

**Bulletin for Sunday 26 June 2022**

Good morning friends. I hope you are all able to enjoy the warmer weather and the long light evenings, and that those who are getting away on holiday over the next few weeks will return refreshed.

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

Hymn: Morning has broken (R&S 45)

Prayers: God of eternity, as we take time to worship,  
help us to lay down for a few minutes  
the burden of our every-day concerns.  
Teach us to centre our thoughts on you  
and to focus on your word.  
May your priorities become our priorities,  
and may our hearts overflow with love and praise.  
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: Psalm 16 and Luke 9: 51-62

Reflection: Our Gospel reading begins by telling us that Jesus was deliberately heading for Jerusalem. He had already warned his disciples that he must soon suffer and die, but they hadn't understood or accepted his words; and perhaps this explains his growing sense of urgency. The whole account of his journey is accompanied by teaching of important matters which he wanted the disciples to understand before he had to leave them. Our passage ends with his comment about being fit for the kingdom of God, and clearly he wasn't satisfied that even these close friends of his were yet on track for that.

En route to Jerusalem they had to walk through, and stay in, Samaritan villages where the locals were less than welcoming of Jewish pilgrims heading to religious places which

they, as Samaritans, didn't recognise. Jews and Samaritans were traditionally enemies. Centuries earlier the prophet Elijah had called down fire to destroy some of their ancestors, and the disciples apparently fancied a repeat performance! Both here, and later in the story of the 'Good Samaritan', Jesus made it very clear that these traditional prejudices were wrong, and that they (we) should be open even to those of a different faith.

Following Jesus is important and urgent, for the disciples and for us. It requires real commitment, and putting God's priorities before the many, many distractions of our own lives. Some things in life can wait - but, Jesus said, some things can't. Some things, like ploughing, obviously require concentration; and Jesus said that seeking God's will is in the same category - it's too important and too urgent to be put off, or done as an afterthought, with half our minds or intermittently.

Hymn: Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult (R&S 355)

Prayers: Loving God, we pray for our world,  
so full of beauty... and of pain...  
We hold before you those in the news this week;  
and we pray too for those places and people  
who have slipped out of the headlines:  
may their needs not be forgotten.  
We pray for all in fear, or in pain,  
and especially for our neighbours and friends.  
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,  
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Will you come and follow me (R&S 558)

Blessing: May God grant us to know what is most important;  
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

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There will be a Sunday at Six Zoom service at 6pm this Sunday as usual.

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