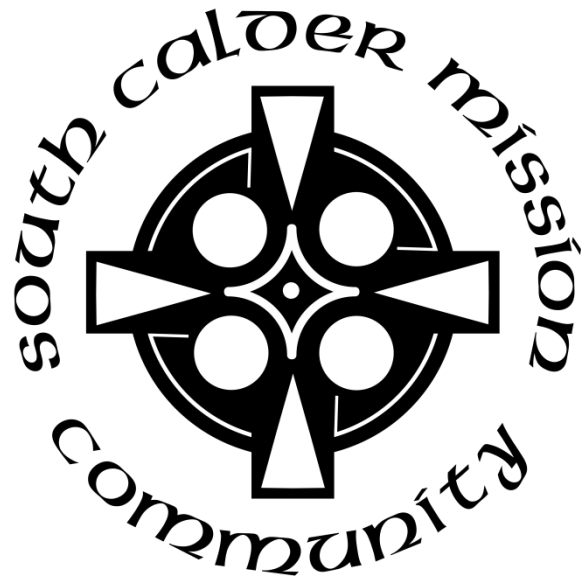


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word

Sunday 3 August 2025
Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

"When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory."

Colossians 3:4



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

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Thy kingdom come, O God.**

THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalm 49.1–12.

- 1 Hear this, all you peoples; ♦
listen, all you that dwell in the world,
- 2 You of low or high degree, ♦
both rich and poor together.
- 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom ♦
and my heart shall meditate on understanding.
- 4 I will incline my ear to a parable; ♦
I will unfold my riddle with the lyre.
- 5 Why should I fear in evil days, ♦
when the malice of my foes surrounds me,
- 6 Such as trust in their goods ♦
and glory in the abundance of their riches?
- 7 For no one can indeed ransom another ♦
or pay to God the price of deliverance.

- 8 To ransom a soul is too costly; ♦
there is no price one could pay for it,
- 9 So that they might live for ever, ♦
and never see the grave.
- 10 For we see that the wise die also;
with the foolish and ignorant they perish ♦
and leave their riches to others.
- 11 Their tomb is their home for ever,
their dwelling through all generations, ♦
though they call their lands after their own names.
- 12 Those who have honour, but lack understanding, ♦
are like the beasts that perish.

Ecclesiastes 1.2, 12–14; 2.18–23.

Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me — and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.

So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labours under the sun, because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.

Colossians 3:1–11.

1. Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
2. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
3. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
4. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
6. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
7. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips.
8. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
9. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Blest are the pure in heart.***

GOSPEL

Luke 12:13-21.

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.'

But he said to him, 'Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.'

Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is

with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

REFLECTION – Dead or Alive?

In today's passage from the Letter to the Colossians, Paul makes a number of references to being dead, raised and alive, which need some unpacking. In verse 3 he writes:

'You died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.'

In the previous chapter (2: 20) he had said:

'Since you died with Christ, why do you live as though you still belonged to this world?'

Yet we are here today, very much alive **and** still living in the world.

Perhaps there is a clue in Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 6 verse 11: 'Reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.'

Now the way we use the word 'reckon' today is usually to express an opinion or conclusion. I might look at the sky, observe the clouds, note the wind direction, and say, 'I reckon it's going to rain.' I might be wrong, but it is a reasonable deduction. However, the original meaning of 'reckon' was much more precise. It referred to adding up a column of numbers, carrying out a computation. If you reckoned something there was only one possible answer. And in fact the word Paul uses in Greek definitely referred to a calculation with numbers, with no room for error or approximation. So he is saying in Romans, 'Add up the facts, and there is only one answer: you are dead to sin and alive to God.'

So what are these facts?

1. Jesus died on the cross, winning there the victory over sin and death.
2. He was raised, and is now alive with the Father.
3. You have united yourself with Jesus by faith.
4. Therefore what is true for him is true for you too.
5. Therefore **you** died and rose again; **your** life is hidden with God.

Well, that is all very neat so far, but the reality is that we are also still in the world, we still face temptation. Paul says (v. 5):

'Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature,' turn away from these sinful ways, which he goes on to illustrate by two lists. Now the people of Colossae would be familiar with a number of religions which involved the worship of idols. In fact, most of them would have been involved in such religions before converting to Christianity.

The list in verse 5 – lust, greed etc., he compares with idol worship. In other words, if you let anything become more important to you than God is, you are in effect committing idolatry. You are putting your own desires in the place of God.

The second list, in verse 8, are signs of the old life. You have put off the old self and put on the new. How, then, can you still allow yourself malice, slander, lying and the rest? These things are incompatible with your new life, united with Christ, renewed in the image of your Creator. They are the opposite of Christ's example of self-giving love. (Of course, both these lists are only examples – there are plenty of other ways of living the old life!)

To emphasise that we are now living by completely different standards, Paul adds verse 11, which denies all the old divisions, between Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, slave and free, barbarian and Scythian. (If you are wondering what a Scythian is, they originally came from east of the Black Sea, but the term came to mean an outsider, even worse than a barbarian. Even these, if they became Christians, were equally acceptable, and accepted, with all the rest.) In the new order, all these are united with Christ, all one with him, all included in the church.

Now it is all very well for Paul to say there is a new world, a new self; that the old self has gone – but as I said earlier, we are still in the world, we still have to relate to people who have **not** put their faith in Jesus, we still have to face the same temptations. We are to live as new creatures, live as Jesus lived, yet still subject to all the pressures and demands of living in the society and community in which we are placed. It requires a daily turning towards God, a continuous process of confessing where we have failed and seeking the help of the Holy Spirit in re-focussing on Jesus.

The twentieth century theologian CH Dodd wrote of 'the Now and the Not Yet.' Jesus has won the victory, and we are invited to share in it, but the full extent of that victory is not yet acknowledged in the world. Jesus has died, and we have died with him, but we have not yet been removed from this world and its demands and temptations. Perhaps when Paul wrote, he thought the 'Not yet' would not last very long. We are so used to living in the 'Not yet' that we might forget that we have indeed put on the new self. We need to be clear where we stand and where our hope lies.

I wonder if you remember the television series 'Yes Minister'? The three main characters were Jim Hacker, the government minister; Sir Humphrey, the senior civil servant; and in the middle Bernard, the minister's private

secretary, yet also a civil servant answerable to Sir Humphrey. In one episode when the minister is at odds with Sir Humphrey, he asks, 'Bernard, when the chips are down, whose side are you on?' 'Oh minister,' he answers, 'my job is to see that the chips never go down.'

Paul is telling us in Colossians that the chips **are** down. We need to be clear which side we are on. It can be difficult in a world of many pressures, many influences, many temptations. So just do the reckoning again:

From Romans 6: 11 –

'Reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.'

From Colossians 3: 3 –

'You died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.'

And from Colossians 3: 9 & 10 –

'You have taken off your old self and put on the new.'

Jonathan Falkner.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **The kingdom of God is justice and joy.***

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.**



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.**

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

<i>Suggested hymn to sing or read</i> He will hold me fast.
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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

Thy kingdom come, O God.

<https://youtu.be/K3S9faT7odc>

Blest are the pure in heart.

<https://youtu.be/Z8h3fvk9wGY>

The kingdom of God is justice and joy.

<https://youtu.be/YD2bnZt9GWM>

He will hold me fast.

<https://youtu.be/z4tTPDyEtPE>