



# spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 56

pentecost 12 to reign of christ

31 august to 23 november 2025

sample

A resource with a Scottish flavour for  
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,  
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

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# introduction

Welcome to the final issue in a series of eight issues of Spill the Beans through which we have taken an alternative journey through the Scripture over a two year period. Having spent the previous year with The Women's Lectionary, and not at the beginning point of either the Revised Common Lectionary or the Narrative Lectionary, this has been an opportunity for thinking about a different way to engage the Scripture with a contemporary setting.

## Word And World Lectionary

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team took time out to consider the way forward and with enthusiasm embarked on creating our own two year lectionary. We had past experience with our "Path Less Travelled" lectionary in 2018-19 which was inspired by user feedback.

This time we decided to deliberately and methodically to engage Word and World using the device of special days and themes. For instance, using United Nations' focus days, or saints days, or particular festivals. We have shaped these into short thematic series. We would encourage engagement both with the Scriptural texts for each day and to use this as an opportunity for your congregation to engage with some of the international themes that arise.

This is a different approach for us and we hope it will be inspiring to you in your worship as we pray it will be for us as we lead worship in our own settings.

We have decided to keep the format for the layout of the issues as we have used in the past year, and to encourage the development of intergenerational worship.

See [pages 4-6](#) for what we plan to do next.

## Intergenerational Worship

Spill the Beans has always been rooted in the power of story telling. Story binds generations together. In that shared bond of story lies the creative space for building relationships between generations. Using different ways to engage with the story recognises the variety amongst us all: some learn by listening, others by doing, others by creating. All are valuable and a part of our shared worship of God.

We are encouraging you to experiment as we will be doing with ways to worship intergenerationally in an authentic and inclusive manner. To that end we are still providing a rich variety of resources but grouped by how they help us **'tell the story'**, **'explore the story'**, and **'live the story'**. Mix and match, rewrite, contextualise for your own setting, try something different, and have fun with it! Please do give us feedback.

There are many resources online to help think more deeply about intergenerational worship. A simple but very helpful summary is provided by the Methodist Church, copied below.

### Intergenerational worship IS about:

- **building relationships**—offering a key time for people to get to know each other better and build a sense of connection;
- **a time of worship and learning that is offered in a simplified and participatory way**—simple does not mean shallow; rather it enables everyone to contribute and receive in a meaningful and appropriate way;
- **providing an inclusive experience and a sense of belonging**—helping everyone of all abilities to feel part of the body of Christ, whatever their experience;
- **being a bridge**—not only between ages but also for those who are exploring what being part of a church means. This relaxed service style can provide a comfortable place for some to discover more about Christianity;
- **encouragement, nurture and inclusiveness**—it is a means by which faith can grow and, in turn, inform life-making or life-changing decisions;
- **exploring vocation**—an opportunity to discover and develop gifts and calling.

### Intergenerational worship is NOT about:

- limiting the richness of resources used;
- oversimplifying the message or adding a children's talk into the 'usual' service;
- unstructured and chaotic worship;
- children having token responsibilities for roles and participation;
- limiting potential to explore faith and discipleship together;
- nuclear families exclusively worshipping together.

## Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

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Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

# the team

If you would like to find out how you could be part of the team, please contact either Roddy or Peter (see previous page).

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## Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

|      |                                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------|
| ATAS | All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need |
| CG   | Common Ground                           |
| CH4  | Church Hymnary, 4th Edition             |
| GTG  | Glory To God: The Presbyterian Hymnal   |
| GWA  | God Welcomes All (Supplement to CH4)    |
| JP   | Junior Praise                           |
| MP   | Complete Mission Praise                 |
| STF  | Singing The Faith                       |
| WGP  | Wild Goose Publications                 |



# lukan lectionary

## Journeying With The Doctor

This issue is the final issue in our Word and World lectionary cycle. It has been a cycle that the Spill the Beans Resource Team have enjoyed putting together and using in our own churches and we hope that it has been stimulating in your own settings too.

What to do next? The team have given this considerable thought and have decided that we would spend a whole year in one of the gospels, working our way through the whole of the text. For this we have chosen Luke's gospel. In addition to the primary texts from the gospel we also have support texts.

It is not possible just to work our way through the gospel chronologically, as there are inevitably some diversions at different points in the year to align with the liturgical calendar. So we have tried to approach this a little differently with some major themes that we will explore: the beginning birth narrative, the road to Golgotha, Holy Week and the Passion, and finally Jesus' life and ministry. We are going to be reading every verse of the gospel during the year.



And we are not going to stop there... we have now completed a plan for the second year when the primary focus will be on The Acts of the Apostles, Luke's sequel. For this book we have tried to follow chronologically the events as Luke records them as much as possible. Again, we will be reading every verse of Acts over the course of the year.

You can find the complete plan for both years in the following table.

Come join us on this journey with the good Doctor Luke.

| Date                                               | Liturgical      | Primary Text          | Support Text           | Notes                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 1: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE</b> |                 |                       |                        |                                                                     |
| <b>The Beginning</b>                               |                 |                       |                        |                                                                     |
| 30 Nov 25                                          | Advent 1        | Luke 1:1-4            | Joshua 22:4-6          | The Setup; The Lord's Commandment                                   |
| 7 Dec 25                                           | Advent 2        | Luke 1:5-38           | Isaiah 9:2-7           | Births foretold; People walking in darkness                         |
| 14 Dec 25                                          | Advent 3        | Luke 1:39-56          | Psalms 146             | The Magnificat; Praise for God's help                               |
| 21 Dec 25                                          | Advent 4        | Luke 1:57-80          | Isaiah 40:1-9          | John the Baptist's birth; God's people are comforted                |
| 25 Dec 25                                          | Christmas Day   | Luke 2:1-20           | Micah 5:2-5            | Jesus' birth; Ruler from Bethlehem                                  |
| 28 Dec 25                                          | Christmas 1     | Luke 2:21-40          | 1 Samuel 1:19-28       | Jesus presented; Samuel's dedication                                |
| 4 Jan 26                                           | Christmas 2     | Luke 2:41-52          | 1 Samuel 2:18-21       | Jesus as a boy; Samuel growing up in God's presence                 |
| <b>The Road To Golgotha</b>                        |                 |                       |                        |                                                                     |
| 11 Jan 26                                          | Epiphany 1      | Luke 19:45-20:8       | Proverbs 26:4-5        | Jesus back in the Temple; Fools and folly                           |
| 18 Jan 26                                          | Epiphany 2      | Luke 17:22-37         | Genesis 19:15-29       | Jesus foretells death/resurrection; Sodom & Gomorrah                |
| 25 Jan 26                                          | Epiphany 3      | Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17 | Exodus 34:21           | Jesus breaking Sabbath taboos; Sabbath renewal                      |
| 1 Feb 26                                           | Epiphany 4      | Luke 11:14-23         | Acts 28:23-28          | Jesus causing division; Paul preaching in Rome                      |
| 8 Feb 26                                           | Epiphany 5      | Luke 11:29-54         | Jonah 3:1-10           | Signs from Jonah with Jesus' critique; Nineveh conversion           |
| 15 Feb 26                                          | Transfiguration | Luke 9:21-36,44-45    | Exodus 34:29-35        | Jesus foretells and transfiguration; Moses beams                    |
| 22 Feb 26                                          | Lent 1          | Luke 12:49-56         | Micah 7:1-7            | Households divided and repentance; People corrupted                 |
| 1 Mar 26                                           | Lent 2          | Luke 15:1-10          | Ezekiel 34:11-16       | Parables of the shepherd/woman; The true shepherd                   |
| 8 Mar 26                                           | Lent 3          | Luke 18:31-34         | Luke 13:1-9; 21:29-33  | Third foretelling of death/resurrection; On fig trees               |
| 15 Mar 26                                          | Lent 4          | Luke 20:9-19          | Isaiah 5:1-7           | Parable of the vineyard; Song of the unfruitful vineyard            |
| 22 Mar 26                                          | Lent 5          | Luke 20:20-26         | Acts 17:1-9            | Taxes and authority; Uproar in Thessalonica                         |
| 29 Mar 26                                          | Palms/Passion   | Luke 19:28-44         | Zechariah 9:8-12       | Entrance to Jerusalem; A coming ruler                               |
| <b>The Passion (Holy Week)</b>                     |                 |                       |                        |                                                                     |
| 30 Mar 26                                          | Monday          | Luke 20:27-21:4       | Deuteronomy 25:5-10    | Questions about resurrection and widow's mite; Levirate marriage    |
| 31 Mar 26                                          | Tuesday         | Luke 21:5-28          | Revelation 6:1-17      | Mini-apocalypse; The seven seals                                    |
| 1 Apr 26                                           | Wednesday       | Luke 21:34-22:6       | John 20:45-53          | Be on your guard and Judas' plans; Plotting amongst elites          |
| 2 Apr 26                                           | Maundy Thursday | Luke 22:7-30          | Deuteronomy 16:1-8     | Preparation of Passover, institution, disputes; Passover legislated |
| 3 Apr 26                                           | Good Friday     | Luke 23:1-49          | Psalms 31:3-5,9-14     | Execution; Prayer for deliverance                                   |
| 4 Apr 26                                           | Holy Saturday   | Luke 23:50-56         | 2 Chronicles 16:13-14  | Burial of Jesus; Example of burial (Asa)                            |
| 5 Apr 26                                           | Easter Day      | Luke 24:1-12          | Psalms 126             | At the tomb; Song of joy                                            |
| 12 Apr 26                                          | Easter 2        | Luke 24:13-35         | 1 Corinthians 10:12-17 | Road to Emmaus; Partake of the one bread                            |

Note that the double-lined breaks in the table delineate between issues.



| Date                                                     | Liturgical            | Primary Text               | Support Text                       | Notes                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The Ministry Of Jesus</b>                             |                       |                            |                                    |                                                                    |
| 19 Apr 26                                                | Easter 3              | Luke 3:1-22(23-38)         | Isaiah 42:1-9                      | John with Jesus' baptism; The Servant and light to the nations     |
| 26 Apr 26                                                | Easter 4              | Luke 4:1-15                | Deuteronomy 8:1-6                  | Jesus' temptation; Lessons from 40 years in the wilderness         |
| 3 May 26                                                 | Easter 5              | Luke 4:14-30               | 1 Kings 17:8-16                    | Jesus preaching in the synagogue; Elijah and widow of Zarephath    |
| 10 May 26                                                | Easter 6              | Luke 4:31-44               | 2 Corinthians 5:11-15              | Jesus healing and teaching; Ministry of reconciliation             |
| 17 May 26                                                | Easter 7              | Luke 5:1-11,27-28; 6:12-17 | Acts 6:1-7                         | Jesus calling disciples; The community leadership grows            |
| 24 May 26                                                | Pentecost             | Luke 5:12-16               | Acts 2:1-11                        | Jesus heals a leper; Pentecost spirit visits                       |
| 31 May 26                                                | Pentecost 1 (Trinity) | Luke 5:17-26               | Leviticus 24:10-16                 | Healing of paralysed man; An example of blasphemy punished         |
| 7 Jun 26                                                 | Pentecost 2           | Luke 5:29-39               | Isaiah 58:3-9a                     | Fasting / old and new; On true fasting                             |
| 14 Jun 26                                                | Pentecost 3           | Luke 6:17-31               | Psalms 63                          | Blessings and woes; Comfort in God's presence                      |
| 21 Jun 26                                                | Pentecost 4           | Luke 6:27-42               | Acts 9:9-20                        | Do not judge / speck and plank; Saul/Paul transformed              |
| 28 Jun 26                                                | Pentecost 5           | Luke 6:43-49               | James 1:2-11,22-25                 | Good/bad fruit/foundations; Poverty and riches, be a doer          |
| 5 Jul 26                                                 | Pentecost 6           | Luke 7:1-23                | Acts 10:1-35                       | Healing of centurion, raising of widow's son; Peter and centurion  |
| 12 Jul 26                                                | Pentecost 7           | Luke 7:24-50; 8:1-4        | Exodus 30:17-21                    | Jesus deals with question, anointing; The bronze basin             |
| 19 Jul 26                                                | Pentecost 8           | Luke 8:4-21                | Galatians 5:22-26                  | Parable of sower and explanation; Fruit of the Spirit              |
| 26 Jul 26                                                | Pentecost 9           | Luke 8:22-56               | Psalms 107:23-32                   | Commanding the waters / healings; The Lord's control over chaos    |
| 2 Aug 26                                                 | Pentecost 10          | Luke 9:1-20                | Numbers 11:21-23                   | Jesus teaching and feeding multitude; Moses doubts God's power     |
| 9 Aug 26                                                 | Pentecost 11          | Luke 9:37-50               | 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12             | Faithless and perverse generation; A life pleasing to God          |
| 16 Aug 26                                                | Pentecost 12          | Luke 9:51-10:24            | Ecclesiastes 4:9-12                | Jesus sets face to Jerusalem, mission of 70; Pairing up            |
| 23 Aug 26                                                | Pentecost 13          | Luke 10:25-42              | Leviticus 19:11-18                 | Parable of Good Samaritan and Mary & Martha; Moral holiness        |
| 30 Aug 26                                                | Pentecost 14          | Luke 11:1-13,24-28,33-36   | Philippians 4:4-8                  | Jesus praying, admired, do not hide your light; Exhortations       |
| 6 Sep 26                                                 | Pentecost 15          | Luke 12:1-34               | 1 Corinthians 5:6-8                | Crowds trampling to hear Jesus; On yeast                           |
| 13 Sep 26                                                | Pentecost 16          | Luke 12:35-48,57-59        | 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11             | Watchfulness and preparation; Prepared for the day of the Lord     |
| 20 Sep 26                                                | Pentecost 17          | Luke 13:10-35              | Acts 8:14-24                       | Healing and words about the Kingdom; Buying your way to blessing   |
| 27 Sep 26                                                | Pentecost 18          | Luke 14:1-24               | Proverbs 25:6-7                    | Healing, parables of humility; Do not put yourself forward         |
| 4 Oct 26                                                 | Pentecost 19          | Luke 14:25-35              | Colossians 4:2-6                   | Cost of discipleship; Let your speech be gracious                  |
| 11 Oct 26                                                | Pentecost 20          | Luke 15:11-16:13           | Genesis 27:30-38                   | Parable of prodigal / dishonest manager; Esau's lost blessing      |
| 18 Oct 26                                                | Pentecost 21          | Luke 16:14-31              | Psalms 19                          | Rich man and Lazarus, the Law and the Kingdom; Perfect Law         |
| 25 Oct 26                                                | Pentecost 22          | Luke 17:1-21               | Leviticus 13:45-46                 | Sayings, cleansing of lepers, coming Kingdom; Unclean              |
| 1 Nov 26                                                 | Pentecost 23          | Luke 18:1-30               | Hebrews 13:1-8                     | Unjust judge, persistent widow, rich young ruler; Contentment      |
| 8 Nov 26                                                 | Pentecost 24          | Luke 18:35-19:10           | Numbers 5:5-7                      | Blind beggar, Zacchaeus; Restitution                               |
| 15 Nov 26                                                | Pentecost 25          | Luke 19:11-27              | 1 Corinthians 4:1-5                | Parable of the ten pounds; Servants and stewards                   |
| 22 Nov 26                                                | Reign of Christ       | Luke 24:36-53              | 1 Corinthians 15:1-11              | Jesus' commission of disciples; The good news flows on             |
| <b>LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 2: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES</b> |                       |                            |                                    |                                                                    |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                      |                       |                            |                                    |                                                                    |
| 29 Nov 26                                                | Advent 1              | Acts 1:1-14                | Isaiah 64:1-9                      | The promise of the Holy Spirit/Ascension; Prayer of penitence      |
| 6 Dec 26                                                 | Advent 2              | Acts 1:15-26               | 2 Peter 3:8-16a                    | Matthias chosen to replace Judas; Promise of the Lord's coming     |
| <b>In Jerusalem</b>                                      |                       |                            |                                    |                                                                    |
| 13 Dec 26                                                | Advent 3              | Acts 2:12-21               | Luke 1:46-55                       | Peter addressing the crowd; Mary's song of praise                  |
| 20 Dec 26                                                | Advent 4              | Acts 2:22-36               | Matthew 1:1-17                     | Peter's sermon continues; The genealogy of Jesus                   |
| 25 Dec 26                                                | Christmas Day         | Acts 2:37-39               | Matthew 1:18-25 and/or Luke 2:1-20 | Peter's sermon closes; The birth of Jesus                          |
| 27 Dec 26                                                | Christmas 1           | Acts 2:40-42               | Galatians 3:23-29                  | The first converts; Children of God through faith                  |
| 3 Jan 27                                                 | Christmas 2           | Acts 2:43-47               | Matthew 2:1-15                     | Life among the believers; The visit of the Magi                    |
| 10 Jan 27                                                | Epiphany 1            | Acts 3:1-11                | Matthew 9:1-8                      | Peter heals a crippled beggar; Jesus heals a paralytic             |
| 17 Jan 27                                                | Epiphany 2            | Acts 3:12-26               | Matthew 3:1-17                     | Peter speaks in Solomon's Portico; John the Baptist's proclamation |
| 24 Jan 27                                                | Epiphany 3            | Acts 4:1-22                | Matthew 4:1-11                     | Peter and John before the Council; Testing of Jesus                |
| 31 Jan 27                                                | Epiphany 4            | Acts 4:23-37               | Hebrews 10:19-25                   | The believers pray for boldness; A call to perseverance            |
| 7 Feb 27                                                 | Transfiguration       | Acts 5:12-16               | Mark 9:2-13                        | The apostles heal many; The Transfiguration                        |



| Date                                                                 | Liturgical            | Primary Text     | Support Text            | Notes                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 2: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (continued)</b> |                       |                  |                         |                                                                                               |
| 14 Feb 27                                                            | Lent 1                | Acts 5:1-11      | Micah 6:6-8             | Ananias and Sapphira; What God requires                                                       |
| 21 Feb 27                                                            | Lent 2                | Acts 5:17-33     | John 11:45-53           | The Apostles are persecuted; The plot to kill Jesus                                           |
| 28 Feb 27                                                            | Lent 3                | Acts 5:33-42     | Psalms 37:1-11          | Gamaliel's intervention; Exhortation to patience and trust                                    |
| 7 Mar 27                                                             | Lent 4                | Acts 6:1-7       | Psalms 37:12-27         | Seven chosen to serve; Comparisons between righteous & wicked                                 |
| 14 Mar 27                                                            | Lent 5                | Acts 6:8-15      | Psalms 37:28-40         | The arrest of Stephen; On justice                                                             |
| 21 Mar 27                                                            | Palms/Passion         | Acts 7:1-16      | Mark 11:1-11            | Stephen begins to address the Council; Jesus' entry to Jerusalem                              |
| 22 Mar 27                                                            | Holy Week Monday      | Acts 7:17-29     | Psalms 24:1-2           | Stephen speaks about Moses; The earth is the Lord's                                           |
| 23 Mar 27                                                            | Holy Week Tuesday     | Acts 7:30-34     | Psalms 24:1-4           | Theophany on the mountain; Who shall ascend?                                                  |
| 24 Mar 27                                                            | Holy Week Wed         | Acts 7:35-43     | Psalms 24:1-6           | God uses Moses; Blessing from the Lord                                                        |
| 25 Mar 27                                                            | Maundy Thursday       | Acts 7:44-53     | Psalms 24:1-8           | Stephen challenges those who oppose God; Lift up your heads                                   |
| 26 Mar 27                                                            | Good Friday           | Acts 7:54-8:1    | Psalms 24:1-10          | The stoning of Stephen; Who is this King of glory?                                            |
| 27 Mar 27                                                            | Holy Saturday         | Acts 8:2-3       | Mark 15:42-47           | The burial of Stephen and Saul's violence; The burial of Jesus                                |
| 28 Mar 27                                                            | Easter Day            | Acts 9:32-42     | Mark 16:1-8             | Healing and raising from death by Peter; The resurrection of Jesus                            |
| <b>In Judea And Samaria</b>                                          |                       |                  |                         |                                                                                               |
| 4 Apr 27                                                             | Easter 2              | Acts 8:4-25      | Mark 16:9-13            | Philip preaches in Samaria; Jesus' appearances                                                |
| 11 Apr 27                                                            | Easter 3              | Acts 8:25-40     | 2 Timothy 3:10-17       | Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch; Paul's charge to Timothy                                     |
| 18 Apr 27                                                            | Easter 4              | Acts 9:1-19a     | 2 Kings 5:1-14          | The conversion of Saul; The healing of Naaman                                                 |
| 25 Apr 27                                                            | Easter 5              | Acts 9:19b-31    | Matthew 13:54-58        | Saul's new ministry begins; The rejection of Jesus in Nazareth                                |
| 2 May 27                                                             | Easter 6              | Acts 9:43-10:33  | Leviticus 11:1-12       | Peter and Cornelius; Clean and unclean foods                                                  |
| 9 May 27                                                             | Easter 7              | Acts 10:34-43    | Romans 2:6-11           | Gentiles hear the Good News; God shows no partiality                                          |
| 16 May 27                                                            | Pentecost             | Acts 2:1-13      | Acts 10:44-48           | The coming of the Holy Spirit; Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit                               |
| 23 May 27                                                            | Pentecost 1 (Trinity) | Acts 11:1-18     | 1 Corinthians 1:10-17   | Peter's report to the Church in Jerusalem; Divisions in the Church                            |
| 30 May 27                                                            | Pentecost 2           | Acts 11:19-12:5  | Deuteronomy 11:18-21    | The Church in Antioch, James killed, Peter imprisoned; The Shema                              |
| 6 Jun 27                                                             | Pentecost 3           | Acts 12:6-13:3   | Revelation 3:19b-22     | Peter delivered from prison; I am standing at the door, knocking                              |
| <b>The Missionary Journeys</b>                                       |                       |                  |                         |                                                                                               |
| 13 Jun 27                                                            | Pentecost 4           | Acts 13:4-52     | 1 Samuel 8              | Preaching in Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas in Antioch; Israel demands a king                      |
| 20 Jun 27                                                            | Pentecost 5           | Acts 14:1-28     | Daniel 2:24-29          | In Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and back to Antioch; Daniel's dream interpretation                  |
| 27 Jun 27                                                            | Pentecost 6           | Acts 15:1-35     | Galatians 2:15-21       | The Council at Jerusalem; Jews and Gentiles saved by faith                                    |
| 4 Jul 27                                                             | Pentecost 7           | Acts 15:36-16:10 | 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10  | Paul and Barnabas separate, Timothy joins Paul and Silas; The Thessalonians faith and example |
| 11 Jul 27                                                            | Pentecost 8           | Acts 16:11-40    | Isaiah 61:1-3           | Conversion of Lydia, Paul and Silas in prison; Good news of deliverance                       |
| 18 Jul 27                                                            | Pentecost 9           | Acts 17:1-15     | 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 | Uproar in Thessalonica; Giving thanks for the Thessalonian believers                          |
| 25 Jul 27                                                            | Pentecost 10          | Acts 17:16-34    | 2 Corinthians 4:1-6     | Paul in Athens; We do not lose heart                                                          |
| 1 Aug 27                                                             | Pentecost 11          | Acts 18:1-23     | 1 Corinthians 2:1-5     | Paul in Corinth; Proclaiming Christ crucified                                                 |
| 8 Aug 27                                                             | Pentecost 12          | Acts 18:24-19:20 | Jeremiah 33:6-9         | Ministry of Apollos, Paul in Ephesus; Healing after punishment                                |
| 15 Aug 27                                                            | Pentecost 13          | Acts 19:21-41    | Proverbs 29:8,22,25-26  | The riot in Ephesus; Wisdom sayings                                                           |
| 22 Aug 27                                                            | Pentecost 14          | Acts 20:1-16     | Daniel 12:1-3           | Paul visits Macedonia and Greece, sleepy Eutychus; Awakening to eternal life                  |
| 29 Aug 27                                                            | Pentecost 15          | Acts 20:17-38    | Ezekiel 34:23-31        | Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders; The one shepherd                                          |
| <b>Paul's Witness Spreads To Rome</b>                                |                       |                  |                         |                                                                                               |
| 5 Sep 27                                                             | Pentecost 16          | Acts 21:1-26     | Galatians 2:1-5         | Paul's journey to Jerusalem, visit with James; Paul and the disciples                         |
| 12 Sep 27                                                            | Pentecost 17          | Acts 21:27-22:5  | John 18:1-11            | Paul arrested in the Temple, defends himself; Betrayal of Jesus                               |
| 19 Sep 27                                                            | Pentecost 18          | Acts 22:6-29     | John 18:28-38           | Paul continues his defense, pulls the Roman citizen card; Jesus before Pilate                 |
| 26 Sep 27                                                            | Pentecost 19          | Acts 22:30-23:22 | Mark 12:18-27           | Paul before the Council, plots to kill Paul; Sadducees try to catch out Jesus                 |
| 3 Oct 27                                                             | Pentecost 20          | Acts 23:23-35    | Joshua 1:1-9            | Paul sent to Felix the Governor; God's commission to Joshua                                   |
| 10 Oct 27                                                            | Pentecost 21          | Acts 24:1-27     | 1 Timothy 1:1-7         | Paul before Felix at Caesarea; Warning against false teachers                                 |
| 17 Oct 27                                                            | Pentecost 22          | Acts 25:1-22     | John 18:12-14,19-24     | Paul appears to the Emperor, Festus consults King Agrippa; Jesus before the High Priest       |
| 24 Oct 27                                                            | Pentecost 23          | Acts 25:23-27    | John 18:38-40           | Paul brought before King Agrippa; Jesus sentenced to death                                    |
| 31 Oct 27                                                            | Pentecost 24          | Acts 26:1-32     | Luke 21:12-15           | Paul defends himself before Agrippa, tries to convert the king; Persecutions of the faithful  |
| 7 Nov 27                                                             | Pentecost 25          | Acts 27:1-44     | Jonah 1:1-17            | Paul sails for Rome, stormy seas and shipwreck; Jonah tries to flee                           |
| 14 Nov 27                                                            | Pentecost 26          | Acts 28:1-10     | Psalms 91:11-16         | Paul on Malta; God's protection                                                               |
| 21 Nov 27                                                            | Reign of Christ       | Acts 28:11-31    | Isaiah 6:6-13           | Paul in Rome; Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?                                      |

# prayers of complaint

## Pentecost 12

Sunday 31 August 2025

## Word

Jeremiah 20:7-18

1 Samuel 1:1-18

## Theme

Prayer



## Bible Notes

We start Issue 56 with a series of services focusing on different aspects of prayer. This is not intended as a 'How to...' kind of series. Rather it is going to explore some examples of prayer from the Scriptures with the intent of delving more deeply into the nature of prayer, forms of prayer, and the content of prayer. Through these examples we hope to let the Scripture speak to us in our own faith lives, in our own contexts, to consider what prayer means to us.

By the very nature of this exploration of prayer we will be touching on some difficult subjects for many people, including the thwarted desire to be a parent and the loss of a child. It raises the need for sensitivity in how we approach these stories, letting worshippers know what is coming in order to prepare themselves should they need to do so.

This first Sunday we are considering two prayers from the Hebrew Bible that are rooted in experiences that, in the case of Jeremiah, shook the ground upon which he understood himself, and in the case of Hannah was stymying her hopes and aspirations for herself within her cultural setting.

Jeremiah's complaint to God comes as the last straw. We need to understand that Jeremiah has just been beaten and held in stocks within the house of the Lord. It was an utter humiliation and shameful position to be placed in by Pashhur, the chief officer of the Temple. Once released from these confines, Jeremiah unleashed his tongue on Pashhur, who he describes as someone who unleashes terror, and gives a dire warning for the future of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians. Then comes this final complaint of Jeremiah, directed to God.

There is a poignant despair in Jeremiah's prayer as he both confesses his situation and explores the human condition with some bitterness. It is a prayer that may speak into many worshippers sense of the world in the current time in which those who seek to be truth-tellers and justice-seekers are terrorised by the powerful, ridiculed in digital public spaces, all with the intent of silencing those who might reveal where God's kingdom priorities truly lie.

The prayer is in three sections, a section of confession to verse 12, a short call to praise at verse 13—a frequently deployed literary device in psalms of complaint in order to anticipate a deliverance still to come, so perhaps a later addition—and then a final cry of lamentation "Cursed be the day on which I was born!" which is developed in the final section.

The initial section is quite breathtaking in its accusations towards God. These are seductive, bordering in our modern context towards abusive, undercurrents as Jeremiah describes how he was enticed and overpowered. It is verging on blasphemy. How close it runs to the edge reveals a great deal about the despair in Jeremiah's mind. He goes on to describe the ridicule he has felt and how his own friends have mocked him for his portents of doom when he had thought he was trying to reveal the truth. It is a cry of outrage, and perhaps one that is relatable to those seeing justice-thwarting, gross inequality and corruption running rampant globally in our own time. The sense of helplessness to perceive the reality of what is happening around you, to call it out, and to have no one listen and respond is heartbreaking for Jeremiah as it is for all activists and modern prophets today.

Yet, the prayer moves from this complaint to a sense of God still at work within Jeremiah, keeping his sense of calling to the role of the prophet despite all the shame and ridicule hurled in his direction.

For Hannah, one of the two wives of Elkanah, there is shame of a different kind, but which, is no less debilitating in her cultural setting. Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, had children, while Hannah did not. It was a source of shame for her, despite the care and favour she found from her husband. Indeed, it is likely that Elkanah took Peninnah as his second wife because Hannah did not bear him an heir.

Bullied by Peninnah, year after year, Hannah comes to God in prayer at the Temple. She confesses her situation, as Jeremiah did, bringing in her heavy heart her predicament and complaint for all understood that God had closed her womb. And she seeks to make a deal with God, to offer a son to be a Nazirite. She is even mocked by Eli, the priest, but she holds her ground. She is not afraid to question God, as Jeremiah does too.



## Story Retelling

### Mitchell Is Mocked

It was an unnerving sound, a strangled kind of wail, as if someone was struggling to catch one's breath, followed by deep, deep sobbing, that made you wonder what you might find, if you walked much further into the sanctuary!

Then I saw Mitchell! He looked gaunt, a mere shadow of himself, shaking, shivering, shuddering, quivering. It was obvious he was upset.

"Meenister, Meenister," he cried loudly when he saw me. "Why can people be so cruel. Somebody in church has set out traps! Poor Harris was badly hurt by one trap, snapping tightly shut and almost forcing the life out of him. If Grandpa and I hadn't turned up in time he might not have made."

"O Mitchell, that is shocking!" I exclaimed.

"But there is more, Meenister," Mitchell continued, "Some children at the school service got so upset and angry they tried to stamp on me. They were shouting and screaming like banshees, as if I was a threat to those big P7 boys! When would folk feel threatened by a little mouse, when all I wanted to do was help them to understand the stories about God. I wish you had been there to explain and help, Meenister!"

I sighed, "I wish I had been there Mitchell, nobody deserves to be treated like that!"

"Well, Meenister," Mitchell said, "even folk I thought were my friends were trying to make fun of me, ridiculing the length of my tail and trying to squeeze my little pointed nose, and laughing at the little black patch I have over my eye. They were even calling me names, making me feel like a stranger in my own home... It was just terrible, Meenister, terrible."

Mitchell began to cry again, he was frightened, upset, fearful of what might happen to him next.

"Oh Mitchell," I consoled, "I am so, so, sorry about everything that has happened. It's like the world has gone mad and people have forgotten the lessons we have shared in church and in school, and that is not right! It's not fair! It's just not reasonable!"

"Oh Meenister," Mitchell appealed, "what are we going to do?"

"Well Mitchell," I said, "remember me telling you about the prophet Jeremiah?"

"Aye, Meenister, was he the prophet they called the weeping prophet?" Mitchell recalled.

I continued: "Yes, Mitchell, that's right. He once got a really hard time from the Babylonians. Pashhur, the chief officer of the Temple even had him imprisoned in the stocks, and he was humiliated and badly treated for speaking the truth."



"Sometimes people don't like to hear the truth, Mitchell, especially if it shows them in a bad way.

"No wonder Jeremiah wept, he was being treated terribly by people who should have known better. He was being mocked, ridiculed, scorned for having the guts to speak the truth and proclaim the word God had given to him, to share to his people, and to the rest of the world."

Mitchell thought for a minute and then asked: "But Meenister, did Jeremiah not get upset and even blame God for not caring about him, and having to experience the beatings and betrayals, and the terrible treatment?"

I nodded: "Admittedly, Jeremiah felt as though God had let him down and there are times we all feel like that, but Jeremiah prayed to God to find a way forward. He wanted to try and understand what he was going through. Jeremiah realised that the answer lay with God, and so, he asked and pleaded with God that God could help him to understand why he was treated in this way.

"As Jeremiah talked with God, he began to understand his situation and to find a way forward. I guess in the worst of times sometimes all we can do is offer up our complaint when all seems to be going wrong, and ask God for help in the hope that we can find a way forward."

Mitchell looked up: "You know, Meenister, I think you might be right. You have told us to trust God, not just in the good times, but also in the worst of times."

"Life is not always easy Mitchell," I agreed, "but with God all things are possible, and thankfully Jeremiah understood that and hopefully you can too".

"Thanks, Meenister," Mitchell smiled, "I feel better having talked with you and with God!"

## Discussion Starters

**You will need: large sheets of paper, post-it notes, pens.**

Take some time as a group to think about the world or your community and what people have witnessed that would cause them to complain. Write each complaint on a post-it note. Once you have a number of these complaints, start to discuss and organise them appropriately. Take three large sheets of paper and mark them individually: GOD, AUTHORITIES, OURSELVES.

Place each complaint on the appropriate sheet to show where the group thinks the complaint is best directed.

- How easy was it to designate the recipient of the complaints?
- What do we expect to happen when we make a complaint?
- Do complaints form a part of your prayer life? If so, in what ways? If not, is there a reason why you do not include them?

Read together from Jeremiah 20:7-18. You may wish to split this into the three parts with a single person as Jeremiah reading verses 7-12 and 14-18, but with everyone in the group reading verse 13 aloud.

You may want to dwell somewhat on the passage, after reading it (perhaps twice), then ask people to highlight what surprised or shocked them about Jeremiah's prayer. It could be helpful to explore some of the background to this prayer as described in the Bible Notes regarding the shame that had been heaped upon Jeremiah.

- Can you describe a situation in which you have tried to call out the truth and yet found yourself ignored or belittled? How did that feel?
- What do you find relatable or off-putting about Jeremiah's prayer?
- What does Jeremiah's experience tell you about the call to be a prophet?
- Who are the people who are ridiculed for trying to speak truth to power in today's world?

Now read the account of Hannah coming to the Temple and taking the opportunity to pray about her predicament, 1 Samuel 1:1-8. If you have a dramatised version of the passage that you could use with different voices, use that with people taking on the characters of Hannah, Elkanah, and the priest Eli.

Note that a Nazirite was someone dedicated to the service of God for a period.

- How does Hannah's prayerful complaint and appeal resonate with you?
- Should she have been content to have been loved by her husband?
- What does this passage speak into a modern understanding of infertility and the problems couples can go through if they struggle to conceive a child?

Ask the group to think about situations in which they may have found themselves complaining to God, bringing a dire situation to God, and explore whether there was any sense of bargaining with God for the future. To do as Hannah does in trying to find a way out of her predicament is entirely natural.

- What do you think of the desire to bargain with God? It is something frequently done in the Scriptural record, but do we have hang-ups about it?
- What place is there for trust and faith?
- Where do you draw the line between complaining about a situation and accepting a situation?

# explore the story

## Engaging The Text

***You will need: sheets of paper, pens, music playing in background, a reader.***

We are entering a run of weeks where we consider different aspects of prayer. Rather than suggest 'ways of praying' we offer the experience of prayer in different situations. Being human, we have a whole host of emotions tied up in our faith because of difficult times and experiences and memories and there is always the invitation to stand aside from any of the suggestions offered if they come too close to a place someone does not wish to go.

This week we are looking at Jeremiah's complaints.

There are moments to speak quite honestly to God.

We often repeat the above sentence in our hearts, knowing we rarely do so in our voices. There is a reluctance to be honest, in case we are seen not to appreciate all God has done for us, as well as a reluctance for others to hear our honesty that admits to the crises and anxieties we have as God's people.

Treat this activity as a cathartic corrective to all of that.

To begin with, explore the story of Jeremiah; the complaints he made and why he made them. Use the Bible Notes for background and context. Tell Jeremiah's story and invite people to find themselves in his shoes.

While none of us have ever been in the public stocks, all of us have been in situations where we are humiliated, or feel the force of injustice, imbalance or prejudice etc. Go into that space again and voice to God what you feel - honestly!

Write these feelings of anger and all the other emotions experienced on a sheet of paper. This can be done as a list or as a poem or as a piece of prose.

Play some music while this is being done and have someone read out, dramatically, Jeremiah's words in Jeremiah 20:7-18 as a way of hearing how some have spoken to God and what it is okay to say.

Invite people to take their 'complaints' away with them and place them in a space in their homes, so that they can be revisited and built up each week, creating an honest prayer space within each home.

## Paper Chain Prayers

***Note that this craft could be added to week by week with different aspects of prayer during this series of services.***

***You will need: paper strips, stapler, felt tip pens.***

Give everyone a few strips of paper and ask them to write or draw things they want to bring to God: complaints, things that are hard, big questions. Link the strips together to form a paper chain.

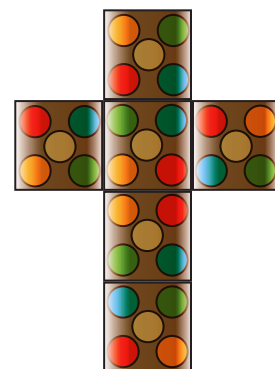
Drawing from today's stories, talk about the importance of being able to bring all our feelings to God.

## Prayer Cross

***You will need: six square boxes (all the same size such as square paper hanky boxes with top cut off), cardboard tubes (kitchen roll tubes), PVA glue, glue spreaders, strong paper clips or bulldog clips.***

Today we are constructing a prayer cross. In the weeks ahead, the cross can be filled with prayers—these are made with different coloured paper cut so that when they are rolled up they can fit inside the card tubes. Participants are invited to write or draw their prayers on the coloured paper, roll the paper up and place it inside one of the tubes.

Ask participants to place the boxes in a cross shape with the bottom of the boxes on a flat surface. The top row should have one box, the second row should have three boxes, with the middle box in line with the box from the first row, the third row should have one box in line with the middle box from the second row and the fourth row should have one box, again in line with the middle box from the third row. Once all the boxes are in place, ask participants to glue all the surfaces which are touching together with PVA glue. Paper clips or bull dog clips should then be attached to keep the boxes together while the glue is drying. Ask participants to cut card tubes to the length which will fit inside the boxes and then to place and glue the tubes in each box to make little 'pigeon holes or dookits'.



Introduce the idea of different kinds of prayer. Ask people to talk about different kinds of prayer – are the 'complaint' prayers of today's stories featured. Talk about the importance of being able to bring all our feelings to God.

## Mitchell Mouse Puppet

***You will need: thick grey and beige card, scissors, glue sticks, paper clips, sticky tape, pencils, small googly eyes, scraps of felt in a variety of colours, scraps of card in a variety of colours.***

Ask participants to cut a square of card and then to roll that to form a cone shape. The edges should be glued and then kept in place with a paper clip until the glue dries. Alternatively, sticky tape could be used. The cone forms Mitchell Mouse's body and face with the point of the cone being the nose. Ask participants to cut out circles for ears which can be stuck to the back of the cone. Add googly eyes and other features using scraps of felt or paper.

Read the story and use the puppets to help people talk about the story and explore different aspects of prayer.

## Praying Knots

***You will need: lengths of cord.***

Give each participant a length of cord. Allow space and time of about three minutes and invite participants to sit quietly. Invite them during that time to think of three things they want to pray about and to tie a knot for each prayer.

Again this is an activity that can be repeated throughout this theme as well as encouraging participants to pray at home or in the park or during their lunch break with the cord in their pocket or bag an easy reminder and a way to build up a habit of prayer.

## Prayer Spots

***You will need: hula hoops or circles drawn on floor.***

Place hula hoops around the area or draw circles on the floor. Ask those participating to move around the room and when the leader calls 'prayer', participants have to make their way to a circle or hoop and stand in it. Depending on the age range of those participating, other aspects could be added such as everyone has to run or hop. You could also add another aspect: for example when everyone is in a hoop or circle, the leader calls out a category of prayer (like 'thanks' or 'help' or 'complaint') and participants say one word as a prayer of thanks or help or complaint to God.

This game can be used throughout this theme and help people to think about different aspects of prayer.





# live the story

## Call To Worship

Here is the place  
where we voice to heaven  
the worries of the earth.  
Where the ear of the holy  
hears every concern.  
Where the love of the divine  
holds the fear of the world  
and every word we speak  
falls into the love of God.  
We bring our living,  
our complaining,  
our loving,  
our celebrating,  
and gather them all  
in worship.

## Prayer Of Dedication

Generous God,  
our offerings of prayers  
and our offerings of gifts;  
monetary as well as  
each moment of shared time,  
small kindnesses and  
moments of meaningful interaction,  
we present joyfully to you,  
this day, O Lord.

We ask your blessing  
and your rememberings  
for these offerings,  
for this church community,  
for your church in Scotland,  
for your world-wide church  
in the name of the head of the church,  
Christ, Jesus.  
Amen.

## Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

O Lord of Hosts,  
we approach you in worship today  
knowing you look upon us in certainty,  
individually and uniquely.  
Sing to the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!

We cannot comprehend your ways,  
but we know through Scripture  
of your great love  
and your desire for relationship.  
Sing to the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!

We offer our thanks and praise  
for creation more intricate and awesome  
than we can imagine,  
for the gift of life  
in all its complexity.  
Sing to the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!

Loving God,  
we pour out our souls  
in prayer to you now,  
speaking out of  
anxiety and vexation,  
confusion and calamity,  
lips moving, wordless, heartfelt.

We confess  
that we do not bring our cares and concerns  
to you as regularly as we should  
and we consider ourselves and others worthless.  
We often wait until the last resort  
to spend time with you.  
Forgive us.

May we, your servants,  
find favour in your sight,  
and hear the words go in peace  
the God of Israel grant your petition.  
Amen.

## Prayers For Others And Ourselves

Holy One,  
this day we pour out our souls  
for the faithful who sense your closeness  
as well as for the faithful  
that are not feeling your presence  
at this moment.

Faith is not an easy road,  
it is full of questions and challenges,  
full of doubters and pot-stirrers.  
Jeremiah and Hannah are faithful and real,  
we know people like them,  
we may even identify more closely with them.

Lord God, we bring to you today  
the wandering and the wondering.  
May they find comfort in your presence.

We are mindful of those who  
have little choice over their situation:  
who endure the fear of war,  
the struggle to source food,  
no safe place to lay their heads.  
Hear their prayers of anguish and angst.

There are those who are struggling with their health  
who challenge you with 'why me'  
and there are those that quietly  
accept a diagnosis and press on.  
Both faithful responses  
are held in your compassion and love.  
Direct us to offer prayers and presence  
when they feel they cannot pray themselves.  
Guide us to call on the Spirit for wisdom.

We pray for your Creation,  
as the seasons turn  
and yet again,  
records have been shattered,  
unexpected weather events occur.  
We pray for resolute attention  
and determination to care for this beautiful world.

Father, we present ourselves before you,  
asking for your blessing on your church  
recognising it is made up of many people  
just like those in Scripture  
looking to live according to your will  
and to share the gospel.  
Grant us conviction and passion  
to communicate our experiences of  
the Living God.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

God of relationship,  
if we do not seek,  
if we do not come to you in prayer,  
our bones feel as if on fire.

How often we feel we cannot...  
cannot come to you,  
cannot hold it in,  
cannot voice what  
is in our hearts, minds, our very being.  
God help us.

When we shout out curses  
for the day we were born  
rather than praise,  
God help us.

When we question our  
very purpose and existence,  
God help us.

When we relentlessly  
badger you about  
that which we have no understanding,  
God help us.

O Lord of Hosts,  
you test the righteous,  
you see what is in hearts and minds.  
May we be able to confidently claim,  
like Jeremiah, like Hannah,  
to you I have committed my cause.  
God help us.  
Amen.

## Reflection

### Tell Me God!

What's the point?  
Is it worth the effort?  
Is the struggle so necessary?  
Tell me God!

Crying out in despair.  
Mixed with one praise or two,  
faithfully proclaiming God's Word  
and getting nothing in return.  
But being  
ridiculed,  
humiliated,  
jeered at.

Who am I?  
Who am I that I should...  
Who am I that I should confront...  
social injustice?  
welfare cuts?  
discriminations?  
Tell me God!

God, give me a break!  
I've done what you told me to do.  
I'm exhausted and lonely now.  
So, forget it and find someone else,  
to stand up for your righteousness.  
I am telling you God!

"I am with you".  
"You are not the only one".  
"You cannot right every wrong".  
"You cannot fight every battle".  
"My beloved Son Jesus didn't".  
"Come away and rest with me awhile".  
God is telling me so.

## Sending

We have gathered,  
worshipped,  
praised,  
and now we go  
knowing God goes with us;  
continuing to hear,  
to hold  
and to guide;  
now and forever.

## Praise/Hymns

|                                             |                        |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Big, big questions                          | Fischy Music           |
| Bring it all to me                          | GWA 62 / Fischy Music  |
| For all the faithful women                  | Glory to God 324       |
| God weeps at love withheld                  | CH4 168                |
| Jesus knows the inmost heart                | Glory to God 427       |
| Lament                                      | The Worship Initiative |
| Listen for God who speaks within our hearts | GWA 59                 |
| Lord, from the depths to thee I cried       | CH4 87                 |
| My God, my God, why have you left me here?  | GWA 2                  |
| My life flows on in endless song            | CH4 565                |
| O threefold God of tender unity             | CH4 114                |
| Prayer is the soul's sincere desire         | CH4 546 / MP 567       |
| The daylight dims as the sun sinks low      | GWA 97                 |
| The mind of God is forever changing         | GWA 152                |
| Weep with me                                | Rend Collective        |
| Whoever you are, your prayer is welcome     | GWA 61                 |

