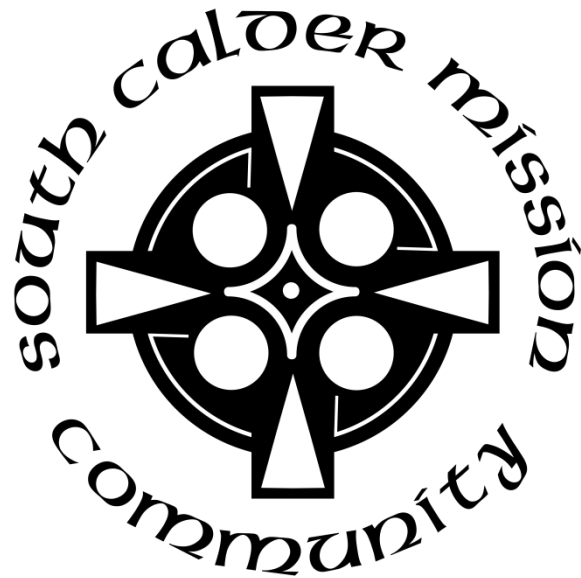


Into his Courts with Praise...



A Service of the Word
For Harvest
Sunday 27 September 2026
(Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.)

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

“ As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.’”

2 Corinthians 9:9.



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

Creator God, in your hands are the seeds of life and you have blessed us abundantly. May we in whom the seeds have grown bear the fruits of love and generosity; May we sow that others may reap and rejoice in a harvest of plenty; for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***Let all the world in every corner sing.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Psalm 104:1, 25-37

Bless the Lord, O my soul. ♦
O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!

People go forth to their work ♦
and to their labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are your works! ♦
In wisdom you have made them all;

the earth is full of your creatures.
 There is the sea, spread far and wide, ♦
 and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.
 There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan ♦
 which you have made to play in the deep.
 All of these look to you ♦
 to give them their food in due season.
 When you give it them, they gather it; ♦
 you open your hand and they are filled with good.
 When you hide your face they are troubled; ♦
 when you take away their breath,
 they die and return again to the dust.
 When you send forth your spirit, they are created, ♦
 and you renew the face of the earth.
 May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; ♦
 may the Lord rejoice in his works;
 He looks on the earth and it trembles; ♦
 he touches the mountains and they smoke.
 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; ♦
 I will make music to my God while I have my being.
 So shall my song please him ♦
 while I rejoice in the Lord.
 Let sinners be consumed out of the earth
 and the wicked be no more. ♦
 Bless the Lord, O my soul.
 Alleluia.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11.

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.'
 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us;

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **We plough the fields and scatter.***

GOSPEL John 6:5-12

When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.'

REFLECTION – .

Harvest is one of my favourite times of celebration. I'm a country boy at heart and grew up in a small market town on the edge of the East Anglian fens. The agricultural year was part of daily life and the seasons seemed more distinct in those far off days than they do now. In the midst of grain growing country, harvest time brought a stream of lorries to the flour mill in town.

Even though we live in a very different world where the agricultural year seems distant from our day to day lives it is still important to remember the seasons and pause to take stock of where our food comes from and the impact it can have on every part of life.

Let's start by looking at the passage from John's Gospel. As ever John's genius as a narrator is to put us there, right where the action is. We are part of that large crowd of people coming towards Jesus.

Jesus, concerned for their well being, asks Philip where they can buy bread for them to eat. Here they are, miles from anywhere and faced with a task that seems impossible. Philip responds;

‘Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’

Andrew speaks up;

‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’

This is one of my favourite parts of the story. Who was the boy – we don’t know. Where did he come from – we don’t know. Was he smart or scruffy, just a typical lad? We will never know the answers to these questions. And I wonder just how he managed to pluck up the courage to offer what little he had, to help if he could.

This is a significant moment in history, John has enabled us to witness perhaps the first recorded instance of something which we all know and love, the “Bring and Share Supper”.

The rest of the story is well known. The masses are fed, all five thousand of them, from the boy’s five barley loaves and two fish. Every one had something and the left overs were gathered up;

so that nothing may be lost.

Food was precious, especially when it had been touched by the Messiah.

There are a couple of things I’d like to consider about this miracle. Was it a miracle?

Did Jesus turn the small store of food the boy gave into enough to feed five thousand hungry mouths – and some left over?

What is the significance of the boy and his giving up his lunch?

Was he the only one of that large crowd who had the foresight to take a packed lunch when he set out for the day on the mountain so that he could hear the new prophet that everyone was talking about. Did his mum say

“you better take this to keep you going for the day.” Or was it a more spur of the moment kitchen raid?

We’ll never know but I think we can say that John never put anything in his Gospel that was not necessary or significant. The unanswered questions here are intended to make us think.

If the boy wasn’t the only one with a picnic that day – and it would surprise me if he was – did his act of generosity prompt others to share their food too? Were they shamed by his innocent offer into sharing what they had but had intended to keep for themselves?

That would be a true “Bring and Share” moment, and perhaps something of a miracle in its own right.

And why a young boy rather than an old man or a middle aged woman? Is that significant too?

Perhaps it is. Was John trying to say that this boy, scabby of knee and slightly grubby, young and not yet made cynical and selfish by life’s hardships, was an indication of how things might be in the new Kingdom of God on earth?

A kingdom where no one needed to go hungry if someone had something to eat and would share it willingly.

It may be that the boy is a symbol for the “New Order” made possible by Jesus’ teaching. Instead of the old way where what people got depended on who they were and not what they needed, this was a way of doing involving sharing and provision of people’s needs.

This is borne out by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians;

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

To go back to our initial premise that this might have been the first “Bring and Share” supper, that is a really good example of sharing what we have. It’s what we do whenever we give a stranger a helping hand, irrespective of who they are, where they came from or what they believe.

After all, everything we have is because of the grace of our creator God. Nothing is ours exclusively but to be shared with those in need, bread or fishes, tins of beans or even just a kind word of encouragement, a smile given to a stranger who looks downcast and unhappy.

Now Lord we dedicate this festival of harvest thanksgiving to you.

Bless us, strengthen us, unite us in your love.

Amen

(The Reverend Rachel Parkinson, Northallerton)

Brian Pateman.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Now the green blade rises.***

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 **God whose farm is all 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.

Bless to us, O God the sun that shines above us, the rain that falls upon us, the earth that sustains us, the air that surrounds us and the love that binds us.

*and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;
the love of God;
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit;
be with us all, ever more,
Amen.*

So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Let all the world in every corner sing.

<https://youtu.be/xvYUV8PFQa8>

We plough the fields and scatter.

<https://youtu.be/ccVEjKFkAV4>

Now the green blade rises.*

<https://youtu.be/En28Je8ehDs>

God whose farm is all creation.

<https://youtu.be/1v9seebouz0>

**For an alternative version.*

<https://youtu.be/vpU01KQIUJM>