

# How to be a super-hero

Julian Smith *reflects on Amos 7:7-15*

Our thirst for super-hero movies seems unquenchable, but in reality there is no one to sweep in and sweep away our problems. Last year showed that our heroes come from a very different mould. They included healthcare staff, workers at our local care homes and supermarkets, corner-shop owners, volunteers at community shops and food banks, postal workers and delivery drivers. Many were immigrants, on the minimum wage and, until then, largely taken for granted. Unlikely heroes all.

This is nothing new for God. The Bible shows us how God calls and empowers ordinary people – Amos is a good example. He is not a smooth-talking professional; he is a plain man, a herdsman and dresser of trees, who has been called by God to prophesy to “my people Israel”. Amos is sent to set Israel straight. Amos is abrasive and uncompromising, he is from a class of people beneath contempt, and he is an immigrant.

But Amos has some things going for him – he is open to God, willing and able to listen, and he has the courage to say “yes” when God calls.

Super-heroes may be fictional, but God’s calling of unlikely heroes continues. If you are open to God, willing and able to listen and are brave enough to say “yes”, the next unlikely hero could be you. 😊



Dear God, we thank you for calling unlikely people to be heroes in your earthly kingdom and for those who have touched our lives. Give us grace to be open to you and courage to say “yes” to your call. Amen.

## Making Ordinary Time anything but

by Caroline Hodgson

One of our greatest challenges is to stop thinking of “ordinary” time as wasted or “dead” time. So here is an exercise in thinking and praying about what’s “ordinary” in our lives. First, set aside at least half an hour – and stick to it. Then take a piece of paper

– the bigger the better – and a bold pen, and start compiling a list of activities you find “ordinary”. You can work as a group, but each person should create their individual list. You might include washing up, commuting to work, visiting a relative. Be honest (but sensitive) and resist the temptation to get into big discussions at this stage. Every time you find yourself faltering, take a minute to pray – this is a wonderful exercise in achieving clarity through prayer. Keep the list visible during the week, and every time you find yourself doing something “ordinary”, add it to the list. 😊

## Characters from the lectionary

by Julian Smith

*St Swithun, bishop, is commemorated on Thursday. Julian Smith looks at his life and legacy.*

Immortality is assured when a rose is named after you. St Swithun has a “large, strongly-scented, soft-pink bloom of more than a hundred petals” to his name.

But his fame does not depend upon a rose. Nor does it depend upon knowledge of his holy and humble life, his ten years as Bishop of Winchester in the mid-tenth century or his time as an

adviser to King Egbert. Swithun is remembered for the legends that attend the moving of his body.

According to his wishes Swithun was buried in a simple grave outside his cathedral. When a new cathedral was being built it was planned to move his remains to a shrine within the building. Despite dire warnings of storms and tempests, Swithun’s remains were moved on 15 July 971 and forty days of storms ensued.

Never mind the rose, Swithun is remembered for his link to the weather and his day is anticipated with trepidation. 😊

“ God is faithful even when his children are not.”

Max Lucado (born 1955), American author and pastor