray for your Church,

remembering the many communities who care for those overlooked by others,

may they remain places of love, support and diversity.

*Silence*

When you offer change God, **give us courage to accept it.**

We pray for ourselves,

remembering those we know who experience exclusion and isolation,

help them to see change they need in the world around them.

*Silence*

When you offer change God, **give us courage to accept it.**

We join our prayers together in the prayer Jesus taught his followers:

Our Father,

Blessing

The blessing of God in Holy Trinity,

be with you,

those you love

and even your enemies.

Now and forevermore. Amen.

Hymn Suggestions

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| **Hymn** | **RS** | **StF** | **CH4** | **MP** |
| Let us build a house where love can dwell |  | 409 | 198 |  |
| Come all you people (Uyai mose) |  | 22 | 757 |  |
| Spirit of God, unseen as the wind |  | 394 | 600 |  |
| My life flows on in endless song |  |  | 565 |  |
| Ubi caritas et amor | 402 | 783 | 801 |  |
| Tell out my soul | 740 | 186 | 286 | 631 |
| *Key:* *RS = Rejoice and Sing, StF = Singing the Faith, CH4 = Church Hymnary 4, MP = Mission Praise* |