

Bulletin for Sunday 15 May 2022

Good morning friends, on the fifth Sunday of Easter and at the beginning of Christian Aid Week, which we remember in this service.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him (R&S 116)

Prayer: Living God, creator of past, present and future,
we thank you for being with us every day
from our very beginning to our journey's end.
You created the ebb and flow of tide and season,
so we thank you for the blessings of the past
and for the hopes we glimpse for the future.
Most of all, we thank you for the here and now, today.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Revelation 21: 1-6 and John 13: 31-35

Reflection: There is a reason the book of Revelation comes right at the end of the Bible: it makes us focus forwards, describing a vision of the future which was given to John; a vision which looks ahead, beyond the world that John lived in, and beyond the one that we live in two thousand years later, to 'a new heaven and a new earth'.

Our worlds, as we know them, are full of pain: we see the war in Ukraine in the news; we hear from Christian Aid of people living in desperate hunger in Zimbabwe after droughts repeatedly caused crops to fail; we know that there are people in our own communities struggling to care for family members or to cope with rapidly rising prices.

John's vision points us towards a future where God dwells with us - deliberately makes a home with us. In this future world there is no death or suffering, and God, who never intended them, wipes away all the tears of pain.

This picture of the Earth as God's home - this vision of a time when God and the world will be 'at home' with each other - is an inspiration. Being reminded of God's intentions,

of God's values and of God's compassion, can motivate us to work together with others, like Christian Aid, to care for those in need and to do what is in our power to wipe away their tears of pain right now. This Christian Aid Week we can work in the present towards the day in the future when injustice and suffering are ended. Amen.

Hymn: Hail to the Lord's anointed (R&S 127)

Prayers: God of time and eternity
as we wonder about "what next" for the future
we bring before you people and places in turmoil,
for whom the future seems bleak or unimaginable.
Where war has destroyed cities and societies
we pray for your peace and your healing...
Where crops have failed and left people hungry

we pray that help is shared and future crops thrive...
Where illness or grief leave folk exhausted
we pray for proper support and genuine care...
As we all face the challenges of today and tomorrow,
we pray for your wisdom and guidance:
for our leaders, our neighbours, our loved ones,
and for ourselves.
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Blessed city, heavenly Salem (R&S 559)

Blessing: May we learn from the past, live in the present,
and hope for the future which is in God's hand;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love,
this week, and always. Amen

There will be a ' Sunday at Six 'service on Zoom at 6pm on Sunday - all welcome.

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