

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 16:2–15

Psalms 105:1–6, 37–45

Philippians 1:21–30

Matthew 20:1–16

SELECTED READING AND THEME

Exodus 16:2–15

The God of freedom joins human beings in the wilderness, giving human partners a taste for freedom and teaching them the way of trust.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The God of freedom meets human beings in the wilderness –
joining them, feeding them,

and opening human lives to new ways of being in the world.

I Am Who I Am meets people just as they are.

And this God meets us here today, just as we are,

Giving us a taste for freedom and teaching us the way of trust.

We're standing on holy ground. Let's worship God together.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Spirit of God, move here among us, move within us.

Give us an appetite for divine wisdom.

Open our hearts,

help us to know our aliveness in Christ,

and leave us humming with reverence.

Spirit of God, move here among us, move within us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of the wilderness, freedom can be daunting and confronting.

Sometimes, we prefer a harsh taskmaster, who keeps our bellies full, over the adventure of faith.

**We're sorry, God, for the ways we cling to the security of what we've known
and the ways we slide into what is normal all around us.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Our God is the fullness of mercy and kindness.

Slow in anger, rich in love, God is good to everyone, everywhere,
and drenches the whole world with grace.

Forgiveness is God's way with us.

Open your hearts and hands, receive God's gift:

You are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Hallelujah! God be praised!

Shout out God's deeds and call on God's name.

Hallelujah! God be praised!

Remember the difference that God has made.

Hallelujah! God be praised!

Think Abraham and Jacob and all the babes.

Hallelujah! God be praised!

Led Israel out, no longer enslaved,

hallelujah! God be praised!

Protected God's people from the heat of the day,

hallelujah! God be praised!

Warmed them by night with a holy blaze,

hallelujah! God be praised!

Miraculous bread and gift of quail,

hallelujah! God be praised!

Opened a rock and water sprayed,

hallelujah! God be praised!

Rejoice in your heart for all of your days!

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

God does not simply want to get the Israelites out of Egypt. God wants to get Egypt out of the people – all the ways human beings have shaped their lives around domination, idolatry, and the normal patterns of anxious clutching and greed. This is no small thing. The Israelites grumble and complain. They long for the slavery they knew over the freedom that would have to be formed in them as God's covenant partners. So, God will feed Israel in the wilderness. God will guide the people and reveal a vision for a counter-cultural society grounded in a reverence for life and where freedom, dignity, and justice prevail. The Israelites must develop a taste for freedom and learn to trust God in the wilderness. Everything else rests on this.

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Our God meets our needs in the wilderness and guides us on the way. Let's continue our journey of faith in practical ways with the giving of our offerings.

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

God of wonders, we thank you for your goodness and faithfulness and for how you care for us in the wilderness. May these offerings help meet wider needs as an expression of your grace and love. In Jesus' name, amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God who journeys with people through the wilderness,
we pray for those going to sleep hungry,
for those who don't have safe places to rest,
for those especially vulnerable to the elements.
We pray especially for...

(People pray aloud or in silence)

Merciful God,
feed those who are hungry,
provide safe housing,
protect people from heat and cool, flood or drought.

Kind and loving God, help us trust you
and know that we can bring our needs to you.

Focus your light within us.

Meet us with your love.

God, with our palms open,
we quietly name the needs we have in our own lives
and concerns we have for others we are connected to.

(People pray silently)

In your grace, weave your freedom and joy ever more into our lives.
This we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

Go, with all the company of God's people, from this place now.
Draw near to the God who accompanies you,
who protects and feeds you,
and who extends freedom before you and within you.
May you know fully who God is for you and who you are to God.
Go with love, go with hope, go in peace!

HYMNS

Exodus 16:2–15

Bread of heaven, on you we feed	TiS.513 AHB.434
Christ whose glory fills the skies	TiS.212 AHB.140
Feed us now, O Son of God	AHB.565
Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour	TiS.520 AHB.441
Safe in the shadow of the Lord	TiS.644 SA.74
You satisfy the hungry heart	TiS.539

Psalms 105:1–6, 37–45

Blessed are those whose way is blameless	TiS.75
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	TiS.111 AHB.28

Philippians 1:21–30

Fight the good fight with all your might	TiS.594 AHB.511
I know that my Redeemer lives	TiS.376 AHB.132
My gracious Lord, I own thy right	AHB.483
Lord Jesus, joy of loving hearts	TiS.499 AHB.(420)
Son of God eternal Saviour	TiS.606 AHB.529
We are your people	TiS.468 SA.90

Matthew 20:1–16

A spendthrift lover is the Lord	TiS.676
From heaven you came, helpless babe	TiS.256 AT Everybody.261
Great is your faithfulness	TiS.154 SFGP.95
May the mind of Christ my Saviour	TiS.609 AHB.537
Take my life, and let it be	TiS.599 AHB.520
With joy we meditate the grace	TiS.206 AHB.134