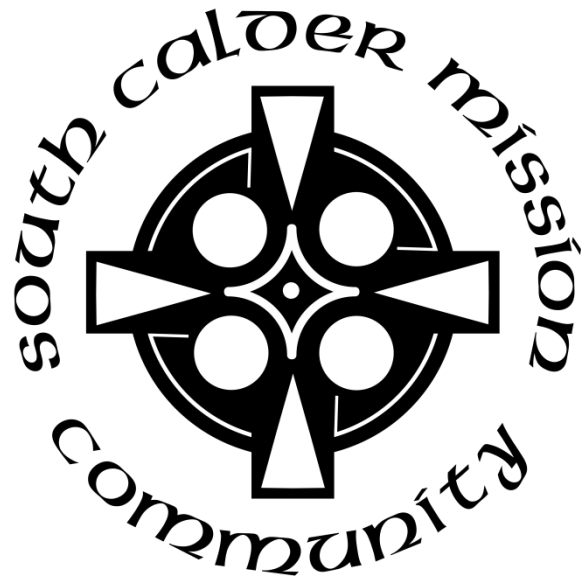


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word

Sunday 28 September 2025
Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*"We brought nothing into the world, so that we can take
nothing out of it."*

1 Timothy 6:6



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

Lord God, defend your Church from all false teaching and give to your people knowledge of your truth, that we may enjoy eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **King of glory, King of peace.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalms 91.

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High ♦
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold, ♦
my God, in whom I put my trust.'
For he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler ♦
and from the deadly pestilence.
He shall cover you with his wings
and you shall be safe under his feathers; ♦
his faithfulness shall be your shield and buckler.
You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, ♦
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, ♦
nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.

Because they have set their love upon me,
therefore will I deliver them; ♦
I will lift them up, because they know my name.
They will call upon me and I will answer them; ♦
I am with them in trouble,
I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
With long life will I satisfy them ♦
and show them my salvation.

Jeremiah 32 : 1-3a, 6-15.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Zedekiah had said, 'Why do you prophesy and say: Thus says the Lord: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came to me: Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.

And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

1 Timothy 6 : 6-19.

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Suggested hymn to sing or read In Christ alone my hope is found.

GOSPEL

Luke 16 : 19-end.

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with

Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” ’

REFLECTION – Dives and Lazarus.

The readings today are well chosen. The Old Testament passage concerns the purchase of a plot of land but has greater symbolic significance. The actions were used to convey the word of the Lord. Today’s extract doesn’t give us the context however. This transaction took place during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Jeremiah’s purchase of a plot of land is a prediction that there is hope, the land shall be restored to the possession of Judah.

The Gospel passage has a similar message of hope for the future. Lazarus, although suffering in this world, will be restored in the life to come. We see him sitting with Abraham while the un-named rich man languishes in hell, suffering the torments that carries with it. Not least is the sight of the redeemed Lazarus, in comfort at last.

It’s worth mentioning that although Luke doesn’t name the rich man, in the original Latin he is Dives, meaning “rich”. There is a well known folk song called “Dives and Lazarus” which amplifies the story, painting Dives as the real villain of the piece.*

In Jewish society, Lazarus was not merely a poor man, he was covered with sores. We read that the dogs licked his sores. This would be enough to make him unclean. Many of Jesus’ listeners might well have cast the rich man in a better light according to the context of their time and custom.

The rich man was favoured by God – of course he was, he was “dressed in purple and fine linen”.

As we look at this story there are several things which spring to mind. One significant point is that Jesus refers to an “afterlife”. Does this raise the meaning beyond the obvious one;

“If you want to go to heaven take care of those less fortunate than yourself”?

Perhaps it does, after all the rich man asks Abraham if Lazarus might be sent to warn his five brothers to mend their ways. He receives the reply from Abraham that there would be no point, if they do not heed Moses and the prophets, why should they be persuaded by someone rising from the dead?

The naming of the characters is also significant. Jesus does not name people in his parables so there must be a reason for Abraham and Lazarus being named here.

Lazarus means “God helps”. Abraham was of course very well known to those hearing this story. Father Abraham was held by the tradition to ensure the safety of all. Earlier in Luke’s Gospel we read that;

“no one should presume to say ‘We have Abraham as father.’”
(Luke 3:8-9)

The “children of Abraham” are those who obey Moses and the prophets and share their worldly wealth with the needy.

We need also to consider the passage from the first letter of Timothy. This adds to the Gospel message.

“Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.”

Sound words of advice which are very relevant in our world, two millennia later.

Timothy takes it a little further, addressing those who are rich;

“They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.”

Let us pray that as we wait in darkness Christ will be our light, shining in our hearts.

Amen.

** I couldn’t resist adding a link to this song in the hymn links. For those of a more classical taste I have also added a link to the Vaughan Williams variants.*

Brian. Pateman.

<i>Suggested hymn to sing or read Longing for light, we wait in darkness.</i>
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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.**

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...

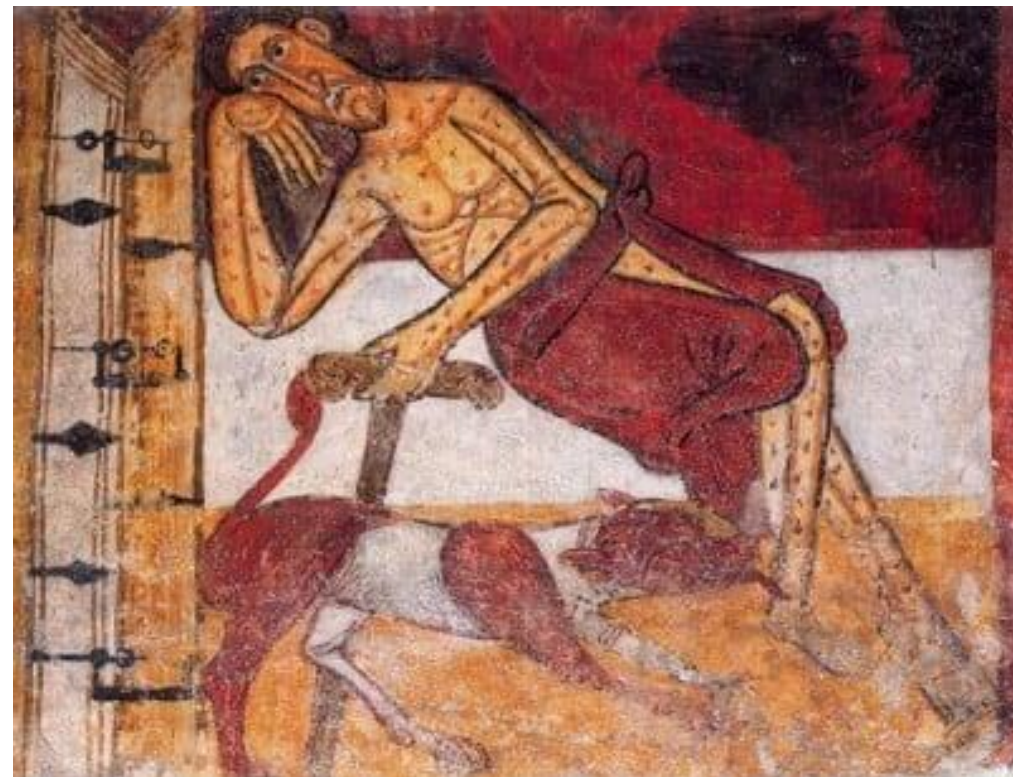
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

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.



Lazarus Waiting at the Door with Dogs, 11th c., Saint Climent di Taull, Barcelona, Spain.

THE CONCLUSION

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?***

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

King of glory, King of peace.

<https://youtu.be/ikj7CiC7v0U>

In Christ alone my hope is found.

<https://youtu.be/ljlsOQ269l4>

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

<https://youtu.be/kt3Qc04uIOM>

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

https://youtu.be/quBKGeq8_hw

Additional music links

Dives and Lazarus (Martin Simpson)

<https://youtu.be/gQVzuwNa1nU>

Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus (R. Vaughan Williams).

<https://youtu.be/hRBuobu57fU>