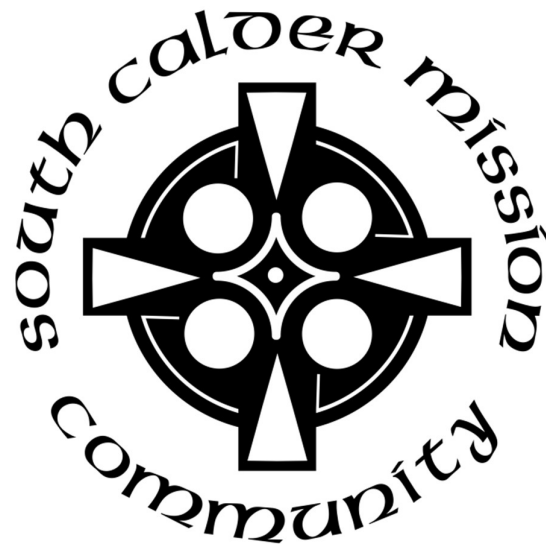


# Into his Courts with Praise...



A Service of the Word  
For  
Sunday 2 October 2022  
Sixteenth of Trinity.

## A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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### INTRODUCTION

*"If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you."*

Luke 17:6.



### 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 of creation, whose glory is around and within us:  
open our eyes to your wonders,  
that we may serve you with reverence  
and know your peace at our lives' end,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Suggested hymn to sing or read* ***All my hope on God is founded.***

### **THE WORD OF GOD.**

#### **Psalm 37:1-9.**

Fret not because of evildoers; ♦  
be not jealous of those who do wrong.  
For they shall soon wither like grass ♦  
and like the green herb fade away.  
Trust in the Lord and be doing good; ♦  
dwell in the land and be nourished with truth.  
Let your delight be in the Lord ♦  
and he will give you your heart's desire.  
Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him, ♦  
and he will bring it to pass.  
He will make your righteousness as clear as the light ♦  
and your just dealing as the noonday.  
Be still before the Lord and wait for him; ♦  
do not fret over those that prosper  
as they follow their evil schemes.  
Refrain from anger and abandon wrath; ♦

do not fret, lest you be moved to do evil.  
For evildoers shall be cut off, ♦  
but those who wait upon the Lord shall possess the land.

### **Lamentations 1 : 1-6.**

How lonely sits the city  
that once was full of people!  
How like a widow she has become,  
she that was great among the nations!  
She that was a princess among the provinces  
has become a vassal.

She weeps bitterly in the night,  
with tears on her cheeks;  
among all her lovers  
she has no one to comfort her;  
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,  
they have become her enemies.

Judah has gone into exile with suffering  
and hard servitude;  
she lives now among the nations,  
and finds no resting-place;  
her pursuers have all overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

The roads to Zion mourn,  
for no one comes to the festivals;  
all her gates are desolate,  
her priests groan;  
her young girls grieve,  
and her lot is bitter.

Her foes have become the masters,  
her enemies prosper,  
because the Lord has made her suffer  
for the multitude of her transgressions;  
her children have gone away,  
captives before the foe.

From daughter Zion has departed  
all her majesty.  
Her princes have become like stags  
that find no pasture;  
they fled without strength  
before the pursuer.

## 2 Timothy 1:1-14.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read* **Firmly I believe and truly.**

## GOSPEL Luke 17:5-10.

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!" '

## REFLECTION – Grow your faith!

These verses from Luke's gospel come in a section where sayings of Jesus are collected together. They have faith and discipleship as a theme. I got bothered about the first saying, when the disciples ask Jesus to make their faith greater. He replies:

'If you had faith as big as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea!' and it would obey you.'

A mustard seed is very small – this leaves me thinking that I haven't got faith even as small as that! Have I any faith in that case?

'I believe – help my unbelief,'

to quote Jairus, whose daughter was brought back from death.

I have faith enough to pray for healing for others, and for big things like the war in Ukraine to be ended, but at the same time I have niggling doubts about being answered. Do I pray well enough / Do I have enough faith? It's only me praying – will God bother even listening? Am I the problem?

But then, looking at these two verses again, the **disciples** are asking Jesus to increase their faith – and they have been constant companions, watching as he speaks and heals, how he teaches them and acts, how he prays and talks to God. Even **they** feel their lack of faith. I wonder if they were about to be sent out to preach and heal without Jesus?

Before we look any further, I have a cautionary tale about taking things too literally. This is part of some entries from 'The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass, aged 37½.' \* Adrian has bought a book about faith from the Christian bookshop – it's all about how Christians should be able to move mountains by faith, if they are really tuned in to God.

'Very inspiring' he comments. 'Waited till there was no-one around, then practised with a paper clip. Put it on my desk and stared at it, willing it to move. Nothing! Tried commanding it in a loud voice. Gerald came in just then and said 'What's all the shouting about, Dad?' Could hardly tell him I was shouting orders at a paper clip. Said I was practising voice projection.

Told Anne later that I'd heard about a man who tried to move a paper clip by faith and couldn't do it. She yawned and said, 'Well you always get your lunatic fringe, don't you?'

Three days later he writes:

'Got up early today to have a last go at that blasted paper clip. Ended up hissing at it viciously, trying not to wake everybody up. When I gave up and opened the door, I found Anne and Gerald listening outside in their night clothes, and looking quite anxious. Anne said 'Darling, why did you tell that paper clip you'd straighten it out if it didn't soon get its damned act together?'

Explained with as much dignity as I could muster that I'd been conducting an experiment in faith, and had got a bit carried away when it didn't work. Anne said, 'But, sweetheart, being a Christian isn't like joining the Magic Circle. Why would God want you to make a paper clip move by faith?' Gerald wiped his eyes and said 'Dad, I think you're wonderful. I wouldn't swap you for anything.'

Adrian has missed the point. The story is only an illustration about faith.

The 'Roots on the web' material for this reading comments that faith, like the mustard seeds in the reading, needs to be used to grow. It's no good if seeds lie in a packet in a drawer going out of date (I've done that, have you?) They need to be planted.

Faith needs to be used to grow. If we share it with each other in the church family, we'll be encouraged, and it will spread further and be used more outside in the community too. Faith is not for showing off, it isn't a competition to see who can be the best Christian, or achieve the most.

Faith is to be at the heart of our lives. Then it will show as we live day by day, and be used, and grow.

Do you know this song, an old one from Sunday School days from long years past, which was often sung when the collection plate or bag was sent round:

'Love is like a magic penny, hold it tight and you won't have any. Spend it, lend it, give it away – you'll end up having more.' It's true of love, and I think it's true of faith too.

Be brave and take a risk! invite the Holy Spirit to use you. Pray about things by yourself and with others and ask God to act. Doubts often niggle, but don't let them stop you. We believe Lord, help our unbelief – give us more faith.

The portion of psalm set for today is from psalm 37, the first 9 verses.

Verse 5 says:

'Commit your way to the Lord. Trust in him and he will act.'

'I believe and trust in him,' we say giving promises at baptisms, and as a statement of belief, a creed. If we do that **he will act**. Adrian couldn't move a paper clip by will or faith, but God can move anything! So if we believe and have faith – I don't know how it works, but it does. You may not get the answer **you** think is right, but the answer that **God** thinks is right. That can be hard, and we will have to talk to God about it (there are certainly things I've bent his ear about), but it's a much more enriching life than any alternative I can see.

A prayer to finish:

Lord we believe, We want to believe and trust in you, but we're often afraid that we'll fail you. Lord, please give us more faith. Help us to trust you, in spite of how we feel. We commit ourselves and our lives to you again, Lord. Send us the Holy Spirit to bring your love, faith and hope to fill us, so that we can share with each other and grow in confidence to share that faith and to live for you day by day. Amen.

\* 'The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass, aged 37½.' © 1995, Harper Collins London.

Sheila Falkner

Suggested hymn to sing or read **The Servant King.**

## 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...*

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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* **Jesus, be the centre.**

*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

All my hope on God is founded.

<https://youtu.be/DohxO6ytsaU>

Firmly I believe and truly.

<https://youtu.be/9kPzfgy4Rlo>

The Servant King.

<https://youtu.be/SuDTVNbdPrQ>

Jesus, be the centre.

<https://youtu.be/884tPls01e0>