



ORDINARY 15C

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

28 STF – Jesus calls us here to meet him OR

161 STF – Speak, O Lord, as we come to You

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

571 STF – As your family, Lord, see us here OR

157 STF – God has spoken – by his prophets

Readings: Amos 7:7-17; Psalm 82; Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

Hymn:

253 STF – Love inspired the anger OR

257 STF – Would you walk by on the other side

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there? OR

705 STF – It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling OR

415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age

Blessing

The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

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Call to worship

Open our hearts to hear your words to us today, we pray, O God.

Open our hands to do your bidding this week, we pray, O God.

Open our eyes to see your glory each and every day, we pray, O God.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

28 STF – Jesus calls us here to meet him OR

161 STF – Speak, O Lord, as we come to You

Opening Prayers

These prayers will work best if people can access the liturgy and join in with the words in bold. If you can project them or share in advance, then please do so. If not, it would work with two voices – one person playing the ‘leader’ and the other ‘all’.

Leader: Loving God,

As we come to worship today, we bring all of ourselves before you.

All: We bring the highest peaks we have climbed and the lowest valleys into which we have fallen.

Leader: As we come to worship today, we bring all that is in our hearts before you.

All: We bring the widest landscapes of our joy and the deepest oceans of our pain.

Leader: As we come to worship today, we bring all that is on our mind to you.

All: We bring all that we find easy to accept about ourselves and all that we find hard – our shadows and our light.

Leader: We bring all that we are before you today, Lord, knowing that in you we will always be loved and we will always be enough.

All: Amen²

We say together the Lord’s Prayer

All Age Talk

Today is marked as Action for Children Sunday in the Methodist Church, and is a day for remembering that – although the UK is one of the richest countries in the world, many people in our communities, cities and towns are living in poverty.

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Hannah Baker

Action for Children is a UK children's charity created to help vulnerable children and young people and their families, with its roots in the Methodist church, and which continues to operate across the country providing practical and emotional care and support, to children affected by poverty and injustice.

Across our nation, there are many charities working in this space, tackling homelessness, ensuring people receive enough food to live on, standing up for those who have been neglected or overlooked by the state. These charities are vital and do amazing work, and thank you to the many of you here today who support charities like Action for Children.

And yet we know this is not right. We know this is not how God would want things to be. We know it is injustice.

The Methodist Church is committed to playing our part in seeking to end poverty – one of the priorities for the Justice Seeking Church is helping the church to find what is 'ours to do' in this space. If you are interested in finding out more about this, do speak to your minister or take a look at the Methodist Church website – we all have a part to play!

Amen.³

Hymn:

571 STF – As your family, Lord, see us here OR

157 STF – God has spoken – by his prophets

Readings: Amos 7:7-17; Psalm 82; Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

Hymn:

253 STF – Love inspired the anger OR

257 STF – Would you walk by on the other side

Reflections on the readings

Today, our reflection is written by Graeme Dutton, the Superintendent minister in Bradford South circuit. Let's listen to his words now:

I really enjoy writing these reflections. It's a huge privilege to be asked. I'm not sure how others approach things, but when I get sent the readings, it's always fun to see what particular passage I'm being asked to shed some light on.

What pearls of wisdom might I be able to tease from our rich treasure of scripture? What new angle can I explore? What can I say about this story that hasn't previously been said?

Sometimes it's wonderfully easy to find the 'new'. Then there are the other occasions, like this one!

What can possibly be said about the story of The Good Samaritan that hasn't already been explored?

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Baker

The subject of a billion (that might be an exaggeration but I don't think by much!) Sunday school services and Youth Fellowship dramas, the Good Samaritan is an absolute staple of our Christian education. I suspect that many of you reading this today will have heard all the possible comparisons.

'It's like a Bradford Supporter and a Leeds Fan looking after each other (or whatever teams are your local football rivals)'

Or 'It's like Spider-Man and Doctor Octopus teaming up to save the world'

So maybe my task today isn't actually to bring you something 'new', but rather to re-examine the 'old'.

In Terry Pratchett's Discworld novel 'The Truth' the hero, William De Worde, becomes the accidental editor of a city's first newspaper. In a conversation with the city's ruler William is told, 'People like to be told what they already know. Remember that. They get uncomfortable when you tell them new things. New things . . . well, new things aren't what they expect. They like to know that, say, a dog will bite a man. That is what dogs do. They don't want to know that a man bites a dog, because the world is not supposed to happen like that. In short, what people think they want is news, but what they really crave is olds.'

So what 'olds' can I tell you about today's passage?

Well, perhaps the first 'old' thing to be reminded of is that this story isn't just about being kind. It's not just a moral fable about helping someone who's fallen on hard times—although it certainly includes that. At its heart, this is a story about boundaries. About borders. About who's in and who's out.

It's a radical story because Jesus, as he so often does, flips the question.

The expert in the law begins with what seems like a solid religious query: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus, ever the master teacher, turns the question back to him: "What is written in the Law?" The man answers well, with an 'old'. 'love God, love your neighbour.' Tick. Gold star.

But then comes the follow-up: "And who is my neighbour?" And that, of course, is where things get interesting.

It's worth remembering that the question behind the parable isn't "How can I be a better person?" but rather "Who do I have to love?"—and by extension, who can I get away with not loving?

It's such a human question. Draw me the line, Jesus. Define the border. Tell me where my responsibility stops.

And Jesus responds not with a rule, but with a story. A story in which the most unexpected person becomes the example. The outsider. The enemy. The one from over there. The one who believes the wrong things and worships in the wrong way and votes the wrong way and says the wrong things. That's who shows compassion. That's who becomes the hero. That's who, in the words of Jesus, has truly acted like a neighbour.

It's not just a story about kindness. It's a story about dismantling the boundaries we're tempted to draw around our compassion. It's about letting the circle widen, not narrow.

I wonder who our "Samaritans" are today? The people we'd least expect—or perhaps least want—to become the hero of the story. Who are the ones we instinctively place outside our idea of "us"? If Jesus told this story today, in our neighbourhood, who might he cast in the role of the surprising neighbour?

And perhaps most challengingly: are we willing to let our assumptions be upended in the same way the lawyer's were?

At the climax of the story in 'The Truth', William De Worde, through the incredible writing of Pratchett, does the unthinkable. He takes the 'old' that the ruler had suggested in their earlier conversation, dog bites man, and transforms it into 'news'.

The 'olds' in our Gospel passage today are uncomfortable because they're so very current. This parable is ancient, yes, but it speaks right into our moment, into our politics, our communities, our hearts.

Because being a neighbour isn't a matter of geography or familiarity. It's a matter of mercy. And the call of Jesus is not just to admire the Good Samaritan, or to wish we could be like him. It's to go and do likewise. To get our hands dirty. To move toward the pain. To cross the boundaries.

To love not in theory, but in action.

That's News.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

256 STF – When I needed a neighbour, were you there? OR

705 STF – It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand

Prayers of intercession

Circle us, O God,
Circle us with justice and mercy,
Circle us with your wisdom and strength.
As you sit in the divine council and judge with righteousness,
Judge also in our hearts, and make us ready to pray.

Circle the voiceless, Lord:
Circle them with dignity.

Raise up the poor and the powerless,
those ignored or dismissed by the world.

Let their cries rise like incense,
and let justice roll down like a river.

Circle the victims of injustice, Lord:
Circle them with your protection.

Those wrongly imprisoned,
those denied fair trial or due process,
those oppressed by corrupt rulers or violent systems.

Give them hope, give them courage, give them vindication.

Circle the leaders of nations, Lord:
Circle them with your truth.

Grant them wisdom,
and a heart for the widow and the orphan.

Let them remember that they too are mortal,
called to serve under your authority.

⁴ Reflection written by Graeme Dutton

Circle your church, Lord:
Circle us with your fire.

Burn away complacency and silence.

Light our hearts with compassion for the weak,
and our hands for works of justice and peace.

Circle the brokenhearted, Lord:
Circle them with comfort.

Those who grieve, those who wait,
those who are tired of crying:
Speak your healing into the cracks of their lives.

Be near to all who walk in darkness.

Circle the earth, O God:
Circle it with your reign.

Arise, O God, and judge the earth,
for all nations are yours.

Let your justice be known in every land,
and your mercy in every heart.

God of justice,
You call us not only to pray,
but to act.

So send us out now, encircled by your Spirit,
to defend the weak, uphold the poor,
and walk humbly with you.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Lord of life,
You have given us this day, and we turn to you in gratitude.
Thank you, for all that we have received, and for all that you are doing in and through us,
this and every day.
Come, into our hearts, into our lives, into this space,
And bless these gifts, that they might be used to build a Kingdom of grace here in your
world

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling OR
415 STF – The Church of Christ, in every age

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Graeme Dutton

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Blessing

You have gathered in this holy space,
You have noticed the work of the Living God,
You have joined with others around the world who are worshipping God today.
Now, go out into the world, and live that life of worship as you go,
With the Spirit of God going before you.

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker