



spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

telling our stories

issue 52

pentecost 13 to reign of christ

18 august to 24 november 2024

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

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introduction

Welcome to the fourth in a series of eight issues of Spill the Beans through which we are taking 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.

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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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
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications

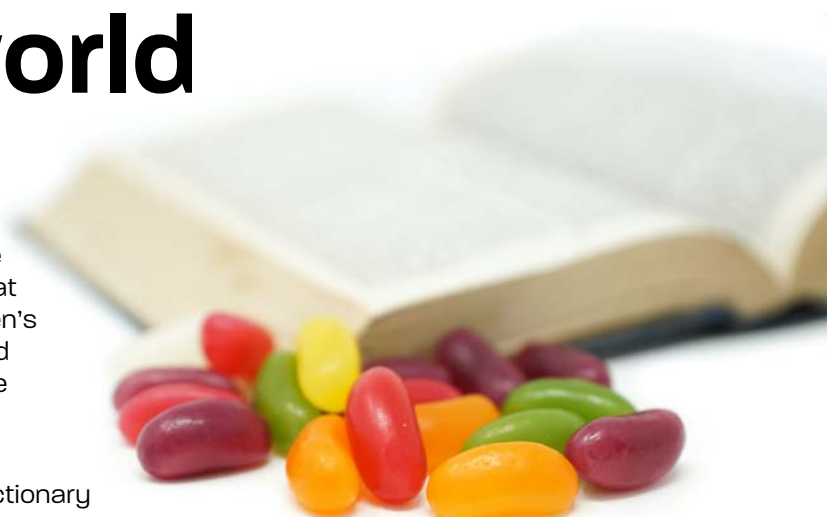


word and world

New Lectionary December 2023—November 2025

Members of the Spill the Beans Resource Team have been exploring ideas on what to do following our year with The Women's Lectionary. As we are mid-stream in both Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary, we decided to take the opportunity to do something different.

This is our second foray into creating our own lectionary following The Path Less Travelled in 2018/19. The inspiration for this new plan was to connect the worship of the church more systematically with events that are happening around and outside the church. This includes 'national' or 'world' days, particular seasonal events and people. We are excited at the opportunity this may give us to engage with other events. Some are very serious such as International Holocaust Memorial Day, while others may inspire some fun such as National Ice Cream Day and one close to our hearts... Jelly Bean Day!



Note that we are still fine tuning this, but the following table will give you the main basis of where we are planning to journey for the two years from Advent 2023.

As always, this is invitational, and you are welcome to join us as and how is right in your own setting. We pray it is a jumping off point for your own engagement of Word and World.

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Links/Notes
YEAR 1					
3 Dec 23	Advent 1	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 8:1-4	Abolition of Slavery (2 Dec)/Persons of Disability
10 Dec 23	Advent 2		Malachi 3:1-7	Galatians 5:13-14	Human Rights Day
17 Dec 23	Advent 3		Isaiah 16:2-5	Luke 1:5-25	International Migrant's Day (18 Dec)
24 Dec 23	Advent 4	Christmas	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 1:39-56	
25 Dec 23	Christmas Day		Luke 2:1-20	1 John 4:7-9,13-21	
31 Dec 23	Christmas 1		Matthew 2:1-15	Micah 5:1-5a	
7 Jan 24	Epiphany 1	Unwrapping	Luke 1:1-4	John 1:19-31	Beginnings, setting up calendars, Orthodox Christmas
14 Jan 24	Epiphany 2		Luke 4:16-30	Psalm 119:97-108	Flourishing, St Mungo
21 Jan 24	Epiphany 3		Luke 6:20-26	Psalm 1	Blessings, use "A Man's A Man" by Robert Burns
28 Jan 24	Epiphany 4		Luke 8:16-18	Jonah 1:1-17	Lighting, Up-Helly-Aa (30 Jan)
4 Feb 24	Epiphany 5		Luke 8:22-25	Psalm 139:1-12	Calming, World Cancer Day
11 Feb 24	Transfiguration		Luke 9:10-17	2 Kings 5:1-6	Feeding, International Day of Women/Girls in Science
14 Feb 24	Ash Wednesday	Social Justice	Luke 11:37-44	Isaiah 55:6-11	Valentine's Day
18 Feb 24	Lent 1		Isaiah 58:6-12	1 Samuel 21:1-6	World Day of Social Justice (20 Feb)
25 Feb 24	Lent 2		Luke 6:27-36	1 Peter 3:8-14	
3 Mar 24	Lent 3		Luke 7:1-17	Psalm 68:4-10	Whuppity Scoorie Day (1 Mar)
10 Mar 24	Lent 4		Luke 7:36-50	Micah 7:14-20	Mothering Sunday, International Women's Day (8 Mar)
17 Mar 24	Lent 5		Luke 8:26-39	Psalm 102:1-6,18-22	International Day of Happiness (20 Mar), Red Nose
24 Mar 24	Palms/Passion		Matthew 21:1-11	Psalm 22:1-11	
25 Mar 24	Monday	Holy Week	John 15:1-13	Psalm 36:5-11	The true vine
26 Mar 24	Tuesday		John 16:4b-24	Psalm 74:1-14	Work of the Spirit
27 Mar 24	Wednesday		John 17:1-11	Psalm 70	Praying for friends
28 Mar 24	Maundy Thurs		John 18:1-12	Psalm 116:1-2,12-19	Betrayal and arrest
29 Mar 24	Good Friday		John 19:1-30	Psalm 40:1-14	Jesus and Pilate
30 Mar 24	Holy Saturday	John 19:38-42	Psalm 31:1-5	Jesus' burial	
31 Mar 24	Easter Day	Resurrection and New Creation	John 20:1-18	Psalm 18:16-21	Jesus and Mary in the garden
7 Apr 24	Easter 2		Isaiah 40:21-31	Matthew 6:25-34	Holy Humour Sunday, World Health Day
14 Apr 24	Easter 3		Isaiah 51:1-18	Matthew 13:24-29	National Gardening Day
21 Apr 24	Easter 4	Joy	Isaiah 61:1-11	Matthew 20:1-16	Mother Earth Day, Jelly Bean Day (both 22 Apr)
28 Apr 24	Easter 5		Psalm 30	Romans 12:9-21	International Dance Day (29 Apr), Beltane's Day (1 May)
5 May 24	Easter 6		Psalm 16	1 Peter 1:3-12	World Laughter Day, St Catherine of Siena (29 Apr)
12 May 24	Easter 7	Christian Aid	Acts 1:15-17,21-26	1 John 5:9-12	RCL readings used this week to link to Christian Aid
19 May 24	Pentecost		Acts 2:1-21	2 Samuel 6:14-19	World Baking Day (home bakes to raise money for work of Christian Aid)

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes	
26 May 24	Pentecost 1	Witness and Journey	Exodus 3:10-17	Matthew 28:16-20		
2 Jun 24	Pentecost 2		Genesis 20:1-13	Acts 21:1-6		
9 Jun 24	Pentecost 3		Exodus 34:4-8	1 Samuel 3	St Columba	
16 Jun 24	Pentecost 4	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Exodus 2:1-10	Luke 15:11-32	Father's Day	
23 Jun 24	Pentecost 5		Exodus 5:1-14	1 Corinthians 4:1-13	World Refugee Day (20 Jun), International Widow's Day	
30 Jun 24	Pentecost 6	Stories of Travelling	John 4:1-15,28-30,39-42	1 Kings 17:7-16	Hospitality	
7 Jul 24	Pentecost 7		Matthew 15:21-28	Hebrews 13:1-3	Encounters with strangers	
14 Jul 24	Pentecost 8		Leviticus 25:10-12,35-41	Galatians 3:26-28	Towards equal opportunities	
21 Jul 24	Pentecost 9		Mark 2:18-28	Genesis 2:1-2	Holidays and refreshing Sabbaths, Ice Cream Day	
28 Jul 24	Pentecost 10		Psalms 139:1-12,23-24	Romans 8:31-39	God with us on the journey	
4 Aug 24	Pentecost 11		1 Kings 19:1-8	Mark 8:1-9	Food for the journey	
11 Aug 24	Pentecost 12		Psalms 71:16-18	Ephesians 4:11-16	Journey from youth to age, Inter. Youth Day (12 Aug)	
18 Aug 24	Pentecost 13		Telling Our Stories	Deuteronomy 6:20-25	John 9:13-25	World Humanitarian Day (19 Aug)
25 Aug 24	Pentecost 14	Exodus 12:21-28		Acts 26:1,9-18	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 Aug)	
1 Sep 24	Pentecost 15	Jeremiah 29:1-14		Philippians 4:10-20	World Letter Writing Day, Amnesty International Write for Rights	
8 Sep 24	Pentecost 16	Peacemaking	Leviticus 26:1-6	Matthew 5:9	World Suicide Prevention Day (10 Sep)	
15 Sep 24	Pentecost 17		Psalms 34	Colossians 3:12-17	International Day of Democracy, Hildegard De Bingen (17 Sep)	
22 Sep 24	Pentecost 18		John 14:25-31	Philippians 4:4-9	International Day of Peace	
29 Sep 24	Pentecost 19	Environment and Harvest	Deuteronomy 16:9-15	James 2:14-26	World Heart Day, building up to Sukkot	
6 Oct 24	Pentecost 20		Psalms 126	Joel 2:15-19	Restoring the environment	
13 Oct 24	Pentecost 21		Exodus 16:9-16	2 Corinthians 9:6-15	World Food Day	
20 Oct 24	Pentecost 22	Faith Heroes	Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:8-22	Back to the Future Day (21 Oct)	
27 Oct 24	Pentecost 23		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:23-28	National Mentoring Day, Reformation Day (31 Oct)	
3 Nov 24	Pentecost 24		Hebrews 12:1-2	Hebrews 11:29-40	All Saints Day (1 Nov), link to any local saints	
10 Nov 24	Pentecost 25	Hope	Job 17:1-5,11-16	Matthew 12:9-21	Armistice Day (11 Nov), World Kindness Day (13 Nov), St Machar, St Gerardine	
17 Nov 24	Pentecost 26		Lamentations 3:19-24	Romans 8:18-25	Prisoners Week, International Day for Tolerance (16 Nov)	
24 Nov 24	Reign of Christ		John 3:11-21	Isaiah 42:1-10a		
YEAR 2						
1 Dec 24	Advent 1	Incarnating Love	Isaiah 11:1-9	Luke 5:12-13	World AIDS Day, St Aiden of May	
8 Dec 24	Advent 2		Mark 1:1-8	Isaiah 2:2-4	International Anti-Corruption Day (9 Dec)	
15 Dec 24	Advent 3		Isaiah 35	Galatians 5:13-16		
22 Dec 24	Advent 4		Luke 1:26-38	1 Corinthians 13:1-13		
24/5 Dec 24	Christmas Eve/Day		Luke 1:46-55 Matthew 1:18-25	Romans 13:11-12 1 John 3-11		
29 Dec 24	Christmas 1	Holocaust Memorial	John 1:1-14	Isaiah 43:1-7	Donald Caskie (died 27 Dec 1983)	
5 Jan 25	Christmas 2		Daniel 2:8-23	Matthew 2:1-6	Thomas Aikenhead (died 8 Jan 1697)	
12 Jan 25	Epiphany 1		Luke 11:14-28	Nehemiah 5:1-13	Awareness of evil	
19 Jan 25	Epiphany 2		Exodus 1:15-22	Mark 9:42-48	Slaughter/protection of innocents, Jane Haining	
26 Jan 25	Epiphany 3		Isaiah 61:5-11	Mark 15:33-34	International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 Jan)	
2 Feb 25	Epiphany 4		Rediscovering Jesus	Luke 2:41-52	Proverbs 3:1-10	Jesus the Jew, Candlemass, Groundhog Day
9 Feb 25	Epiphany 5			Matthew 13:1-3,10-17	2 Samuel 12:1-7a	Jesus the Storyteller
16 Feb 25	Epiphany 6			Luke 4:38-41	Ezekiel 34:11-16	Jesus the Healer
23 Feb 25	Epiphany 7			Mark 6:45-52	Mark 8:11-14	Jesus the Wonder Worker
2 Mar 25	Transfiguration			Matthew 16:13-20	John 20:30-31	Jesus: the Christ?



Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
5 Mar 25	Ash Wednesday	Health and Wellbeing	Matthew 6:1-6,16-21	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Wellbeing
9 Mar 25	Lent 1		Romans 12:1-8	Proverbs 16:21-24	Self Care I
16 Mar 25	Lent 2		Romans 12:9-21	Psalms 1	Self Care II
23 Mar 25	Lent 3		John 6:35-40	Proverbs 3:5-8	Food
30 Mar 25	Lent 4		Hebrews 4:1-11	Matthew 11:28-29	Rest, Mothering Sunday
6 Apr 25	Lent 5		1 Timothy 4:6-16	Isaiah 40:25-30	Health
13 Apr 25	Palm/Passion	You want it darker	Mark 11:1-11	Isaiah 52:13-53:12	The Gate
14 Apr 25	Monday		Mark 11:15-19	Isaiah 48:6-11	The Temple Courtyard
15 Apr 25	Tuesday		Mark 11:12-14,20-25	Isaiah 34:1-4	The Mount of Olives
16 Apr 25	Wednesday		Mark 14:1-11	Isaiah 61:1-4	The Home at Bethany
17 Apr 25	Maundy Thurs		Mark 14:12-16	Isaiah 53:7-12	The Upper Room, Gethsemane
18 Apr 25	Good Friday		Mark 14:43-15:41	Joel 2:1-2	The Hill, Golgotha
19 Apr 25	Holy Saturday		Mark 15:42-47	Psalms 22:27-31	The Tomb
20 Apr 25	Easter Day		Mark 16:1-8	Luke 24:13-35	The Garden (use Emmaus story for an evening service)
27 Apr 25	Easter 2	Community Wellbeing	John 21:1-14	Mark 1:16-20	Back at the Beginning I
4 May 25	Easter 3		John 21:15-21	Mark 14:66-72	Back at the Beginning II, Mental Health Awareness Week, death of David Livingstone (1 May 1873)
11 May 25	Easter 4		Acts 9:36-43	Revelation 7:9-17	Christian Aid Week
18 May 25	Easter 5	Creative Communities	Micah 6:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-14	The Why Behind the How
25 May 25	Easter 6		Colossians 3:12-17	Micah 6:6-8	Creative People, death of Thomas Chalmers (31 May 1847)
1 Jun 25	Easter 7		Ephesians 5:1-20	Micah 6:6-8	Creative Living
8 Jun 25	Pentecost		Galatians 5:13-26	Micah 6:6-8 Acts 2:1-13	Creative Spirit
15 Jun 25	Pentecost 1	Thankful and Grateful	Psalms 100	Romans 5:1-11	Father's Day, National Beer Day
22 Jun 25	Pentecost 2		Psalms 118	1 Thessalonians 5:12-24	International Picnic Day (18 Jun)
29 Jun 25	Pentecost 3		Psalms 145	2 Corinthians 4:7-18	Death of George MacLeod (27 Jun 1991)
6 Jul 25	Pentecost 4		1 Chronicles 16:8-36	Romans 11:33-36	Thank You Day
13 Jul 25	Pentecost 5	Crossroads of Culture and Faith	Psalms 95	Luke 2:22-32	Music, St Swithin
20 Jul 25	Pentecost 6		2 Chronicles 1:1,7-13	Luke 3:7-18	Politics, St Thenew
27 Jul 25	Pentecost 7		Exodus 31:1-11	Luke 6:43-45	Art
3 Aug 25	Pentecost 8		2 Samuel 12:1-9	Luke 9:1-6	Literature
10 Aug 25	Pentecost 9		Song of Songs 2:8-17	Luke 12:49-53	Poetry
17 Aug 25	Pentecost 10		1 Kings 4:29-34	Luke 17:11-19	Science
24 Aug 25	Pentecost 11		1 Samuel 8:1-21	Luke 20:20-26	Civic Space, death of George Matheson (28 Aug 1906)
31 Aug 25	Pentecost 12		Prayer	Jeremiah 20:7-18	1 Samuel 1:1-18
7 Sept 25	Pentecost 13	Luke 10:1-9,17-21		1 Samuel 2:1-10	Thanksgiving
14 Sept 25	Pentecost 14	Genesis 32:3-21		Luke 18:1-18	Protection
21 Sept 25	Pentecost 15	John 17:10-26		Luke 2:36-38	Intercession
28 Sept 25	Pentecost 16	2 Samuel 12:15b-23		Psalms 98	Unanswered
5 Oct 25	Pentecost 17	Reforming Our Faith	Psalms 96:1-9	1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 14:26	Songs and Liturgy
12 Oct 25	Pentecost 18		Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	Matthew 22:34-39	Times and Priorities
19 Oct 25	Pentecost 19		Joshua 10:36-43	2 Timothy 3:14-17	Lectionaries
26 Oct 25	Pentecost 20		Exodus 3:1-10	Ephesians 3:14-20	Experiences of God, Reformation Day (31 Oct)
2 Nov 25	Pentecost 21	Christ on the Edge	Mark 12:41-44	Deuteronomy 24:17-22	All Souls Day
9 Nov 25	Pentecost 22		Matthew 5:38-44	Genesis 22:1-14	Remembrance Sunday
16 Nov 25	Pentecost 23		Luke 10:25-37	Deuteronomy 10:17-22	Home Made Bread Day (17 Nov), St Margaret of Scotland
23 Nov 25	Reign of Christ		Mark 10:17-21	Luke 12:13-21	Stir Up Day, death of James Hogg (21 Nov 1835)

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



new books to resource your worship

God Welcomes All A Supplement to the Church Hymnary Fourth Edition

Editors: Iain McLarty, Phill Mellstrom

Canterbury Press

ISBN 978-1-78622-557-3

It has been a pleasure to have been part of a diverse and joyful committee working away under the leadership of Iain McLarty and Phill Mellstrom to satisfy an instruction from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to produce a supplement to the Kirk's Church Hymnary Fourth Edition (CH4).

This new compilation brings together 226 items, most of which have been written in the period since the creation of CH4 twenty years ago.

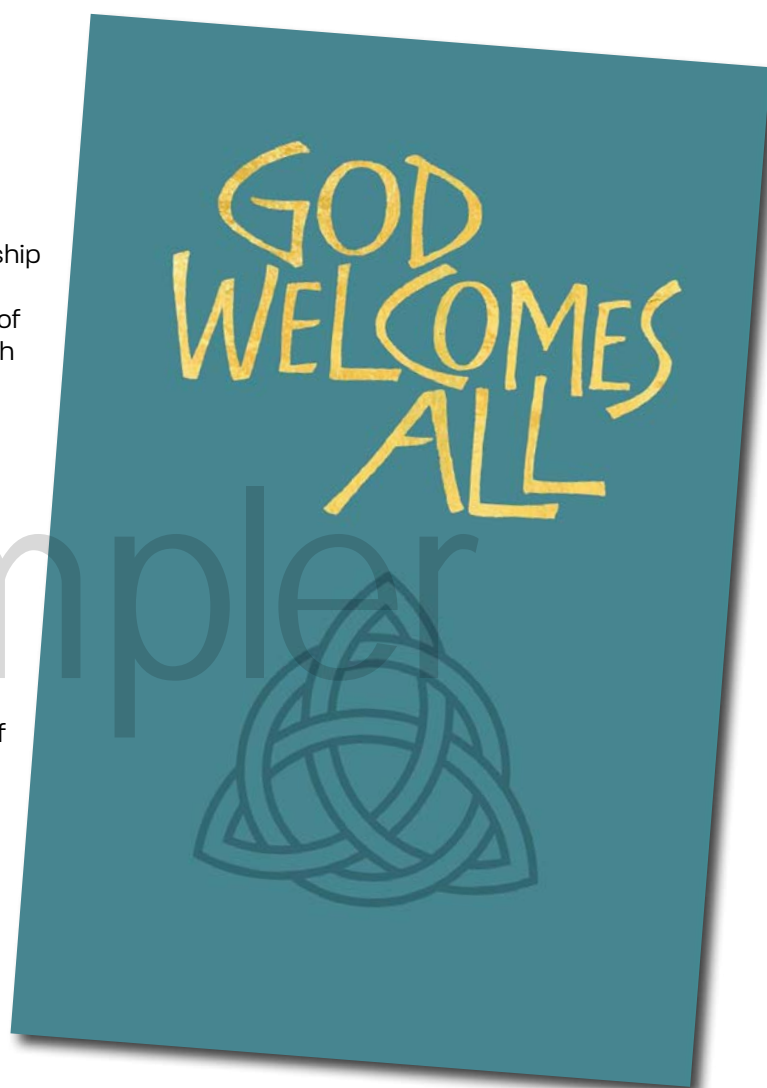
Song is a gift that is found throughout Scripture and in our lives as an outworking of our communion with God and one another. Songs are part of who we are, they help us to tell stories, to shape our theology, and expand our language about God. They provide us ways to express to some of the deepest emotions that arise from our response to God, our experience of life, and our connection to creation.

Singing together is powerful. It may be an old song that everyone knows or it may be singing a new song to the Lord that captures the imagination, but all can be part of worship.

God Welcomes All is intentionally inclusive of a broad range of musical styles and seeks to explore contemporary themes. It supplements what you may already use, and it is hoped will add greater diversity to the worship repertoire of a congregation, whether that is in a style similar to that which is comfortable to the congregation or to invite worshippers to try new styles.

A range of songs have been included from around the world and the process of compiling *God Welcomes All* has involved collaboration with people from different contexts globally, bringing songs from other cultures with integrity and sensitivity to the original intent.

The supplement is divided into four main sections covering Scripture Songs, Order of Worship, Church Year, and Themes. The latter includes songs speaking directly into topics such as the climate crisis, lament, healing, pilgrimage, ageing and dementia, migration, and reconciliation. A very helpful indexing system will also help users find songs and resources for many situations.



The use of language was carefully considered in the creation of the supplement with a desire for inclusivity so that all would feel welcome to sing each song.

Further resources will be coming from the Hymnary Supplement team in the future, including a Words only edition, and digital resources.

From this issue of *Spill the Beans* moving forward we will include suggestions from *God Welcomes All* (GWA) in our Praise/Hymns suggestions.

Peter Johnston

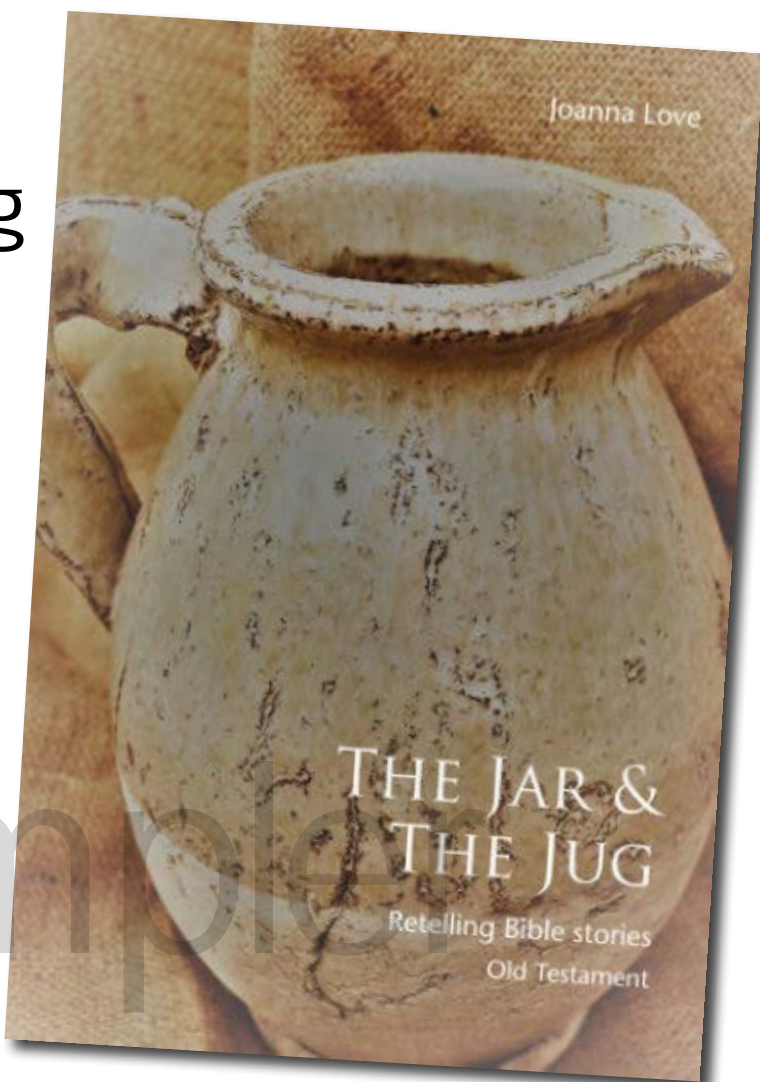
The Jar and the Jug

Joanna Love

Wild Goose Publications
ISBN 978-1-80432-329-8

So it seems I've written a book. And immediately discovered the widespread belief that I must have sat down one day, begun writing a book, and kept going until it was finished. Ta da! I had no such intention and no such experience. Instead, over many years, I wrote retellings of Bible stories for *Spill the Beans*, missing lots of deadlines, yet ending up with quite a stash of pieces that someone else then suggested might take the form of two books! After publication of this first one, a brief flurry of micro-fame, with a radio interview, zoom reading event and wee bookshop chat, all in quick succession! The interesting bit was getting asked questions, among them maybe the inevitable, "what's your writing process?" to which I think I first just laughed. Process?! One time it'll be agonising, the next flowing. But if there's any common thread in what happens, it's looking for a detail that gets my curiosity. Maybe because something is mentioned but not expanded on, or I wonder whose voice is missing, whose perspective on events is worth imagining. Or is there a way to retell things that simply encourages us to stay a bit longer in this story, to walk around in its world with open eyes and open minds, and see what comes of it?

There are so many voices behind the Bible. So many storytellers and retellers. I doubt that it gets us anywhere to wonder about their writing process! But from their experiences, and the meaning they took from it all, and the changing sense of God over generations, what a stash of pieces that eventually took the form



of these 66 books. I like to think they'd rejoice at all our continued retellings, all our ways of staying curious and reading with our imaginations alive and well. 'Fictional but feasible' is what I sometimes say about my own style, and if what's scattered throughout issues of *Spill*, and gathered in this wee book, gets you curious with the Bible all over again, that'll be fantastic. (Until the Beans team do a first foray into Leviticus...!)

Jo Love



this is my story

Pentecost 13

Sunday 18 August 2024

Theme

Telling Our Stories

Word

Deuteronomy 6:20-25

John 9:13-25

World

World Humanitarian Day (19 Aug)

tell the story

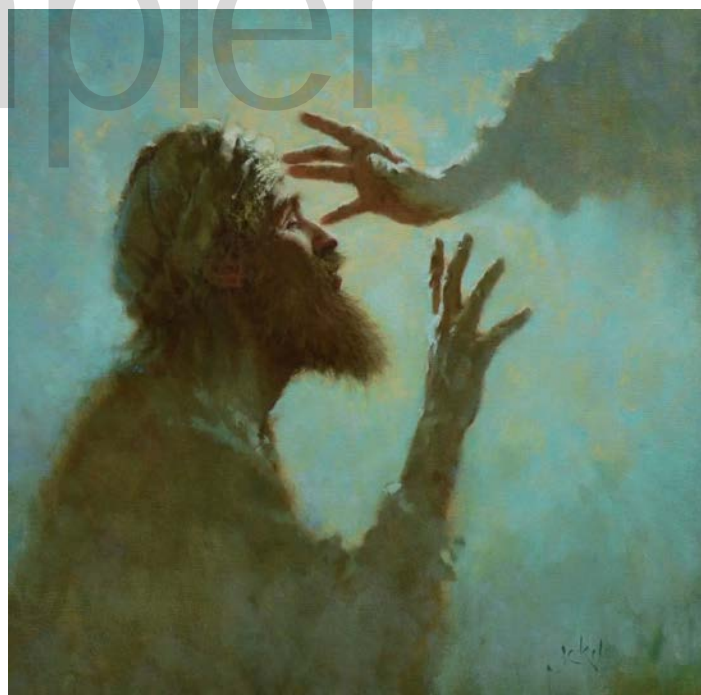
Bible Notes

We begin a series of Sundays focused on telling our stories. This is at the very heart of the key purpose for Spill the Beans: engaging creatively with story, whether Scriptural, personal or communal. This is a series we hold dear!

Our brains have an extraordinary ability by which we consciously perceive ourselves. It is a gift of which humanity has an abundance, though other creatures in the animal kingdom also seem to have elements of this ability (apes, elephants, dolphins, even pigeons have been shown to recognise themselves in a mirror, for instance). Part of what this allows is for us to create a narrative about ourselves, the story of us. This is hugely helpful in then assisting us in navigating our way through the world and through relationships with others. It helps to ground us, to inform us, to help us sense belonging to a group, and to share collectively in the creation of group understanding.

We do this all the time, but without necessarily being aware of it (we can be forced to engage with the process of this kind of internal narrative story-making through speaking therapies). This kind of narrative imagining is part of our thought system, it is what helps us to understand the past, where we have come from, the present and the decisions we need to make, and to predict the future, making plans far beyond our immediate needs.

Telling stories in a wider sense is also to write history, to shape understanding for whole societies. A Hopi proverb says, "those who tell the stories rule the world". Stories have power and influence. Watch how populist



"Jesus Healing The Blind Man" by Brian Jekel

politicians use storytelling (often based on untruths) to manipulate whole populations to their own ends.

In this week's Scripture lections, we have two different examples of storytelling. In Deuteronomy we have the example given of an elder instructing children in the reasons why things are as they are. Why do we have these laws? Why these traditions? Why these special feasts? Indeed, this text becomes part of the Passover text, part of the bigger retelling of this foundational story for the Judaeo-Christian tradition in the Haggadah. This

places the decisions made in the present, including the decision to worship God and live righteously, within the wider context of the story of God's people.

What this story still has to say to us today, of course, raises further questions about how we utilise narrative to define who we are, when those narratives are so far removed from the current time and many (though certainly not all) people's experiences.

The second story is the second part of the story of Jesus giving sight to a man who was born blind. We enter the story after the transformation has happened. As the man tells his story to the Pharisees, we see how stories are not just a retelling of facts: they gain interpretation and narrative, followers and doubters, questions and witnesses. The man has to have his parents bear witness to the fact that he was born blind, for the Pharisees do not believe his story. It does not fit their narrative. They struggle to allow the space for a new story to challenge their own narrative of how things are, of who Jesus might be, even the identity of the man sharing his own story of transformation.

It is not a reach in our current time to consider how some powerful people are wilfully ignoring the stories of those who are transgender, for instance, in order not to have their own narratives of 'how the world is' challenged. For many of us, it takes effort and deliberate action to listen to other people's stories and to let them shape our own understanding of the world.

Story Retelling

It's All So Very Odd

Three voices would be helpful for this piece.

- Pharisee: It's all so very odd.
This cannot be of God.
He seems so very sure
his blindness is a cure
performed with mud and washing—
he won't accept us quashing
this story he's been telling—
though we threaten an expelling
from the synagogue this minute
for anyone who's 'in it'
with that disobedient man
and his Sabbath-breaking scam!
- Parents: It's all so very odd.
We don't know. Was it God
who worked through mud and splashing
to a miracle so smashing?
Our son, born blind, can see!
They ask, how can this be?
We're scared to sound too sure
of how he got this cure.
He's old enough to tell
the story for himself!
It might cause them to fizz
but he'll tell it like it is!
- Man: Now really, what's so odd?
How could it not be God?
Just take a look at me—
a blind man who can see!
My words I am not mincing.
I've told you—mud and rinsing!
My Mum and Dad won't tell
they're scared they'll be expelled.
The healer man's a prophet!
A sinner? No, come off it,
and see that God is bigger
than you all think. Go figure!



Discussion Starters

Monday 19 August is World Humanitarian Day. This is a specific day on which we are encouraged to pay tribute to those humanitarian workers who have been injured or killed in the line of their work, and further to remember all who dedicate their working lives or offer their service to bring aid and healthcare to people who are most in need.

There is more information available here: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/humanitarian-day>.

The core principles behind the humanitarian work that the United Nations engages in are humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

Being a humanitarian in some circles has gathered a negative connotation, for some that it is in some way anti-religious, and for others that it is about do-gooders doing good (as if that is a bad thing).

- What does being a humanitarian mean to you?
- In what ways do people engaging in humanitarian work make a difference in the world?
- What stories about humanitarian work have stuck in your minds?

The Deuteronomy passage (6:20-25) contains a distilled remembrance of the exodus story, a story which has defining power for the Jewish community still today, and a story that resonates across the ages for many other communities that have known slavery and the desperate hope of freedom.

- What is (are) the defining story(ies) for our own nation or community?
- How were you told these stories?
- What part do these stories still have on shaping your own identity?

The story of the man born blind, given sight by Jesus, and then having to argue his case after sharing his story to the Pharisees (John 9) reminds us that our own stories, which are our own truth, are not always received as such by others. In this case the Pharisees refuse to accept what the man has to say, even when he pushes back against them.

- When have you had the experience of someone refusing to believe a story that you have shared with them?
- How did that experience feel?
- How has that experience shaped how you listen to other people's truth, their stories about themselves?

example

explore the story

Engaging The Text

You will need: a smooth stone for every group, FineLine pens that can write on the stone, a little research into the history of your congregation and founders.

The passage from Deuteronomy goes back to the foundational stories of the Hebrews. These are the bedrock formulas through which faith has been held and explored over generations. We all have such stories in our communities and churches: men and women, or events, that have shaped us, and to which we go back every so often and hear again.

In groups of a suitable size to hear and engage with each other, invite folk to consider the foundational stories of your community. It may be the story of a heritor, a schism, a saint, a church plant, a character. See how far each group can go back into the history of your community and listen to all the stories that are suggested.

As everyone tells their stories, ask each person to write the name of the event, person, story, or saint on the stone each group has as they hear it. Keep adding the names from all the stories told.

Once this is concluded, bring all the stones together. Depending on how many there are, either lay them in a line across a communion table to begin building a cairn, or place in some other suitable place.

A prayer could be said to conclude this time together.

Story Chain

You will need: A4 paper (cut into long strips), felt tip pens, scissors, sticky tape or staples and a stapler, used tea bags.

Ask those participating to take a few strips of paper and to gently dab one of the lightly dampened tea bags around the edges of the paper—this is to give an 'ancient parchment' type effect. Ask those participating to write a word on the dry middle section of the strip; the word should be to do with storytelling such as story, words, truth, community, worth, creativity, imagination.

Repeat and ask participants to write a word that comes into their mind when Jesus is mentioned, such as friend, listener, teacher, kind, loving. You could add in other categories as time allows. Attach one strip to another in paper chain style, using either sticky tape or staples. Display your story chain in your worship space or somewhere in your building where it might act as a conversation starter.

Talk about the importance of stories in our community, families and church, about how stories are passed on and how we can pass on the stories of faith to others.

Comic Strip Story

You will need: lining paper or frieze paper, chunky crayons or thick felt tip pens.

Ask those participating to divide into groups of about four or five with a variety of ages in each group. Give each group a length of lining or frieze paper and ask them to divide it into about ten large squares. Ask those participating to work in their group to produce a comic strip version of the story of the blind man being healed (John 9:1-12) or the parents of the blind man being asked to tell the story (John 9:13-25). Each box should portray a key part of the story. Simple outline drawings or even stick people would work. Speech bubbles can be added

Talk about how stories are heard, told and passed on. Discuss how that happened in Jesus' time and how we do that today, also how we pass on the stories of Jesus to others.

Sensory Ideas

These are particularly helpful for younger children or for adults to do with younger children.

Make mud pies.

Play with brown playdough and attachable googly eyes.

Make chocolate pudding or just buy some and eat it (such as chocolate mousse, chocolate dessert with chocolate buttons).

These ideas relate to the story of the blind man being healed. Talk about that story and how the story was talked about and retold as people tried to understand what had happened and what that meant. Talk about the importance of sharing our own stories and sharing gospel stories today.

Library Corner

You will need: cushions, bean bags, comfy seats, a selection of books.

Encourage participants to relax and to look through/read the books provided.

Ask participants to talk about some of their favourite books: what are they about, why do you like them, and so on. Talk about favourite bible stories and about the importance of reading, hearing, telling and sharing these stories.

Find The Story (Sitting Down)

You will need: a few copies of the same book (a simple children's story book would work well or a few copies of the same edition of a local newspaper), prepare some questions relating to the content of the book or newspaper, such as which page is the TV guide on, who scored a goal in Saturday's football match between x and y, which local councillor features on page xx.

Ask those participating to divide into groups of four or five with a variety of ages in each group. Give each group a book/ newspaper. Ask the questions and see how many correct answers each group gets.

Talk about the importance of stories in our community, families and church, how stories are passed on and about how we can pass on the stories of faith to others.

Find The Story (Running Around)

You will need: several copies of the same text (it could be a simple story book or some of today's texts), printed out and cut up so that there is a sentence or phrase on each piece of paper.

Hide these around your meeting space. Ask those participating to find the bits of the story and to put them into the correct order. This could be done individually or in teams.

Talk about the importance of stories in our community, families and church, about how stories are passed on and how we can pass on the stories of faith to others.

live the story

Sampler

Call To Worship

In all the divergence of the world
and all the uncertainty in the future
and all the unknowns we face
let us come back to our source.

Love.
Grace.
Peace.
God.

Let us be here
as we are
whoever we are
this is our home.

Prayer Of Dedication

O Lord, open our eyes,
help us to see evidence
of your great and abundant love.

Today the gifts we bring
show our love for You
and for the community.
Take these gifts and
open others' eyes
to your blessings.

Take the gifts that you have gifted us,
and allow them to be developed
and to be used for your will,
here locally and throughout the world.
Amen.



Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

We are honouring your Sabbath
by turning up,
by putting aside, a period of time
by listening to the stories of our faith within our
worshipping community.

We come to give the glory to you
on this day,
let us be open to awesome
signs, wonders, and stories
as we come into your presence.

On this day,
help us recognise
in each person
a touch of holiness,
seeing your image
crafted in each pair of eyes.

Help us to own your stories,
to allow you
to truly be present in our lives
to say yes to your healing touch
and to faithfully follow your laws.

Heavenly One,
sometimes we choose to follow our own story,
to ignore your laws
and the learning we have
from your word.
Forgive us when
we fail to prioritise creation.
when we place our own
self-interest above the welfare of your children.
We are sorry.

Merciful God,
allow your stories to speak to us today,
that we may treasure your word
and share it with the lives of your people before us.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

God of all,
we bring to you the concerns of the world,
which become the concerns of our community.

Tomorrow is World Humanitarian Day,
and to our dismay,
there are more and more
places in the world
requiring humanitarian assistance.

There is suffering through
drought, flooding,
and natural disasters
made worse
by human failure to act,
or made worse by human interaction
in wars,
in not overcoming
the overwhelming temptation
of human greed and power.
How can we hear Your promises of land
and a way to live
when so many people are displaced?

There are people hurting, not just physically.
People who are feeling outcast
in their communities: schools, workplaces,
even in their families.
We pray for the ability
to write stories with creative possibilities
including forgiveness and relationship.
And we pray for Your church
that it will truly be a welcoming space for all.

Give us grace to speak for ourselves,
not out of fear, but out of love.
We offer up to You our greatest concerns
and our experiences of marvellous joys.
In the silence we come before you now.

Silence

Loving God, we pray for
your peace to fill us,
your will to move us
that we may
in our communities
consistently communicate the story of
your great and generous love.
Amen.

Reflection

His story is our story.
A story that unites us.
Look around you.
Do you see the connection?

His story is their story.
Those people from the past.
The Israelites following the Law.
The Pharisees upset at broken rules.

His story tore up the rule book.
Reset our understanding.
Set us free from restrictive traditions.
Encouraged us to focus on love.

His story is a love story.
Transforming lives.
Uniting us in purpose.
Commanding us to love.

His story is our story,
a story that unites us.
Look around you.
See the love, see Jesus.

Reflective Prayer

When your children ask you...
Lord God, we are your children, and we are asking...

for wisdom when our children ask,
for promptings that children do ask—
ask about your stories that we long to tell.

When your children ask you in times to come...
Lord is it time? Has it come?
Where are our children and our children's children?
We yearn to tell stories of your greatness
stories of your action in our lives.
Today, living God,
you come.

Breathe life into old stories,
breathe new life into the way we tell them,
lead us to the right:
the right way to live your stories
so that the children will see
your love active in our lives,

So that they will ask...
and generations to come
will know your Word.
Amen.

Sending

We have heard God's story,
we celebrate our story,
part of a divine narrative,
of love at work in the world.

Send us out from this time
of shared worship
to share our stories,
your story,
God of healing and hope.

Praise/Hymns

Amazing grace	CH4 555 / MP 31
Blessed assurance	CH4 561 / MP 59
God of all comfort	GWA 226
Guide me, O thou great Jehovah	CH4 167 / MP 201
He healed the darkness of my mind	online at https://hymnary.org/text/ he_healed_the_darkness_of_my_mind
I look around, eyes open wide	GWA 154
Lord, for the years	CH4 159 / MP 428
O for a thousand tongues to sing	CH4 352 / MP 496
O God of Exodus	online at https://hymnary.org/hymn/G32011/page/491
Oh! Oh! Oh! how good is the Lord	ATAS 188
Sing a new world into being	GWA 224
Sing of the Lord's goodness	CH4 157 / STF 65
Sing praise to God	GWA 22
Soon and very soon	CH4 749 / MP 605
The God of Abraham praise	CH4 162 / MP 645
Tree of Life and awesome mystery	CH4 401
You are here, moving in our midst	GWA 146
You who fear the Lord	GWA 31