

# 16. Just an Ordinary Day

(Ordinary Time/Thanksgiving)

**Musical Invitation** (*Worship music leaders may play any of the songs listed below or a selection of their choosing.*)

“A Good Beginning” (*Skit*)

(*For two actors, either male or female.*)

**Speaker 1:** Whatcha doin’?

**Speaker 2:** Nothin’ much. What are you doin’?

**Speaker 1:** Lookin’ around.

**Speaker 2:** Lookin’ at what?

**Speaker 1:** These incredible people. Each one of them is here looking for something special.

**Speaker 2:** Hmm . . . What do you think they want to find here?

**Speaker 1:** I don’t know. Maybe friendship, maybe hope.

**Speaker 2:** Maybe they’re here out of habit.

**Speaker 1:** I know why I’m here!

**Speaker 2:** I suppose you’re going to tell me why.

**Speaker 1:** I sure am. I want to look at life a little differently. You know, look around at the world. Check out the beauty of it all. For instance, have you ever taken time to look at a leaf?

**Speaker 2:** OK, I’ll play. What kind of leaf? A large leaf, a small leaf?

**Speaker 1:** It doesn’t really matter; all leaves are awesome, part of God’s creation.

**Speaker 2:** I was afraid of that.

**Speaker 1:** Of what?

**Speaker 2:** That you would get around to “God.” God always seems to creep into your conversation, like God is your friend or teacher, or artist, or dreamer, or something . . .

**Speaker 1:** I guess that’s true; God is all that and more. . . . Today I was thinking of God as creator. We see the beauty of God’s creation not only in nature, but also in the people we meet.

**Speaker 2:** (*Sarcastically*) You mean, like in these people here?

**Speaker 1:** Exactly. Take that person over there—what a great smile!

**Speaker 2:** It does light up this room.

**Speaker 1:** Ever noticed the facial expressions of people when they greet each other in the worship service?

**Speaker 2:** No, but now that you’ve mentioned it, I’ll pay more attention.

**Speaker 1:** Each person is a special creation to God, as intricate as a leaf, as dynamic as the waterfalls and mountains.

**Speaker 2:** Okay, okay, I get the picture. God’s creation is complex and wonderful. Beauty is all around us, if we open our eyes and look for it.

**Speaker 1:** Yes! “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it!”

**Welcome and Greeting One Another** (*Worship Leader*)

With great joy we welcome you this morning.

Take a few minutes to greet each other, to smile, to laugh, and to rejoice.

See God’s goodness in this day and in each other.

(*To draw the people back together, begin playing “Cantemos al Señor.” If possible, feature acoustic guitar and Latin percussion.*)

**Songs:** “Cantemos al Señor (Let’s Sing unto the Lord),” UMH, no.149

“Clap Your Hands,” TFWS, no. 2028 (*See also CC.*)

**Prayer**

Creator God, from the tiniest speck to the grandest mountain,  
from the rolling sea to the limitless universe, you are with us.  
In each vista we see the marks of your creative power.

Open our eyes and our hearts this day  
to appreciate the incredible diversity and  
uniqueness of the earth and all its inhabitants.  
Help us to take time, to remove ourselves  
from the rush and busyness of everyday living,  
to look around and truly see the beauty.  
And having seen the outer beauty of the world,  
help us to see the inner beauty in each person.

### Statement of Faith

*(Use a statement of faith from your tradition that acknowledges God's act of creation, such as "A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada." See UMH, no. 883.)*

### Message Movers—Part 1

Think about what you have just read. It has to do with the awareness of God's creative energy and power and our faith as the story of God's love unfolds. What a wonderful sense of the continual creative actions of God! This is not a static faith—it is dynamic. God's time is busy!

One problem we face is the busyness of our lives. Many of us need Palm Pilots, date books/calendars, computers, or other devices to remind us of what we must be doing at any given time. Although our days are busy, we do not consider most days to be anything special.

The Pharisees and religious leaders of Jesus' day were also concerned with how to use time. Specific religious celebrations marked high points in time, but the rest of life/time was ordinary—without specific designation.

For a moment think about your days. Do your days follow one another without moments of joy? Is life tedious and mundane? Do you mark time from one weekend to another? We often say that we live for vacations, celebrations, weekends, and breaks from the daily schedules of living. We cry, "Lord, just get us through the daily grind."

We have lost the sense of beauty in the ordinary. The tedium of our daily lives overcomes our efforts to sense God's presence with us. A friend insisted that even birthdays and holidays were nothing special: "Just another day as far as I am concerned." She found no pleasure, no wonder, no joy in her life. She was afraid to expect anything, because every time she began to hope or celebrate, something hurt or disappointed her. So to avoid being hurt, she did not invest any hope or joy in her living. But to live like that is to be immersed in continual hurt and pain. To never experience the overwhelming joy of life around us—even in the dark times, when the joy comes in the strength of family and friends—is tragic.

Has it been like this for you? Have you lost the sense of wonder? Do you long for moments of

delight and joy, perhaps like when you were a little kid lying on your back on the grass, watching the puffy summer clouds and trying to pick out various shapes?

Take a moment—look around. Nothing is ordinary. Each day brings wonder and delight when we take the time and accept the risk to look for it.

Many things delight me. *(Insert a personal story, using the one presented here for ideas.)* We eagerly awaited Hannah's birth. With great joy, Hannah entered the world of her mom and dad and all the people at church. What a wonder a baby is! Each day brought changes in Hannah, new discoveries and new abilities. From her first crawling ventures, to her tentative steps in walking, I watched with fascination. Each Sunday her mother or her father carried her forward to be with the other children for children's time in our worship service. Now she walks up front, just holding onto her parent's finger, to be with other children. She is learning and growing so fast. This time will go by too quickly. I want to hold each moment of it in my memory, to revisit the day when Hannah goes to school, graduates, and moves out into the world. What a wondrous gift it is to watch a child grow!

What surprises and delights you? Look around. God's wonders are everywhere. *(Insert a personal story, using the one presented here for ideas.)* One summer day, I stood transfixed at my office window, watching a sleeping baby fox that was curled up behind the church sanctuary. The fox awoke, stretched, looked around, and ambled back into the woods. "Thank you for this precious gift on this ordinary Wednesday," I breathed. Now, the day was no longer ordinary. I was able to see a special moment.

**Song:** "My Gratitude Now Accept, O God," TFWS, no. 2044

*(This song could be sung by a soloist, preferably accompanied by acoustic guitar.)*

**Alternate Song Selection:** "I Hope You Dance" by Tia Sillers and Mark D. Sanders

*(As sung by Lee Ann Womack on the I Hope You Dance CD)*

*(You could sing this live or use the CD recording. If using the CD, consider creating an interpretive dance or a slide presentation to accompany the song.)*

### Message Movers—Part 2

No time with God is ordinary. It becomes ordinary when we fail to appreciate all that is around us and neglect the opportunities to celebrate God's love. We do not have to rely on holidays, weekends, or vacations for the source of our celebration. *(Keyboardist begins softly playing "In His Time" here.)* All

time is God's time, the in-breaking, wonderful, abiding presence of creation in our midst. In the reality of calendars, watches, and Palm Pilots, may we teach our children and ourselves to enjoy the ordinary, which is after all, very extraordinary!

### Segue to Prayer Time

*(The keyboardist continues softly to play "In His Time" as the Worship Leader reads the segue.)*

This is a time for both gathering and letting go.  
Gather your spirits to the Lord,  
let go of the stresses and struggles that you feel.  
In the ordinary, begin to discover the extraordinary.

**Response:** "In His Time," TFWS, no. 2203

*(Consider superimposing the text over graphics of beautiful scenery, followed by photos of people. The photos should reflect celebration. Make sure that the text can be easily read. After stanza 2, play an instrumental pass and then sing stanza 1 again.)*

**Prayer Time and Moments of Quietness:** *(Worship Leader)*

*(Focus on moments of quietness. Do not play any music during the prayer time because it will detract from the silence.)*

Lord, help us to be quiet, to resist the desire to fill every moment with noise:  
the noise of living, the noise of our busyness,  
the noise of plans that rumble around in our heads.

Clear our minds and give us a moment's peace.  
*(Quiet moment)*

Help us to slow down enough to appreciate the beauty around us.  
*(Quiet moment)*

Help us to focus on our own breathing,  
the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling,  
and to remember that you are the breath of life.  
*(Quiet moment)*

Help us to relax in your love and creative power.  
Enable us to place our trust in your abiding presence.  
*(Quiet moment)*

Refreshing God, we thank you for these moments of quietness and relaxation.  
With glad and joyful hearts, we thank you for time in which we can begin to experience the uniqueness of all creation and of each moment in time. Amen.

**Song:** "Give Thanks," TFWS, no. 2036

### Segue into Opportunities for Service:

In appreciation for the joy of each day,  
we celebrate the many ways we can serve the Lord.

### Opportunities for Service

#### Segue to Offering

What a great day to be together, to share, and to rejoice.  
God calls us into community, to offer our gifts and our service for healing,  
renewal, and hope in this world.  
Bring now your offerings to God in thanksgiving for all the incredible blessings in your life.

**Offering:** "Joyful, Joyful/Praise God" arranged by Nylea L. Butler-Moore

#### Sending Forth

Look around at each other again. Smile.  
Look with love and wonder.  
Each one of us is a unique creation of God—  
there is no ordinary person here.  
We are all extraordinary because God has called us so.  
Go forth to discover the wonders of the world,  
and know that you are part of those joyful wonders.  
Go out with joy and be led forth with peace.

**Closing Song:** "The Trees of the Field," TFWS, no. 2279

*(Worship music leaders may play "The Trees of the Field" as the congregation exits.)*

## Service 16. "Just an Ordinary Day" Visual Resources and Ideas

### DESIGN CONCEPT

This can be a dual use service, for Ordinary Time or Thanksgiving. (Photo #16 in the insert shows a visual setting for Ordinary Time.)

How often do we take the world, our families, and friends for granted? We think that almost everything in our lives is "ordinary." In this service, we want to celebrate the "extraordinary" that we have called ordinary.

### DESIGN AND DISPLAY SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES

#### Structure

Place a large plant stand behind the table to hold the large Boston fern. Place a ten-inch-high

riser at the back of the table, adding candles on this riser. To house the other large Boston fern, put a milk carton at the front of the table.

### **Fabric**

Cover the table with ten yards of green cotton fabric. Using about six yards of antique gold silkene lining, drape the table and “puddle” the material over the milk crate. Place a hand-made doily on the left side of the table.

### **Candles**

Use three wrought iron candlesticks, place a 6-inch white pillar candle on each of the stands. On the riser at the back of the table, place one 10-inch, two 6-inch, and four 4-inch white pillar candles.

### **Florals and Plants**

On a large plant stand in back of the table to the right, place a large Boston fern. Put two potted palms in medium-sized plant stands and locate on the back corners, right and left, of the table. Position a large leafy plant in front of the palm plant on the left of the table. Beside this plant, add a basket containing artificial ivy. A rubber tree plant is on the right side of the other large Boston fern. Use a milk crate as the base for the large Boston fern. To the right of the Boston fern, place a rubber tree plant, and behind the medium-sized wrought iron candlestick, put the artificial hydrangea. Add a basket of artificial crocus plants in the center back of the table.

### **Other Items**

Position a host of wonderfully framed photos across the altar. (Most of these photos can be borrowed from the visual arts team.) Try to collect photos from members of your congregation for the table. If you are going to use photos from the congregation, be sure to list the donors in the bulletin.

### **SPECIAL NOTES**

People in your congregation will enjoy coming up after the worship service to look closely at the photographs. Be sure to return the photographs to the donors promptly.

### **VISUAL RESOURCES**

- Fabric: Green cotton fabric and antique gold silkene lining, purchased at a local fabric store
- Doily: Borrowed from a Bible stand at St. Paul’s UMC
- Candles: Purchased at a local craft store
- Wrought iron candlesticks and artificial plants: Borrowed from Nancy Townley
- Large plants: Borrowed from Bud’s Florist and Greenhouse

- Photographs: Provided by Jerry and Barbara Popp, Lesley Leonard, and Nancy Townley

### **WORSHIP RESOURCES**

“Cantemos al Señor (Let’s Sing Unto the Lord)”  
UMH, no. 149.

“Clap Your Hands,” TFWS, no. 2028; or CC, no. 70.

“Give Thanks,” TFWS, no. 2036. See also OGR, p. 52; or WOW Blue songbook, p. 41 and CD, yellow disc.

“I Hope You Dance,” sung by Lee Ann Womack on *I Hope You Dance* (MCA Nashville Records). Sheet music for piano/vocal/guitar published by Hal Leonard Corporation.

“In His Time,” TFWS, no. 2203. See also MGB, no. 45; or WOW Blue songbook, p. 60 and CD, yellow disc.

“Joyful, Joyful/Praise God,” an upbeat arrangement by Nylea L. Butler-Moore of “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” and the OLD 100th doxology. Lead sheet available. For information, contact Nylea at [nbmoosic@aol.com](mailto:nbmoosic@aol.com).

“My Gratitude Now Accept, O God,” TFWS, no. 2044.

“(A) Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada,” UMH, no. 883.

“The Trees of the Field,” TFWS, no. 2279.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

“Beautiful Moments,” sung by Jami Smith on her *Home* CD (Vertical Music). For more information, visit [www.jamismith.com](http://www.jamismith.com).

“Blessed,” sung by Martina McBride on her *Greatest Hits* CD (RCA Records).

“Every Season,” sung by Nichole Nordeman. See *WOW 2001, The Year’s 30 Top Christian Artists and Songs* CD (EMI Christian Music Group), silver disc. Solo tracks available from Christian World.

“God of Wonders,” iWOR songbook, CD set, DVD-B, and multiformat tracks. Sung by City on a Hill. See *WOW 2001, The Year’s 30 Top Christian Artists and Songs* CD (EMI Christian Music Group), blue disc.

“God the Sculptor of the Mountains,” TFWS, no. 2060.

“Let All Things Now Living,” TFWS, no. 2008.

“Lord, We Come to Ask Your Blessing,” TFWS, no. 2230.

“May You Run and Not Be Weary,” TFWS, no. 2281.  
See also CC, no. 73 and CD.

Prayers in UMH: “Prayer to the Holy Spirit,” no. 329; “Bread and Justice” no. 639; and “For a New Day,” no. 676.

“Thank You, Lord,” UMH, no. 84.

“This Good Day,” sung by Fernando Ortega. See *WOW 2001, The Year’s 30 Top Christian Artists and Songs* (EMI Christian Music Group), CD, silver disc.

“This Is the Day,” CC, no. 69.

## Just an Ordinary Day

**Musical Invitation** (*Worship Music Leaders*)

“A Good Beginning” (*Skit*)

**Welcome and Greeting One Another**

**Songs:** “Cantemos al Señor (Let’s Sing unto the Lord)” by Carlos Rosas  
“Clap Your Hands” by Handt Hanson and Paul Murakami

**Prayer**

**Statement of Faith**

**Message—Part 1**

**Song:** “My Gratitude Now Accept, O God” by Rafael Montalvo  
-or- “I Hope You Dance” by Tia Sillers and Mark D. Sanders

**Message—Part 2**

**Response:** “In His Time” by Diane Ball

**Prayer Time and Moments of Quietness**

**Song:** “Give Thanks” by Henry Smith

**Opportunities for Service**

**Offering:** “Joyful, Joyful/Praise God” arranged by Nylea L. Butler-Moore

**Sending Forth**

**Closing Song:** “The Trees of the Field” by Steffi Geiser Ruben and Stuart Dauermann

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