

### Call to Worship

The world says there is not enough, the world says there is too much need.  
The world has too many problems, there is too much to be done.  
The world is too divided, there are too many wars and too much violence.  
There is just too much to think about, it would be easier to think about  
ourselves. Christ calls us into the ways of love. Christ calls us to love others as  
we love ourselves, and in Christ's love, we know that faith surpasses all  
understanding. We are not alone. Let us worship Christ together on this  
journey of faith. Amen

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, this is the day that you have made, and we thank you for it.  
We thank you for all the good things that surround us - Our homes, Our  
families, Our friends, Our church, The vastness of the universe, The beauty of  
the natural world, The sights and sounds of daily life. **For all you have given,  
we praise and worship you.** We thank you for this day set aside, So that we  
might praise you, So that we might bring our lives before you, And consecrate  
every day to your service. **For all you have given, we praise and worship you.**  
Amen

### Prayer of Confession:

Loving God, Forgive us that we have sometimes lost sight of your great love,  
That we have been forgetful of you, Greeting some days with indifference,  
Even reluctance, Instead of welcoming them as your gift.  
We have failed to count our blessings Or appreciate how fortunate we really  
are. We have even made this time of worship A duty or tradition, rather than a  
privilege. For all our faults, forgive us, Lord. Loving God, We know we have  
failed you in much – We have not given you due recognition, We have not  
shown thanksgiving in our hearts, We have not lived as your people. For all our  
faults, forgive us, Lord. (We pause for a few moments to bring the confession  
of our hearts to God). So Lord with your help, Through the grace of Christ, And

in the Power of the Holy Spirit, We are enabled to live more faithfully As your servants, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Lord's Prayer:**

**And Now we say together the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples: -**

Our father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. For ever and ever. Amen.

### **Readings**

**Extracts from John 6: 1 – 15:** When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

### **Sermon**

Do any of you watch the Mid-somer Murder show on TV or enjoy a good murder Mystery book, by writers like Agatha Christie or Ruth Rendall? When you watch those shows and read those books you learn quickly that what may look like a insignificant details, may actually be the key clue to uncovering who the murderer really is. The good writers put all kinds of detail, designed to lead the eye and mind in several different directions, nothing is there by accident, but somewhere in the middle is the sign that, if only you had been thinking hard about it at the time, will tell you the secret of the story. I think it is fair to say that in John's Gospel, nothing is there by accident but the details are not

there to lead you up blind alleys, to draw you off the sent, but conversely they are there to encourage us and guide us to the truth and majesty of God's love, revealed and redeemed through Christ Jesus.

So a little context to this reading from John's Gospel, we have to remember that at this point Jesus has been performing miracles and teaching to large crowds, but he wants to pull the disciples away, to give them more teaching, but the crowds have other ideas, they have a thirst for the miracles that he has performed and want more. Ultimately they wonder if Jesus could be a prophet, the Messiah, the promised one. Remember in occupied Israel, the people craved to be free of their Roman rulers, and the Old Testament paved the way of hope, looking towards one who would free all people from slavery, oppression and despair. Our passage tells us that it was close to Passover. Passover – when the Jews celebrate liberation from Egyptian domination. The great Prophet Moses had told them that one day there would come a prophet like him. Maybe this miracle worker was the prophet Moses wrote about. Maybe they'd finally be free of the Romans! But it's getting late. And no one has food. And there are no supermarkets or fast food restaurants to stop in. As a matter of fact, the crowd is bigger than most villages nearby. They wouldn't have resources to feed that many extra people.

Jesus has set up the context. It is Passover time. Now the hungry masses need to be fed like God fed them at Moses' request when they were in the wilderness. Jesus is gearing up for the punch line, to see if the disciples have started to understand what he's been teaching. Jesus knows what he's going to do. And he knows He can do it. but do the disciples get it? Jesus turns and asks the disciples. In the other gospels, the disciples recommend that Jesus send the people away to find their own food. Now there's a solution. Walk away from the entire predicament. "Not my problem. They brought it on themselves when they didn't pack a lunch. Send them away, Let's get back to that special teaching you had in mind." Jesus didn't accept that proposal. That wasn't His plan. Jesus turns and asks the disciples. Phillip sees the enormity, the impossibility of the task. It would take more than 6 months' wages to buy enough bread to give them a little, let alone actually FEED them– and that's assuming they could even find that much to buy. Phillip sees all the reasons it won't work and starts listing them. He laughs at the plan. Andrew doesn't understand either, but he trusts Jesus to know what's going on. So, he says, here's a kid with his lunch. Just enough for the one child. "what is that among

so many?” Maybe he was discouraged, maybe he was hopeful, maybe he was daring Jesus; we don’t know. But Andrew chose to give the information to Jesus to see what he would do with it. *NOW* Jesus acts. You could say that, Jesus could have done it without the child’s lunch. God, throughout history has worked primarily through people. Even parting the Red Sea, God had Moses hold up his staff. God doesn’t do all the work while we sit back and watch. He expects us to play our part, to make our contribution. And for me that’s the core of the message for today.

It could be argued that we are guilty of doing that in the church today, we think too often that the what we are called to do, “as church”, is to continue in the ways that they have always be done, even though the world we find ourselves in now, is very different. I think we have quit listening to God, and we border on working on old instructions. It is very easy for us to fall into the trap that God calls our church, here in Dorset South and West Circuit, to be just like the churches down the road, but we need to remember that God calls different churches, different people to have different jobs and roles within the kingdom.

**Everything we have, and everything we are belongs to God.** He has a plan to use you, your life, this church, but he asks for your willing contribution. Sometimes we withhold our contribution because we fear it is so little. Look back at our story, Barley loaves and fishes –a poor boy’s box lunch. And look what Jesus did with that! So, instead of complaining about what we do not have, or using it as an excuse for not following God’s plan, we need to give thanks to God for what we do have, and God will make it go farther; just like those barley loaves and fishes. If we know the all-powerful God loves us and wants the best for us, we don’t need to protect our own interests. Sometimes it hard, but still, as Christians, we place our trust: our lives, our talents and our money in the hands of a God who loves and cares for us. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we can let go of our own agendas and get on board with God’s plan to be the people and the church He wants us to be. All the different gifts and skills needed to accomplish God’s plans for our church are here in Dorset South and West Circuit. But God leaves it to us whether we will bring them forward. God knows there’s not enough in what we bring to accomplish his plan, but God will multiply our gifts to fulfill his plans. Look what he can do with 5 loaves and 2 fishes, or with a guitar and a brain tumor, and who on earth knows what he will do with your gifts. Amen.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*Responsive Prayer:*

Lord you are the Way, **Lead us to your kingdom**

Father we pray for people who are facing a door marked 'push', but are unable to push because they have no strength left, or courage or hope . . .

We pray for people who are facing a door marked 'Private', and feeling they're always left outside, ignored, rejected or unnoticed . . .

Lord you are the Way, **Lead us to your kingdom**

We pray for people facing a door marked 'staff only' but are unable to get a job because they've tried for hundreds of jobs and now have no confidence left . . .

We pray for people facing a door that says 'automatic' but whose experience is anything but that; they've had to fight for everything they've got . . . Lord you are the Way, **Lead us to your kingdom**

We pray for people facing a door marked 'changing rooms', wondering if they've got to change to be acceptable, and what the rules are, and who makes them . . . Gracious God, you are the way through many doors into a bigger place and a more sacred world. As we and others stand before many different doors throughout our lives, give us the confidence to knock, to enter, and to find freedom – in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## **Blessing**

Go from this place, Enriched by the abundant love of God, Nourished by the selfless care of Jesus Christ, and Strengthened by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. The Blessing of God, Father Son and Spirit, be with you all, with those you love, and those you are called to love, now in the name of Christ. Amen