



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit



Sunday 29th June 2025: 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "When the Spirit of truth comes"

Opening words:

I cry to God in distress, I cry to God, and he hears me. God, your ways are holy! What God is as great as our God? You are the God who does marvellous deeds, brought nations to acknowledge your power, with your own arm redeeming your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Psalm 77: 1, 13-15

Hymn: StF 673 Will you come and follow me if I but call your name

To watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-Bq1YtpQL8>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

OPENING PRAYERS

God of Creation, you have always been on the move. You are faithful and sure, yet also constantly transforming, recreating, bringing fresh order out of chaos. Humankind is looking, constantly, for an order which can be controlled but finding, constantly, that we are powerless in a world which is so much bigger than we are. Thank you for the example of Jesus, who understood small world and vast universe. He showed us how to be true to ourselves and to you, even when it costs us. He taught us to love all that you have brought into being even the mysteries of life. Forgive and heal us of the arrogance which wants to be in charge. Grant us the assurance in our hearts that we are not only forgiven but healed and transformed by your loving mercy and grace. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Bible Readings: Psalm 77: 1-2, 11-20 2 Kings 2: 1-2, 6-14 Galatians 5: 1, 13-25 Luke 9: 51.62

Hymn: StF 124 For the fruits of all creation

To watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBXHDbesb7k>

For the fruits of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts of every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done;
in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

MESSAGE

"In Luke 9:51-62, we encounter a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry where He resolutely sets His face toward Jerusalem, knowing the suffering that awaits Him. This passage serves as a rich teaching on the cost of discipleship, commitment, and the nature of following Christ. Jesus' interactions with various individuals highlight the tension between worldly distractions and the call to wholeheartedly follow Him.

The passage begins with a significant moment where Jesus prepares to journey to Jerusalem, but He encounters rejection from a Samaritan village. Despite the disciples' desire to call down fire from heaven to punish the villagers, Jesus rebukes them. This response teaches us that Jesus is not about destruction or revenge, but about grace, even in the face of rejection. It challenges us to reflect on how we handle rejection and opposition in our own lives. Are we quick to respond in anger, or can we extend grace as Jesus did?

The following encounters with potential disciples further underscore the cost of following Jesus. When one person says, "I will follow you wherever you go," Jesus responds that the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. This is a reminder that following Jesus requires a willingness to live without the security and comforts of the world. It challenges us to ask: Are we truly ready to give up the comforts of our own lives for the sake of following Christ? How often do we let material security or status take priority over our spiritual calling?

Another person expresses a desire to first go and bury his father, but Jesus replies, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." While this may seem harsh, it highlights the urgency and priority of God's kingdom over everything else. This challenges us to reconsider our own priorities. How often do we delay obedience to God's call, putting it off for things that seem urgent but are ultimately transient?

Finally, Jesus challenges another would-be disciple who wishes to first say goodbye to his family. Jesus' response— "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God"—Again, this might seem harsh, but it's a reminder that discipleship requires complete focus and commitment. This isn't necessarily related to saying goodbye to family, but in a busy 21st century world, distractions are all around us. It's telling is that we cannot look back at past comforts if we are to truly follow Christ. Are we regularly making time in our lives to be free from distractions, enabling us listen?

In our own lives, this passage invites us to reflect on the demands of following Jesus. It calls us to examine our own priorities, our willingness to face rejection, and our commitment to the kingdom of God over personal comfort. Following Christ is not always easy, but it is a call to wholehearted devotion."

Today's message is brought to us by Mr Seb Bell one of our Local Preachers

Prayers for others

Loving God, thank you that Jesus was truly human, as we are, and not just human in form. That he had all the emotions we have and wrestled with them as we do. Sometimes, in our distress, our priorities do get confused, and we miss the needs off. Thank you for those who make the time to notice others, and to be there for them. We pray for the nations where there is division between different groups who despise one another, often because of their

shared history. We hold in mind those who are suffering because of war and violence. We pray for those whose experience of violence is hidden from view, unacknowledged, or imprisoned by fear. We pray for people who make themselves available to help those who hurt in private; and for those brave enough to speak out. We pray for those who are enslaved by others, or by their society, or by their own habits, values, or expectations. We thank you for those who help to set them – and us - free. We hold before you all who are unwell, and all who are grieving. And we bring you such prayers as you inspire in our hearts with groans too deep for words. ... Thank you, Lord, that you hear our prayers. Amen.

Hymn: StF 440 Amazing Grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zG3wOkWyYAA>

Amazing Grace
How sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost,
But now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught
My heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious
Did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers,
Toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought
Me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised
Good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield
And Portion be,
As long as life endures.

And, when this flesh
And heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess,
Within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there
Ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days
To sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth, give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father remain with us always. Amen.