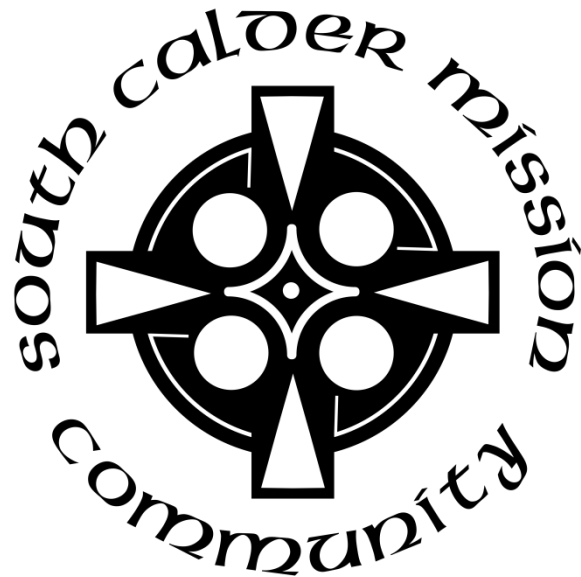


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word
for
Sunday 7 June 2026
First Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*"I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the
righteous but sinners."*

Matthew 9:13.



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

Amen.

For the First Sunday after Trinity.

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

THE WORD OF GOD.

Genesis 12:1-9

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord.

And Abram journeyed on by stages towards the Negeb.

Psalm 33:1-12

- 1 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, ♦
for it is good for the just to sing praises.
- 2 Praise the Lord with the lyre; ♦
on the ten-stringed harp sing his praise.
- 3 Sing for him a new song; ♦
play skilfully, with shouts of praise.
- 4 For the word of the Lord is true ♦
and all his works are sure.
- 5 He loves righteousness and justice; ♦
the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord.
- 6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ♦
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 He gathers up the waters of the sea as in a waterskin ♦
and lays up the deep in his treasury.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; ♦
stand in awe of him, all who dwell in the world.
- 9 For he spoke, and it was done; ♦
he commanded, and it stood fast.
- 10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to naught; ♦
he frustrates the designs of the peoples.
- 11 But the counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever ♦
and the designs of his heart from generation to generation.
- 12 Happy the nation whose God is the Lord ♦
and the people he has chosen for his own.

Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.'

He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.'
Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Christ be our light.***

GOSPEL

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' But when he heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.'

Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well.

When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him.

But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

REFLECTION – Add it up for yourself.

Today's reading from Romans chapter 4 is part of a longer section contrasting the results of putting one's faith in Jesus or relying on the Jewish Law. First, a couple of introductory comments:

1. **Reckoning.** If I look at the clouds, and say, 'I reckon it's going to rain,' or look at the league tables and say, 'I reckon Arsenal stand a good chance of beating Accrington Stanley,' I am not stating a certainty, but neither is it a completely unfounded guess. My reckoning has some basis in the facts of the situation.

However, the original meaning of 'reckoning' was to add up a column of numbers, for which there was one, and only one, correct answer: a much more precise meaning of 'reckoning.' And it is in this sense that Paul writes of Abraham,

'Therefore his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness.'

Other versions translate it 'God credited it to him as righteousness' or 'counted him as righteous,' – both suggesting an exact transaction.

And when, in chapter 6 of Romans, Paul writes of us as Christians:

'You must count yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus,' he is using the same precise word. Add up the facts and there is only one answer.

2. The relationship between Abraham, representing faith, and Moses, representing the Law. Abraham came from a nomadic tribe. His father moved their clan from Ur, in Mesopotamia (in modern Iraq), almost the whole length of the River Euphrates to Haran (in the south-east of modern Türkiye), some 700 miles. Abraham then moved his part of the clan a further 400 miles to the south, into what would later become the Promised Land. These were the nucleus of what would become the Jewish people. Abraham's grandson Jacob took his family to Egypt to escape famine, and some 400 years later Moses led their descendants back to the Promised Land, collecting the Law on Mount Sinai *en route*. So Abraham, the 'man of faith' pre-dates Moses and the Law by 400 years or more.

Of what did Abraham's faith consist? Firstly (as we read today) he believed he would have a son. Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible, but Abraham accepted God's word, and it came true. Secondly, in another well known story, when his son Isaac is a boy, God tells him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and Abraham is all set to obey, even though this boy is the one through whom God's original promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled. At the last moment God stops him, and Abraham offers a ram instead. (It has sometimes been said that this story explains why the Jews did not carry out child sacrifices when other nations around them did.) So Abraham **will** have descendants, and God's promise was seen to be true. Twice then Abraham is shown to be 'the man of faith.'

In Romans chapter 3 verse 20, Paul has written:

'No-one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the Law; rather, through the Law we become conscious of our sin.'

And then in today's reading we hear that the Law is good, but no-one keeps it: if they could, there would be no need for faith and the forgiveness of sins. A similar idea is found in several of Paul's letters: it is fundamental to his understanding of how we are saved. And in Acts chapter 15 we read

about the Council in Jerusalem: Paul and Barnabas return from their mission journey and report to the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem that many Gentiles have come to faith in Jesus. Some of the Jewish Christians try to insist that Gentiles must become Jews first, come under the Jewish Law, before they can be Christians, but the council decides in Paul's favour. (Just as well for most of us today!)

As Abraham pre-dates Moses, so it is faith which establishes the relationship with God the Father, rather than an attempt to follow the Law. Abraham has faith, and God **reckons** this as righteousness. All those who similarly have faith become 'descendants' of Abraham and inherit the same promises, and thus he is 'father of many nations.' Abraham takes God at his word; so do we, through his Word, Jesus. Faith is what matters: nothing more is needed, nothing less will do.

We have faith in Jesus as our Lord; we don't rely on keeping the Law: so what next? Do we have to do anything about it? Yes, of course, but not in order to **earn** our place in his favour. What we do as Christians is in **response** to the fact that through God's grace our faith has saved us. There is a lovely poem by A A Milne about a ship-wrecked sailor on a desert island.* He has a long list of all the things he needs: fish-hooks or a fishing net, a hut, a shirt, a large sun-stopping hat, water, some goats and chickens, the list goes on... He never can decide what to do first, and in the end he does none of these things, but sits on the beach until he is rescued.

When I was in my teens, I was full of plans, and sometimes my mother would quietly say, 'Fish-hooks' and I knew she was telling me to stop dreaming and do something. As Christians we are not called to sit on the beach and wait until we are rescued, we are 'to be about our Father's business,' as Jesus was.

Abraham's faith established his relationship with God, but is best seen in the two major events in which he put that faith into action, as described earlier. If you read his story (Genesis chapters 12 – 23) you will see that his faith lies behind much that happens. It is our faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour which establishes our relationship with him, but it will then shape the way we live the rest of our life.

Jonathan Falkner.

* A A Milne *The Old Sailor* in 'Now we are six'

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 other places
 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 **Go forth and tell.**

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

Hymns:

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

https://youtu.be/ytBTMr0K__I

Christ be our light.

<https://youtu.be/kt3Qc04uIOM>

In Christ alone.

<https://youtu.be/16KYvflc2bE>

Go forth and tell.

<https://youtu.be/QkDD4GiqUEM>