

**Lectionary readings: Amos 7: 7-17; Psalm 82; Colossians 1: 1-14; Luke 10: 25-37**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Amos 7:** I wonder what Amos would be saying of us today? I wonder how our churches would fare if Amos came along with his 'plumb line' to measure whether we are in line with God's purposes? And if he were to find things not right, would we send him packing, as Amaziah the priest did? Or would we be willing to take on board the challenges he faces us with? It might be good for each one of us this week, as an individual, to look at our lives and to reflect on whether our lives are in line with God's desire for us; and then to look at ourselves as a church, and do likewise. If our hearts are hardened and we are spiritually deaf and blind, then there is no future for us. This is Amos' message. It's a hard one, but one we need to allow ourselves to be challenged by.
- **Psalm 82:** This is a plea by the Psalmist that God will minister to the poor, the orphans, the oppressed, the helpless - all those disadvantaged and marginalised, of whom there are plenty in our own day. We still need to bring all such people to God in prayer and ask how we can help them, for God works through human beings. Verse 6 spoke to me in 'Psalms for Praying': *'Within you dwells the Beloved, the Breath of your breath.'* Are we allowing God to fill us and breathe and work in and through us?
- **Colossians 1:** Paul gives thanks for the Colossians' faith and love which he sees as the work of the Holy Spirit; and he prays that they will continue to live to honour

God and please Him. This is our calling as Christians. So it might be good for each one of us to reflect this week on the extent to which we honour God by what we say and do. Are we living to please God, or to please ourselves? And as a church, it is very important that we work at our faith, individually and as a community of faith, and take steps to ensure that our love and our faith grow and deepen. How can we do that? That is worth each one of us reflecting on and then acting on.

- **Luke 10:** This is the familiar story of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer knew the simple answer to his question: love God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself. The lawyer seemed to want Jesus to pat him on the back and pronounce him not only good, but better than most, so he asked the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' His first question: 'What can I do to inherit eternal life?' has more to do with this life than the life beyond death. Eternal life is life shared with God here and now. To love God is to have a burning desire to minister to those in need. If we say we love God, then we are called to love those whom God loves - and that is surely everyone. How do we find ourselves challenged by that?

**A prayer**

O God, it is easy to love the whole world, but hard to love the people I live with or encounter day by day. O God, it is easy to campaign for world peace, but hard to contribute to the peace within my own home, or church, or community. O God, it is easy to share my home and possessions with those I like, but hard to be generous towards those I am prejudiced against. O God, may my love be an expression of Your love, seeing everyone as someone made in Your image and likeness, dearly beloved by You. O God, breathe into me Your Spirit. Amen.