

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit
SERVICE AT HOME – Sunday 28th January 2024

Prepared by the Revd Kate Cambridge

Welcome to this week's service at home sheet. Our service today uses resources from last week's Week of prayer for Christian unity, prepared by Christians in Burkina Faso. We will be reflecting on the theme: *"You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself"*. As you prepare to worship you might like to take time to consider, how easy is it to love God? And what does it mean to love your neighbour?

Our first hymn reminds us that God is Lord of all the earth. Wherever you worship today, we join with all creation and people across the world as we sing God's praises.

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along STF 57

[Let all the world in every corner sing](#)

Let all the world in every corner sing
My God and King!

The heavens are not too high

His praise may thither fly:

The earth is not too low

His praises there may grow

Let all the world in every corner sing

My God and King!

Let all the world in every corner sing

My God and King!

The church with Psalms must shout

No door can keep them out:

But above all, the heart

Must bear the longest part

Let all the world in every corner sing

My God and King!

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Glory to you, Father, for you reveal yourself in your creation and call all people to live in your presence.

Glory to you, Christ Jesus, for you give yourself entirely to each one of us and invite us to do the same. Glory to you, Holy Spirit, for you gather us together in love and unity. Glory to you, God of love, in whom we are created, redeemed and made one. Amen.

Praise to you Lord for you have poured out your love into our hearts so that we never lose hope. Lord, we praise you.

By your love you free our lives from fear and dress our wounded and injured hearts.

Lord, we praise you.

For all who sow seeds of compassion and love for their neighbours around the world.

Lord, we praise you.

Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus your Son, the Redeemer of all creation.

Lord, we thank you.

For the grace that renews and the blossoming of faith, hope and love.

Lord, we thank you.

For the faith we received from the apostles, for Jesus' prayer for unity and for the gift of the Good News of salvation.

Lord, we thank you.

Gracious God, for the generosity of your love for all people, a love so perfect, it is beyond our comprehension.

Lord, we adore you.

For sending your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world.

Lord, we adore you.

For continuing to fill our lives with your love through the Holy Spirit.

Lord, we adore you.

Let us confess our sins to God:

We come before you, O God, to confess our sins: By seeking happiness without God and ignoring the command to love, we have turned from our neighbour. Our selfishness and desire to possess and control separate us from God.

Silence

Merciful God: forgive and heal us.

When we disregard the humanity of others and build walls of division, we sow seeds of hatred and violence, abandoning the Lord's command to love.

Silence

Merciful God: forgive and heal us.

When our lack of compassion hardens our hearts, we no longer see Jesus in those different from ourselves.

Silence

Merciful God: forgive and heal us.

When we fail to open our hearts and minds to God's infinite and unconditional love, the world is darkened by selfishness, violence, and indifference.

Silence

Merciful God: forgive and heal us.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us by your Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Bible says that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then hear God's gracious word:

Our sins are forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

Introduction to the readings

Our Old Testament reading takes place when the Israelites had been led out of slavery in Egypt, wandered for 40 years in the wilderness and were now preparing to enter into the promised land.

The whole community was gathered to hear these important commandments:

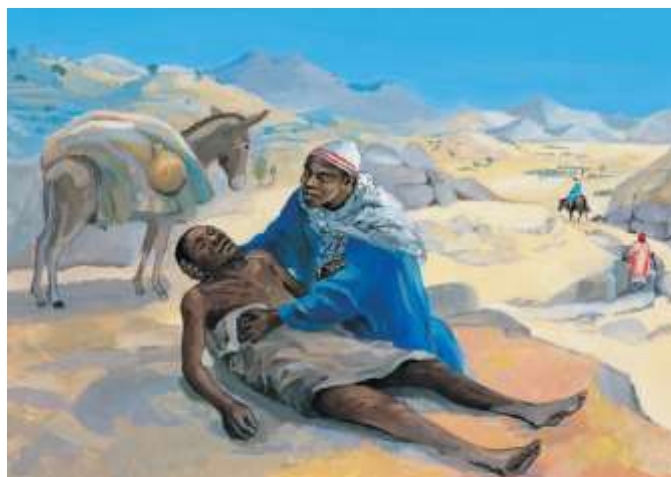
Read Deuteronomy 6.1-9

Where the reading from Deuteronomy reminds us of the importance of loving God, our gospel reading tells a familiar story which reminds us also of the importance of loving our neighbour, with the crucial question, 'Who is my neighbour?'

Read Luke 10.25-37

Reflection

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the few Bible stories which has escaped from our churches and faith communities, and which captures the imagination of wider society. How many people have you heard described as a Good Samaritan, when they have helped someone in need? Perhaps you have your own story of when someone has been a 'Good Samaritan' to you?



Link to larger image:

[WPCU-2024-English-Poster-Final.pdf \(ctbi.org.uk\)](https://www.ctbi.org.uk/WPCU-2024-English-Poster-Final.pdf)

The picture above illustrates the story Jesus told. The man in our story was travelling on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem, a journey of about 18 miles. In that time the road descended about 3000 ft and passed through desert and rocky country. The road was used by Priests and Levites who often lived in Jericho and travelled to conduct their periodic duties at the Temple, but robbers would also take advantage of the rocky terrain. When the unfortunate man was stripped, beaten and left half dead, he might not have seen another traveller for many days. But in our story, three people came along the road and saw the man's plight.

When we talk about someone being a Good Samaritan for helping a person in need, we are in danger of oversimplifying Jesus' parable. It is easy to overlook the impact it would have had on Jesus' first hearers. When Jesus told of a Priest coming along the road, it would appear that the victim's problems were solved – he was the highest grade of potential helper! Similarly with the Levite, the listeners would have expected him to care for the man in need. We are not told why these two religious leaders failed to stop. The point is only that they did not show compassion or care for the injured man – they passed by without helping.

The twist in the story comes when the Samaritan also came along the road. He was the typical villain, a very unlikely source of relief. Jews would struggle to accept help from Samaritans, such was

the enmity between them. There was a saying: *'He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like one that eats the flesh of swine.'* Remember that Jewish people are prohibited from eating pork. The saying suggests that it was just as bad to accept hospitality from a Samaritan. But when we are in desperate need, we are not in a position to choose where our help will come from. The Interpretation Commentary puts it like this: *'From a victim's perspective, if his situation is desperate enough, even a despised Samaritan is a welcome neighbour.'*

How does this story make you feel? Do you notice that the question Jesus asked the teacher of the law was asked from the perspective of the victim, the one in need, not the perspective of the helper? Who was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? When the teacher answered, 'the one who showed him mercy,' then Jesus told him, 'go and do likewise.' The message of the story is that the Samaritan became a neighbour to the man in need, through his compassionate actions.

We are challenged to ask that question, 'who is my neighbour' from the vantage point of the ditch – from a position of weakness and need, who is my neighbour? Then we can approach the question when we find ourselves in a position of strength and apply that same perspective. If we can put ourselves in the position of those in need and empathise with their plight, then we will discern what it means to become a neighbour to them. It will often require sacrifice, it will require laying aside our prejudices and any questions about who might be worthy of help, and enable us to hear the message of the story. The one who became neighbour to the person in need was the one who showed him mercy. Go, Jesus says, and do likewise.

Questions to consider

- *Who has become a neighbour to you when you were in desperate need?*
- *What prejudices do you need to lay aside to hear these words of Jesus?*
- *To whom is Jesus calling you to be a good neighbour – and how might you act on this?*

You might like to reflect on these questions as you consider our next hymn:

Listen, read, pray or sing along to STF 256 [When I Needed a Neighbour \(youtube.com\)](#)

When I needed a neighbour
Were you there, were you there?
When I Needed a neighbour
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
and the name won't matter
were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

I was cold, I was naked
Were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

When I needed a healer
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer
Were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
Were you there?

Wherever you travel
I'll be there, I'll be there.
Wherever you travel
I'll be there.

And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter
I'll be there.

Sydney Carter (1915-2004)

Prayers of Intercession

We have been called to love God and our neighbour as ourselves. As we renew our commitment to this calling, may love strengthen our unity as Christians.

God of boundless love, we pray that all people may come to know your unlimited mercy and your infinite love.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God, our shepherd, we who are scattered ask you to gather us into one fold.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of mission, enliven us by your Spirit and send us again to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of our journey, in our weakness and fear we often pass by on the other side. Grant us grace to risk embracing the stranger in need, tending their wounds of body, mind and spirit.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory and spread the Good News of salvation for all.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

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.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

As we offer ourselves to you anew O God, so we thank you for your many gifts given to us. Help us to be wise in sharing your blessings. Take the gifts we have given for your glory, and use them and us for the work of your Kingdom. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along STF 415

[The church of Christ in every age StF415 - YouTube](#)

The Church of Christ in every age
beset by change but Spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) Words ©1971, Stainer & Bell Ltd.

Closing Blessing

Go forth to love God, and your neighbour as yourself.
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

Prayers taken from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources 2024: [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024 \(ctbi.org.uk\)](#)

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