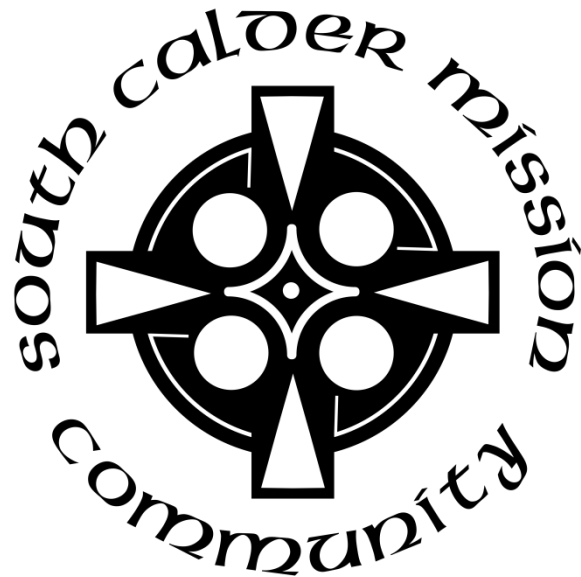


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word
for
Sunday 21 June 2026
Third Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*“ Draw near to my soul and redeem me; ♦
deliver me because of my enemies.”*

Psalm 69:207.



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 our saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power;
hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Will you come and follow me?***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Jeremiah 20:7-13.

O Lord, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
everyone mocks me.
For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, 'Violence and destruction!'
For the word of the Lord has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
If I say, 'I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name',

then within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
For I hear many whispering:
'Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!'
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.
'Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him,
and take our revenge on him.'
But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonour
will never be forgotten.
O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

Sing to the Lord;
praise the Lord!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hands of evildoers.

Psalms 69:14-20.

But as for me, I make my prayer to you, O Lord; ♦
at an acceptable time, O God.
Answer me, O God, in the abundance of your mercy ♦
and with your sure salvation.
Draw me out of the mire, that I sink not; ♦
let me be rescued from those who hate me
and out of the deep waters.
Let not the water flood drown me,
neither the deep swallow me up; ♦
let not the Pit shut its mouth upon me.

Answer me, Lord, for your loving-kindness is good; ♦
turn to me in the multitude of your mercies.
Hide not your face from your servant; ♦
be swift to answer me, for I am in trouble.
Draw near to my soul and redeem me; ♦
deliver me because of my enemies.

Romans 6:1b-11.

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you.**

GOSPEL Matthew 10:24-39.

‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

‘So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the

soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

REFLECTION – Is it too risky to follow Jesus?

If you were one of Jesus' followers about to go out and heal the sick, and you heard what Jesus said in that reading from Matthew, would you still go?

Jesus was preparing them to be mocked, to be called demons, or worse, as he had been called Beelzebul, Prince of demons, or the devil. He told them not to be afraid of people who opposed them, because when it came down to it they could only kill the body, not the soul. And he told them that their message would be divisive – he didn't come to bring peace on the Earth, but a sword. Family members would turn on each other and become enemies. And if anyone loves any of their family more than Jesus – forget it, they're not worthy to follow him. You must be prepared to lose your life here on Earth to gain life in Christ.

Would you still go? Why is it so reaction provoking? Isn't God about love, truth and peace?

Well, yes he is, but the world we live in often isn't. We have free choice about whether to believe in God or not, whether we want to be on God's side or not. And if there's a true choice, then there is another side we can choose. The spirit of worldliness, of power over others for gain, or unfashionably, the spirit of evil, or the devil.

Our culture in this nation now (and the culture of Israel then) isn't perfect, and the values are not aligned with God's will. If you proclaim the gospel or try to live it out then there's a clash of values, sometimes a violent clash. So why bother? Why bother bringing all this trouble on yourself, then or now? Why be cross cultural, appear a fool, or make people feel uncomfortable? Even why try to live out a Christian life, and not talk to others about the gospel, let alone preach?

Have you ever collected Christian Aid envelopes? Some people can't understand why you're giving up your time to go and ask for money to help people with no obvious connection to you. They'll laugh at you for visiting the frail, lonely and ill. You must be wrong in the head – there's no pay back in that. The weak are marginalised in our society. And try telling a non-believing member of your family that you try to tithe your income, giving 10% away to the Church and other charities, especially if it might affect what they think they may receive from your will!

What matters in our society in general is me, my rights, and mine. Just look at the adverts, the news and other television programmes. So why bother? There are some clues in the reading from Matthew. In chapter 10, verse 29 we read:

'Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid: you are worth more than many sparrows.'

God loves and cares for all his creation, and as a Christian believer, a child of God, you are very precious to him. He's always with you, loving you and willing you on whatever happens. Jesus also says:

'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown them before my Father in heaven.'

I want to be counted in with Jesus, to be in on the Kingdom of God, true life, eternal life, in this world and beyond – don't you? This seems folly to our society. Believe in God and his Kingdom, life beyond this life? People want to be shown the proof. Well the whole point is that we can't prove it in this world's terms. It's about faith, in believing in things we can't see. Steps of faith are required before you can grasp what's being talked about here.

But if you take steps of faith, be honest with God, take some risks with him – well I've tried it, and I'm sure he's there – except when I have my times of doubt, nobody's perfect. Enjoy the things of this world, certainly, but sort out your priorities. I've found the Christian life satisfying, in a long lasting sort of way. I've found my purpose in life, I've found love, and security within that love.

I've found it risky, difficult and awkward too. My faith causes difficulties with friends and family who aren't Christians. It causes misunderstandings and distances. But it's worth it. We know it seems too difficult for us often, and we'll make mistakes. Peter denied knowing Jesus in public, but he was forgiven and lived a great life of witness to Jesus.

You can live for Jesus, and live a life of faith too – do you still want to, are you still willing? Come on, and we'll help each other and give it a try.

Sheila Falkner.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **In Christ alone.***

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 PRAYERS

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*

Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace.

**Look upon our divided world
to be with those who are victims of violence.**

**We pray for the people of Ukraine
and all who have been subjected to the cruelty of others.**

**Help us to know the gift of your peace
in the power of your Spirit and
we ask you to soften the hearts
of those who can stop the fighting.**

**Creator God, we ask for your aid as your children of light
living in the darkness of our world.**

Amen.

Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group.

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 **Praise my soul the King of heaven.***

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

Will you come and follow me?

<https://youtu.be/S-Bq1YtpQL8>

Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you.

<https://youtu.be/v2rO0LhSWJ0>

In Christ alone.

<https://youtu.be/ljlsOQ269l4>

Praise my soul the King of heaven.

<https://youtu.be/RqbhPGFilxc>