

7th June, 2026

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Should nothing of our efforts stand
No legacy survive
Unless the Lord does raise the house
In vain its builders strive

To you who boast tomorrow's gain
Tell me what is your life
A mist that vanishes at dawn
All glory be to Christ

All glory be to Christ our King
All glory be to Christ
His rule and reign will ever sing
All glory be to Christ

His will be done
His kingdom come
On earth as is above
Who is Himself our daily bread

Praise Him the Lord of love
Let living water satisfy
The thirsty without price

We'll take a cup of kindness yet
All glory be to Christ

All glory be to Christ our King
All glory be to Christ
His rule and reign will ever sing
All glory be to Christ

When on the day the great I Am
The faithful and the true
The Lamb who was for sinners slain
Is making all things new

Behold our God shall live with us
And be our steadfast light
And we shall ere his people be
All glory be to Christ

All glory be to Christ our King
All glory be to Christ
His rule and reign will ever sing
All glory be to Christ.

The Sermon by Andy Walters

Read James 3:1-12 and Matthew 7:13-23 – “Living and Speaking, Words of Power”.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, used his straight talking in his book to lead us to put our faith into action, and to live out what we believe. This was written between AD44 and AD49, one of the earliest books in the New Testament.

Howard has previously spoken of Faith and action, and how our faith is made clear to others by our actions.

James, in this first part of Chapter 3, is teaching us the enormous power of Words, the power to create worlds, not from Matter but with a word.

Not that Mum and Dad, in their private moment, got together and spoke a word, and there I was. But cells were divided, and biology and chemistry were started; that gift is from the word of God.

As in Gen 1;27 So God created mankind in his own image.

The Gospels have now formed me and given me my identity.

This is me and you, God forming us by his word.

However, James has warnings for us.

First, as a teacher, he warns us that standards of judgement are higher than those who don't teach, but, as believers, we are all teachers to those who don't know of our Lord.

If teaching increases our own feelings of status or importance, then this is not right. Taking a world view and finding and using scripture out of context or from what was originally meant, or its subsequent meaning, to form ideology to justify abundance to our own glory, comfort and personal wealth, then this is not right either.

James uses the bit from a bridle and the rudder of a ship to demonstrate the power of something small to control a large, powerful body, like a horse or a ship.

The small thing in our mouth (or tongue) can directly control our destination.

As a spark lights a small fire, which in turn can set a forest ablaze, our tongues can set our relationships with each other and with God, on fire.

James warns that this is brushing ourselves with the very fires of Hell.

We have learnt to tame wild animals: Orcas in theme parks, Birds of prey hunting in Weathermore Woods. But can we tame our tongue in the same way?

We offer praises to our Lord, then curse each other.

In Matt 15;8 Jesus states, “They honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me”.

This church James addresses sounds awful; surely, this has no meaning for us today.

Would we use machines to write for us? I'm sure it would be better than this.

No! This should not be,

James has created images of birds, animals, fruit-bearing trees, and springs of fresh, living water.

A place we once had in the company of God, in the beginning, the Genesis story, before the word of corruption entered our hearts, finding our weaknesses, greed, power and lust.

It's our hearts freely given that is what God wants from us.

It's our heartfelt praise for what he has done for us. The list of reasons to praise lasts forever.

It's our heart for each other, He wants. Particularly those far off and different from us.

It's our heart for unity. Particularly within His church. Disunity in the church of Jesus is very ugly and unattractive.

We can't be a force for unity in God's world without unity between ourselves.

And God alone knows just how much the world needs Him right now

It starts with controlling our mouths.

Let call on the name of Jesus.

Only he can help us. The only word we need

There are 3 things we can do to enable us to control our tongue...

The first is we need to recognise and repent.

Recognition is sometimes difficult, as is saying sorry.

I, for one, have been conditioned to believe the saying, "sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can never hurt me".

That's not true. We become conditioned by what we are told about ourselves (which is often hurtful and not true).

Let's try not to repeat mistakes handed down to us but rather we should repent, turn from what hurts one another and turn to Him, our God.

A good example of this is in Lk 6:31, "Let us do to others as you have them do to you".

The second thing is to align and join together.

James, as a carpenter, would have made a framework (yokes) to align two oxen so they could work in harmony, pulling together. This is often a metaphor used to explain togetherness in the scriptures.

I would like to introduce you to the "biscuit jointer".

A dedicated machine cuts the slots, thereby increasing the glue surface and holding everything in perfect alignment.

The left piece is you.

The biscuit is His word (the bible read in Prayerful thoughts)

The glue is the Holy Spirit, which bonds you by its words to the right-hand piece, Jesus Christ.

This leads us into the third thing, which is the gift of the all-important Holy Spirit.

This is given freely by his grace to those who turn to him (and away from our double-talking, two-faced, wickedness) and align what comes from our hearts with the powerful name of Jesus.

By the Spirit being given to those who seek it, they, in turn, are given power, for example:

The powerful Holy Spirit was given to Peter as he addressed the crowds, Act 2, and is the one who encourages, rebukes and teaches us.

The powerful Holy Spirit was the one who raised Lazarus from the Dead, who intercedes in prayer and praise.

The Powerful Holy Spirit that brought the Israelite out of Egypt and the Israelites out of exile, and raised Jesus from the dead, is the same Powerful Holy Spirit that will control our tongues.

1st Sunday after Trinity: O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: June 17th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: June 24th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.