

## Circuit Service — 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

**CALL TO WORSHIP**      Psalm 25:1.'

In you, LORD my God, I put my trust.  
"Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

**1<sup>ST</sup> HYMN**      20 StF      Be still, for the presence of the Lord...  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKfyudrhGK4>

<p>1    Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here ; come bow before him now with reverence and fear : in him no sin is found — we stand on holy ground. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.</p> <p>2    Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around ; he burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned : how awesome is the sight — our radiant King of light ! Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.</p>	<p>3    Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place ; he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace : no work too hard for him — in faith receive from him. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.</p> <p>David J. Evans (b. 1957)</p>
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### **PRAYER**

O God, give us a vision of your glory, that we may worship you in spirit and in truth, and offer the praise of glad and thankful hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Merciful God, forgive our foolish ways.  
Forgive our deliberate and willful sin;  
our conscious transgressing  
of your perfect will for us.  
Forgive, too, the insidious sin  
of which we are barely aware,  
so conditioned have we become  
to its presence in our lives.

Merciful God,  
forgive us,  
and cleanse us  
from all kinds of unrighteousness,  
that we might stand  
renewed and restored,

freed from the crippling effects  
of guilt and despair.  
In Christ's name. Amen

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**2<sup>ND</sup> HYMN** 256 StF When I needed a neighbour..

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fExR7eOhJO0>

<p>1. When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there ? When I needed a neighbour, were you there ? <i>And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, were you there ?</i></p> <p>2. I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there ? I was hungry and thirsty, were you there ?</p> <p>3. I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there ? I was cold, I was naked, were you there ?</p> <p>4. When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there ? When I needed a shelter, were you there ?</p>	<p>5. When I needed a healer, were you there, were you there ? When I needed a healer, were you there ?</p> <p>6. Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there, wherever you travel I'll be there. <i>And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, I'll be there.</i></p> <p>Sydney Carter (1915–2004)</p>
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**READINGS** Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan.  
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39. More than conquerors.

## SERMON

Let me begin with a story.

e.g. The father of a friend of mine was mugged on Clapham Common some years ago.  
He was only 15 minutes' walk away from home, but was so badly beaten that he could hardly walk.  
He managed to crawl to the main road.  
People just passed him by.  
He managed to get to his feet and stopped a taxi.  
When the taxi driver saw the state of him he refused to take him because he said he might be sick in his  
taxi because he thought he was drunk, but he wasn't.  
There are all kinds of reasons why we are unwilling to help someone.  
He hailed a second taxi and asked him to drive him home.  
At first he refused.  
He asked him if he were drunk.  
He answered no & explained that he had been robbed and mugged.  
This taxi-driver agreed to drive him home.

### Who is my neighbour?

The parable of the Good Samaritan. Or was Jesus relating something that had actually happened?

What did it mean to the people listening to Jesus?

What does it mean to us 21<sup>st</sup> century readers?

We must be aware of certain insinuations and innuendoes that the people in the crowd round Jesus were picking up.

We would interpret the words 'half-dead' to mean unconscious.

They would have had the picture of a man they would have assumed to be a Jew lying unconscious and naked in the middle of this terrifying terrain.

The 17-mile route from Jerusalem to Jericho descends 3600 feet through hot and hostile desert.

The route was narrow with many rocky areas and sudden turns.

It was notorious for hijackers is also true of more recent times.

Anyone travelling that route alone, especially carrying goods, was reckless and foolhardy.

### **THE PRIEST WAS THE FIRST TO COME THAT WAY. WHY DID THE PRIEST PASS BY?**

- 1 A famous Jewish scholar [Ben Sirach] before the time of Jesus had warned against helping a sinner.
- 2 Fear. The bandits might still be lurking behind the rocks.
- 3 If anyone else saw him with the man, they could accuse him and kill him.
- 4 Leviticus 19:18 defines a neighbour as 'one of your own people'. In Jesus' account this man could neither speak nor was he clothed, the two things which identified where a person was from.
- 5 If the man died, and he can't be sure about that, and he's within 6 feet of him he will defile himself. This would be humiliating and it is costly in time and money and reputation to go through the rites of purification.

While we are booing the baddie, Jesus' Pharisaic audience would have applauded when they discovered that the priest decided the laws of ceremonial duty were more important than all other regulations and traditions.

### **THE LEVITE WAS THE SECOND PERSON TO COME THAT WAY. WHY DID THE LEVITE PASS BY?**

Levites were assistant priests.

The audience would assume that he was aware of the priest in front of him.

He would have in his mind:

- 1 The constant danger of robbers.
- 2 The example of the higher-ranking priest.
- 3 If he moved in where the priest stayed away, he'd be accusing the priest.

Reasons always present themselves when we want to avoid something.

It is said that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

It's also paved with good reasons!

### **THE THIRD TRAVELLER**

3 categories of people are allowed to assist with Temple worship — priests, Levites, laymen.

So the audience think they know what is coming next in the story.

Jesus injects shock waves into this story.

This layman is a Samaritan.

Samaritan: Detested by Jews, as of mixed race with Jewish background, but not pure Jews;

Also follows the Old Testament Law of the Jews;

He would have defined neighbour as a fellow countryman;

He would have assumed the wounded man was a Jew; so could have ignored him.

But, the Samaritan: looked, saw, and he had compassion;  
he acted, tending his wounds, putting him on his own donkey;  
he himself walked alongside, like a slave;  
he took a huge risk — he went into a Jewish town with him.

## WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

### MESSAGE FOR US

The NIV says that in order to justify himself, the lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbour?"

But, The Message has the phrase: "Looking for a loophole, he asked Jesus who was his neighbour. "

We 21<sup>st</sup> century listeners are in danger of hearing only a fraction of the implied meaning in Jesus' answer.

We are in danger of believing that Jesus answers: "Anyone in need, even if he is an outsider or an unknown stranger — like this wounded man."

But that is not what Jesus says.

Jesus refrains from answering the lawyer's question.

He declines to tell the lawyer who his neighbour is.

**Instead, he answers the unasked questions: "To whom must he become a neighbour?"**

**"To whom must we become a neighbour?"**

**"To whom must I become a neighbour?"**

In this story **the person who has become a neighbour** is not the wounded man but the Samaritan.

It is the Samaritan who has become a neighbour to the wounded man in his time of need.

Even more radically, Jesus encourages the lawyer to revise his view of the Law.

**"The Law of Moses is good," Jesus confirms.**

**But love is always prepared to go beyond it.**

Jesus adds by implication the unspoken words about himself: "I myself am the Samaritan."

**Who is my neighbour?**

**To whom must we be a neighbour?**

**You I must each be a good neighbour.**

**Jesus loves us into loving & being a good neighbour to anyone.**

**As you follow Jesus, let his Holy Spirit love you into loving others, as Jesus loves you.**

**Amen.**

<p>1 Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you ; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.</p> <p>2 We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road ; we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.</p> <p>3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear ; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.</p>	<p>4 I will weep when you are weeping ; when you laugh I'll laugh with you ; I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.</p> <p>5 When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony, born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.</p> <p>6 Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you ; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.</p> <p>Richard A. M. Gillard (<i>b.</i> 1953)</p>
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## INTERCESSIONS

Lord of all,

hear us now as we pray for the victims of war  
and for peace in our world.

We pray for those across the world who bear the scars of conflict —,  
through the horrors of war.

We pray for those left homeless or as refugees,  
remembering at this time the people of Ukraine.

We also pray for those in Afghanistan suffering from the devastating earthquake.

We pray for those in the armed forces,

We pray for world leaders and rulers,  
politicians and diplomats —  
those whose decisions and negotiations  
affect the lives of so many,  
and in whose hands peace ultimately lies.

Lord of all,

give wisdom and discernment to all who work for peace,  
so that a more secure future may be ensured for all.

Give courage to those who strive for justice, so that the causes of conflict may be overcome.

Give strength to those who seek to break down barriers, that divisions within society may be ended.

Grant that wherever there is war, or the threat of war, a way of reconciliation may be found,  
and harmony established between people and nations.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

1 Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,  
give me joy in my heart, I pray ;  
give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,  
keep me praising till the break of day :

*Sing hosanna ! Sing hosanna !  
Sing hosanna to the King of kings !  
Sing hosanna ! Sing hosanna !  
Sing hosanna to the King !*

2 Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,  
give me peace in my heart, I pray ;  
give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,  
keep me loving till the break of day :

3 Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,  
give me love in my heart, I pray ;  
give me love in my heart, keep me serving,  
keep me serving till the break of day :

Anonymous

## BLESSING

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, and the world, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;  
and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**