

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit Worship
Sunday 13th July 2025
Who is my neighbour? - Led by Reverend Sarah Knebel

Hello and welcome to this time of worship. As we share together in prayer, reflection and song we will be exploring the call to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

Let's pray:

God of all the world, in you we trust for you are our Saviour. Your faithfulness guides us, your humility inspires us, your Spirit encourages us and your Word feeds us. We praise you for all your blessings, all your gifts and for those you have entrusted to us, to bless, encourage and care for. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

(Roots: Resources for Churches, Adult and All Age, July/August 2025)

As we gather in worship to the God of love, we sing:

Hymn: StF 403 - [God is love, his the care](#)

1. God is love: his the care,
tending each, everywhere.
God is love — all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him:

Sing aloud, loud, loud!
Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good!
God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him!

2. None can see God above;
neighbours here we can love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in others,
sisters all, and brothers:
3. Jesus came, lived and died
for our sake, crucified,
rose again, glorified;
he was born to save us
by the truth he gave us:
4. To our Lord praise we sing —
light and life, friend and king,
coming down love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty:

Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 403

Prayer

There is a response to this prayer, when I say, “wonderful and holy God” will you say, **“we praise you.”**

Wonderful and holy God, Creator of the universe, you made all people in your own image, you live in our midst. You bless us with so many different cultures and ways of responding to you.

Wonderful and holy God, **we praise you.**

Through Jesus, you show us new ways of living and loving, showing us all how: to see difference as a gift, and to share in our similarities, as we learn to respect and trust one another

Wonderful and holy God, **we praise you.**

Through your Holy Spirit, you give us the strength, to learn how to listen with respect to each other, that, with kindness and consideration, we may share with others our faith and story, and above all your love.

Wonderful and holy God, **we praise you.**

And a prayer of confession:

Forgive us, Lord Jesus, when we allow our beliefs to distance us from our neighbours. Help us to care as you care, to serve as you served, to be bridges between our church and community, and to strengthen relationships and build trust.

In a moment of quiet we say sorry to God for the things we know we have done wrong this week,

...

God hears our prayers, both spoken and unspoken, and forgives us and promises us peace.

We conclude our prayers with the prayer that Jesus taught us, using which ever form or language speaks to your heart.

Reading: Luke 10: 25-37

An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

A Reflection: Who is my neighbour?

I wonder whether anyone here has ever had an awkward neighbour? I suspect there are a few of us. It's not easy to love an awkward neighbour is it! And yet, Jesus calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

So often when we look at this text, we think about what it means to be good neighbours to the people in our communities or we think about mission. Today I want to reflect on who our neighbours are in the context of this reading.

This well known gospel reading, begins as an academic game. There were many ways in which the man could have responded to Jesus' question, "What does it say in the law, that you have to do to inherit eternal life?" Rabbinic tradition provided a number of answers, which were mostly consistent with the lawyers response. The lawyer then makes the next move, by asking, "but who is my neighbour?"

Again, the Old Testament includes a number of laws about who our neighbour is. The neighbour is the person next door or along the street, anyone, in fact, who was a fellow citizen. Such a person had to be respected and loved in the day-to-day details of life. The laws stated that a neighbour should not be stolen from, defrauded, oppressed or cursed. These laws about how neighbours were to be treated were just one of the ways in which people were to be holy like their God. These laws were put in place because it was recognised, that when everybody loved their neighbour as themselves, the community flourished, but when people were set against their neighbours, it was a signal of the beginning of a breakdown of society.

The laws about neighbours were well known in Jesus' day. The real issue back then was about who was to count as a neighbour. Where were people to draw the line? Most agreed that the term included fellow countrymen, but many argued that personal enemies did not count. No one dreamed that the Gentiles, the Samaritans, could ever be neighbours. Everyone drew a line somewhere.

When Jesus was asked the question, "Who is my neighbour?", therefore, he too could have responded with any one of these laws, but he doesn't. He tells a story instead. A story in which even the Gentiles, the Samaritans, become neighbours. He tells a story, which reminds us also today, that everyone is our neighbour, not just the person who lives next door. In the sense implied by the story all the people we have contact with are our neighbours.

So I encourage you for a moment to think about all of your neighbours, about all the people you have met and will meet today. All the people you will meet in the week ahead; the ones you know and the ones you don't. To each one of these, your neighbours, God calls you to love them as you would love yourselves.

So, how might we be a better neighbour to those who we see around us, those who we know and those who we, often unintentionally and for many different reasons, don't notice? What might we need to do to show that we love them? What might their needs be and how do we meet those needs and show them that they are loved and cherished?

Are there some who might be keen to learn more about faith and delve deeper into what it means to live a Christian life? How might we help not only to encourage one another to grow in discipleship, through shared bible study and discussion, but also to share God's love with one another through mutual support.

Are there some in need of fellowship in the week, whether through isolation or loneliness or for other reasons? How might these needs also be met, that all may know themselves loved and cherished within the church.

I wonder, as you sit thinking about your neighbours, what your needs might be and whether they are being met by your neighbours, friends, family, the local church, and if not why not?

Within any neighbourhood, within any street, there are needs that are not met by those who are a part of it, and on many occasions it is because those needs are either not known or not listened to. When needs are not met, they become a wound, that swelters, smarts and grows. May I take this opportunity to encourage you in the weeks to come to be open with one another about and attentive to the needs of the people around you and to be neighbourly in the way that you respond to them, that all here may know themselves loved as we love ourselves.

Hymn: StF 257 - [Would you walk by on the other side](#)

1. Would you walk by on the other side,
when someone called for aid?
Would you walk by on the other side,
and would you be afraid?

*Cross over the road, my friend,
ask the Lord his strength to lend,
his compassion has no end,
cross over the road.*

2. Would you walk by on the other side,
when you saw a loved one stray?
Would you walk by on the other side,
or would you watch and pray?
3. Would you walk by on the other side,
when starving children cried?
Would you walk by on the other side,
and would you not provide?

Pamela M. Verrall (1915–1996)
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Prayer:

O Lord our God, we turn our minds, our thoughts, our prayers to those in need,
our neighbours near and far.

We know the right thing to do is to pray for all in need:

Help us now as we pray to be willing to offer a hand of help and friendship wherever we can to those for whom we pray.

O Lord our God, we pray for them: **Our neighbours near and far.**

For our far away neighbours in America seeing drastic effects of climate change with epic flooding in Texas.
And for all countries seeing chaotic weather patterns. For countries where the horrors of war and conflict are experienced daily, and for refugees fleeing danger in the hope of finding a place of welcome, sanctuary and safety.
For the many families who grieve the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, infrastructures and livelihoods;
washed away or destroyed along with so many hopes and dreams.

O Lord our God, we pray for them: **Our neighbours near and far.**

For nearer neighbours in our communities, for young people coming to the end of summer term and all the changes and chances and challenges that will involve. New schools, new classes, new friends, new teachers and for some the stress of waiting for exam results that will determine their next steps. For all who will be leaving education and stepping out into the world with its uncertainty and their own uncertainty. And for all who are already living lives, impacted by our uncertain world.

O Lord our God, we pray for them: **Our neighbours near and far.**

For close neighbours as we take a moment bring our own prayers to God for friends and family and for the people we know: ...

O Lord our God, we pray for them: **Our neighbours near and far.**

And for ourselves: God of grace, whose love embraces us, enable us to reach out to others so that, through us your love may be known. Free us from the confines of culture that we may be a voice to the voiceless, the oppressed and the hungry and hasten the day when we may realise that your Kingdom is for everyone.

O Lord our God, we pray for them: **Our neighbours near and far.**

God of this one world, bind us to our neighbours, everywhere.

In the name of Christ, **Amen.**

(Adapted from 'Called to prayer.' Maureen Edwards, 2001, p.98 and Roots: Resources for Churches, Adult and All Age, July/Aug 2022: Issue 120)

Hymn: StF 672 - [Where can we find you](#)

1. Where can we find you, Lord Jesus our Master?
We want to serve you, to answer your call.
Where do you lead us and ask us to follow?
What should we do in our service to all?
2. 'Go to the hungry, to those who have nothing;
go where the farmlands are empty and bare.
I broke the bread for the people around me;
out of my plenty, think what you can share.
3. 'Go to the homeless, to those who have nowhere;
go where my people sleep out in the rain.
I had no comforts but what others gave me;
offer them shelter, give ease to their pain.
4. 'Go to the outcast, to those who have no-one;
go where my sheep are rejected and lost.
I dined with sinners and reached out to lepers;
go and do likewise, and don't count the cost.'
5. Where will we find you, Lord Jesus our Master?
We are your servants who answer your call.
You go before us, and there we will follow,
taking our cross in the service of all.

Allan Charles Dickinson (b.1954)

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Blessing

Lord, help us to look out for and see our neighbours.

Make us gracious as well as generous,

receptive to the ideas and perspectives,

as well as the needs, of others,

remembering that as we meet them, we meet you.

And in our meeting may we be blessed and be a blessing.

Amen.

(Adapted From Roots: Resources for Churches, Adult and All Age, July/Aug 2022: Issue 120)

Every blessing to you all.

Rev Sarah