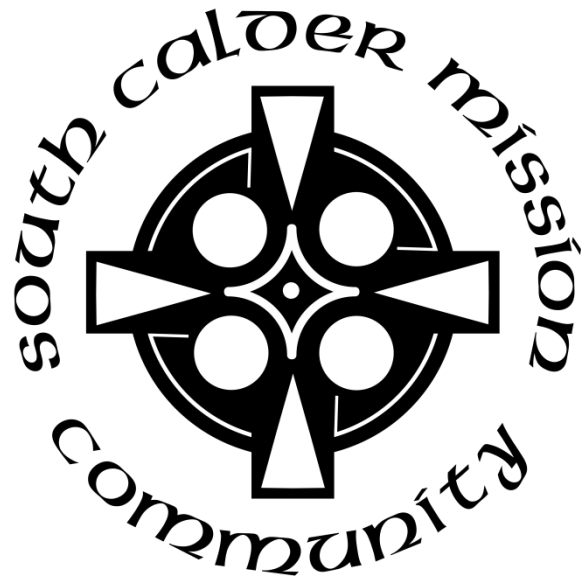


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word

Sunday 14 September 2025
Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.”

John 3:16



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

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***The Lord's my shepherd.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalm 14.

The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' ♦
Corrupt are they, and abominable in their wickedness;
there is no one that does good.
The Lord has looked down from heaven
upon the children of earth, ♦
to see if there is anyone who is wise
and seeks after God.
But every one has turned back;
all alike have become corrupt: ♦
there is none that does good; no, not one.
Have they no knowledge, those evildoers, ♦
who eat up my people as if they ate bread
and do not call upon the Lord?
There shall they be in great fear; ♦
for God is in the company of the righteous.

Though they would confound the counsel of the poor, ♦
yet the Lord shall be their refuge.
O that Israel's salvation would come out of Zion! ♦
When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,
then will Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

Jeremiah 4:11–12, 22–28.

At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem: A hot wind comes from me out of the bare heights in the desert towards my poor people, not to winnow or cleanse— a wind too strong for that. Now it is I who speak in judgement against them.

'For my people are foolish,
they do not know me;
they are stupid children,
they have no understanding.
They are skilled in doing evil,
but do not know how to do good.'

I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void;
and to the heavens, and they had no light.
I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking,
and all the hills moved to and fro.
I looked, and lo, there was no one at all,
and all the birds of the air had fled.
I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert,
and all its cities were laid in ruins
before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

For thus says the Lord: The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end.

Because of this the earth shall mourn,
and the heavens above grow black;
for I have spoken, I have purposed;
I have not relented nor will I turn back.

1 Timothy 1:12–17.

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Immortal, invisible.***

GOSPEL

Luke 15: 1-10.

All the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near Jesus to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So he told them this parable:

‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

‘Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’

REFLECTION – Lost and Found.

The readings this week are talking about things and people which have been lost and found.

I expect you’ve lost things which you needed, or things that have been precious to you. Perhaps you have been lost yourself at some time. A few weeks ago Mary and I were ready to go to Gosforth for a service and were very nearly late because I couldn’t find my car keys. I panicked, and Mary was trying to keep me calm (thank you Mary!) and got me to empty out my bag properly – and **there they were** – oh, the relief!

Another time, we had just moved to a hamlet near Aspatria, and our Silver Wedding was coming up. I wanted my engagement ring for the occasion and couldn’t find it. Had it been lost in the move? I reminded myself that it was Jonathan and our family that were important, and not the ring, but I couldn’t help minding. Fortunately it did turn up in time. I wore it for the celebrations and it added to the joy.

Well, it’s bad enough when you lose an object you value, but how do you value people? The world values people depending upon their relative worth. Is someone going to benefit you in some way? Are they poor or rich? Are they the same colour / class / social status as you?

It is worth thinking about your own attitude to people: if we are all made in the image of God, we should be trying to see them through God’s eyes, not the world’s. It’s so easy to forget.

Losing someone you love, who is precious to you, is very hard to bear. Not just when people die, but when they go missing, or don’t want to be with you any more. Sometimes we don’t realise how much someone means to us until they are not there any more. I try to talk to God about how I feel, even if it is hurt and negative. He wants us to tell him, and trust him with our feelings, even when we can’t understand why something has happened. Life is complicated.

But through the parables Jesus tells in the gospel reading today, and all through the Bible, we learn that we are each precious to God. He is searching, searching for the person who is lost to him, who has never found him, or who has turned away from him.

And when he finds them again, or **they** find him or respond to him and accept that they need forgiveness from him, and that Jesus died for them – what joy God has, what rejoicing there is in heaven.

My commentary on this passage says:

‘God persistently seeks the lost and rejoices at their redemption.’

We all matter to God, we are priceless – precious beyond price. What a wonderful thought. I have to remind myself about this when I’m having a struggle with low self-esteem.

Being lost to God, or wandering away from him, can happen even to the most spiritual people. Just look at what Paul says in the reading we had from 1 Timothy. We look to Paul as an apostle, a theologian. He helped to establish the first church communities around the Mediterranean and preached the gospel, making many new Christians. In these verses he says he is grateful to our Lord Jesus Christ, who judged him faithful, and appointed him to Christ’s service, **even though** he used to be a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But God searched him out, gave him a chance to change his mind, and was merciful. Paul has experienced the grace, faith and love that are in Jesus.

For that is the reason that Jesus came into the world: to save sinners. Paul says that he received mercy from God so that it would show that God could have the **utmost** patience, and make him an example to others. If this can happen to Paul, it can happen to anyone.

We all fall short, because we’re only human. I know there are many occasions when I’ve done or said something that I wish I hadn’t, or judged someone, when I should have left that to God. Or when I have forgotten to do something (or didn’t even think of) which would have shown God’s love for someone.

And I know I don’t pray enough about people and situations, or thank and praise God enough, or ask God to show me what he wants me to do. As a school report might say,
‘There is a lot of room for improvement. Could do better!’

But I know that I can come to God, my heavenly Father, and ask for forgiveness. When I turn to him, he rejoices, because I am precious to him, and he will forgive me and we’ll start again. We are all still loved and cherished by God, whatever we have done or said.

We have only to turn to him again to be forgiven. It’s so easy to get distracted, and wander away from God, without realising it, like the lost sheep in the story that Jesus told, which suddenly found itself stuck somewhere and needed rescuing. It is worth thinking about if we are being distracted: is there anything we can do to spend more time with God, and to focus on him again.

When we stray, whatever the reason, however it happens, we miss out on who we are meant to be. Jesus came into the world so that we could find our way back to God, and be the people he intended us to be.

It doesn’t matter who we are, or how we are valued by other people in this world. We are all loved and valued by God, and God wants the best for us and for our lives.

I am going to finish by quoting that verse from the Gospel of John, which sums this up in a nutshell, John chapter 3 verse 16:
‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.’ Amen!

Sheila Falkner.

<i>Suggested hymn to sing or read</i> O God, you search me and you know me.
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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.
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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

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Lord of creation.**

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

The Lord's my shepherd.

<https://youtu.be/-eIQQayhpak>

Immortal, invisible.

<https://youtu.be/4oGuGzCFEWI>

O God, you search me and you know me.

<https://youtu.be/XST5DCIHh6c>

Lord of creation.

<https://youtu.be/DAVpsmqP85E>