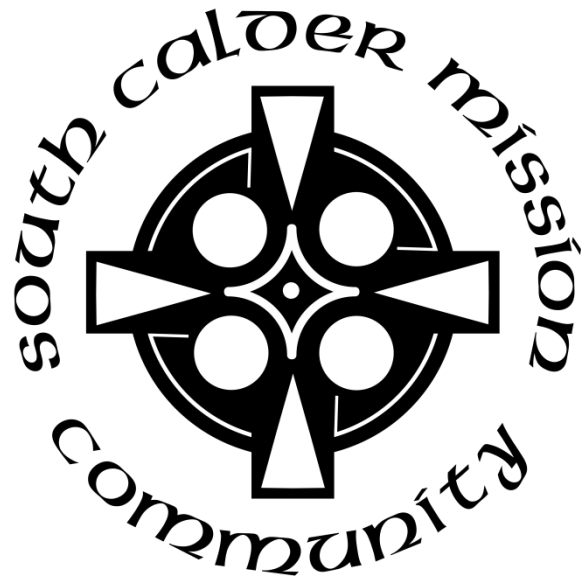


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word

Sunday 13 July 2025
Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*"He has rescued us from the power of darkness and
transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom
we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*

Colossians 1:14



THE CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.
Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our
sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God,
I confess that I have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed;
I have not loved you with all my heart;
I have not loved my neighbours as myself.
Have mercy upon me,
cleanse me from my sins,
and help me to overcome my faults,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Receive God's forgiveness

May the Father forgive us
By the death of His Son
And strengthen us
To live in the power of the Spirit
All our days. **Amen.**

PRAISE

O Lord, open my lips...
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Give me the joy of your saving help...
and sustain me with your life-giving Spirit.

THE COLLECT

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.**

THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalm 82

God has taken his stand in the council of heaven; ♦
in the midst of the gods he gives judgement:
'How long will you judge unjustly ♦
and show such favour to the wicked?
'You were to judge the weak and the orphan; ♦
defend the right of the humble and needy;
'Rescue the weak and the poor; ♦
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
'They have no knowledge or wisdom;
they walk on still in darkness: ♦
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
'Therefore I say that though you are gods ♦
and all of you children of the Most High,
'Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals ♦

and fall like one of their princes.'
Arise, O God and judge the earth, ♦
for it is you that shall take all nations for your possession.

Amos 7:7-end.

This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb-line.' Then the Lord said, 'See, I am setting a plumb-line
in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass them by;
the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.'

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, 'Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land." '

And Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.'

Then Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

'Now therefore hear the word of the Lord.

You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel,
and do not preach against the house of Isaac."

Therefore, thus says the Lord:

"Your wife shall become a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword,
and your land shall be parcelled out by line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land." '

Colossians 1:1-14.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Brother, sister, let me serve you.**

GOSPEL

Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

REFLECTION – The Good Samaritan.

A Teacher of the Law asked Jesus, 'Who is my neighbour?' Jesus' answer was the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Of course, we are all familiar with this story, so much so that the phrase 'being a good Samaritan' has entered our language: a man is attacked, wounded and robbed; three other men come down that road; two pass by and one stops to help the injured man.

'Which one acted like a neighbour towards the man attacked by robbers?' asks Jesus.

'The one who helped him.'

'You do the same.'

What more is there to say? End of sermon – what comes next?

But in fact there *is* more that we can say. Time and again in the gospels either Pharisees or Teachers of the Law are testing Jesus, trying to catch him out and accuse him of misleading people. In this story, the Teacher of the Law asks about receiving eternal life, and Jesus turns the question back on him:

'What do the scriptures say? How do you interpret them?'

Being an expert in the Law, the man quotes two famous passages from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, 'Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself.'

'You are right,' says Jesus. Of course he's right – he's a Teacher of the Law. But now he adds a supplementary question. Is he still trying to catch Jesus out, or is he now genuinely wanting to explore the subject. 'Who is my neighbour?' – and Jesus responds with the parable.

I have sometimes seen modern versions of this parable acted out by church drama groups or youth groups. The priest and the Levite are represented by a vicar, a social worker or a teacher – people who would be expected to do the right thing. The Samaritan is represented by a punk rocker, a football fan, or whoever is the current image of a 'bad boy'. This tells a simple, clear story which makes the main point, but it does miss an important Jewish aspect of the story, that of being ritually unclean.

A person was considered to be unclean if, for example, they had had contact with a foreigner, if they had eaten food not allowed by the Law, if they had touched a person suffering from leprosy – or if they had had contact with blood. (For this reason a woman had to go through a ceremony of purification after childbirth, something we remember at Candlemas, when Mary and Joseph take the new-born Jesus to the temple and make an offering.) Being ritually unclean meant being separated from the gifts and blessings of God and excluded from gatherings of his people. A period of cleansing and the offering of a sacrifice were required for the person to be restored to fellowship.

Priests and Levites were the ones who led the worship and offered the sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. They were required to be ritually pure while they carried out these duties; could not function if they became unclean. This was their dilemma when they came across the injured man at the side of the road. If they helped him they would become unclean and thus barred from the temple for a time. They had to decide whether their work at the temple was more important than helping the man, and both chose to pass by on the other side of the road.

The Samaritan was not pre-occupied with the details of the Jewish law: he simply saw a fellow human being in distress and did what he could to help him. Samaritans and Jews were not generally on friendly terms, but this obvious case of need overcame such considerations.

So we have three men coming down the road where the man lay injured. They all wanted to do the right thing, but two of them made the wrong decision about what that right thing was. Not two bad men and one good man – it is much more complicated than that. Jesus asks which of them

fulfilled the command to love one's neighbour. The Teacher of the Law has no hesitation in saying,

'The one who was kind to him, the one who helped him.'

'You do the same,' says Jesus. 'Get your priorities right. The temple is important; helping a human being in need is more important.'

When I am leading a service or preaching I look at the congregation and I see people who are all well-intentioned; who all, generally, want to do the right thing. People who want to follow the example and teaching of Jesus and are willing to put some thought and effort into doing it. But just like the three men in the story, we don't always know exactly what we ought to do. We sometimes need help in deciding what is right. I am not talking about those situations where there is a clear choice between bad and good, right and wrong. I hope we can all make that sort of choice. It is where we can see the *possibility* of good in either route, yet need some guidance in finding the way our Father God would want us to take. That guidance can come in a variety of ways: our past experience of the Christian life; our reading of scripture; seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit through prayer; and in fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters, as we seek a common mind on some issue.

Who is my neighbour? The short answer is, anyone who needs our help. The longer answer is that in any situation there will be a 'best' solution, and the closer we can come to seeing it through Jesus' eyes the more likely we are to do what is right.

Jonathan Falkner

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***When I needed a neighbour.***

THE CREED

**All I believe in God the Father,
 whose loving care is the pattern for family life.
 I believe in Jesus, the Son of God,
 who lives in my heart through faith,
 and fills me with his love.
 I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens me with power from on high.
 I believe in one God;
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**



The Parable of the Good Samaritan (1575)
 Francesco da Ponte (1549 - 1592)

A time of quiet prayer for

- *The universal Church - Bishops, synods and all leaders church*
- *The leaders of the nations*
- *The natural world and the resources of the earth*

Loving God I see the news and I am afraid. Violence is spiralling out of control. I don't know what to think or feel. The temptation to fall into hatred, or despair feels very close at hand.

Help me to remember that nothing in all creation can separate me from your love that I know in Jesus. May your perfect love for me cast out my fear and free me to discern what is mine to do amidst the chaos of this suffering world.

Amen.

The Methodist Church.

Finishing with the South Calder Mission Community prayer...

**Heavenly Father we thank you for the life of your Church in this place, and in all the villages of the South Calder Mission Community;
 for all who have served and worshipped you in years gone by, for all who make up your family in our churches today, for the faith we have in common, and for the people and traditions which make each church unique.
 By your Spirit, guide and equip us, that together we might find new ways to reach out to our local community, to show your love to our neighbours, and to encourage them to follow the Lord Jesus in their lives. Father, we offer ourselves to your service. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, And in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

and the Lord's prayer...

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
 thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation;
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom,
 the power and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.**



THE CONCLUSION

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Take my life and let it be.**

The following prayer is said

**Be with me, Lord, as I finish my prayer today.
May my lips always speak the truth;
may my eyes which have read your word
see only what is good;
and may my life as well as my worship
be always pleasing in your sight,
for the glory of your name. Amen.**

And now may the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit,
strengthen us for the Christian life.
May the Lord who provides for all our needs
sustain us day by day.
May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,
send us out to live and work for others.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.
Amen.
So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.

<https://youtu.be/FFxZeY2D5tc>

Brother, sister, let me serve you.

<https://youtu.be/EQaOErUUjm8>

When I needed a neighbour.

https://youtu.be/guBKGeq8_hw

Take my life and let it be.

<https://youtu.be/Of4l5bTdZ8M>