West Sussex Area Ministry, United Reformed Church (Billingshurst, Petworth and Pulborough)

Bulletin for Sunday

16th August 2020

Good morning! Firstly, I must apologise (especially to those who noticed...) that the heat during the middle of the week addled my brain sufficiently to leave the wrong date on this week's Newsletter - sorry! The other thing to draw your attention to is that our Zoom worship and also Zoom social events can now be accessed by phone, so that you don't need a computer of any sort to join in. Speak to Karen or myself for more details.

Hymn: Morning has broken	(Rejoice & Sing 45)
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Prayer:God of wonder, we praise you for each fresh new morning,
and for its endless possibilities and hopefulness -
as long as we realise that you are in it with us!
We come to worship this morning
grateful for the chance to focus on you;
help us to be open to your word to us
whenever and wherever we hear it -
particularly in unexpected and unfamiliar voices.
We have much to learn - help us listen!
We need to act on what we hear - help us understand how...
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we bring to you or give in your service,
today and every day.

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Matthew chapter 15: verses 10-28

<u>Reflection</u>: These sections are sandwiched between the story of the feeding of the five thousand, which we read recently, and the feeding of four thousand people which comes soon afterwards. And in all these stories we hear of crumbs - crumbs falling to those who need them most, and God's provision of an abundance of crumbs...

In Jewish law, coupled to the promise of land from God, there was a requirement that God's people didn't harvest fields too thoroughly - it was important that there was always something left for the poor gleaners working behind the harvesters (do you remember the story of Ruth?). Nothing belonged completely to the landowner - it was vital that there was enough to share with the marginalised who otherwise would have nothing.

The conversation between Jesus and the Canaanite woman can be a difficult passage to read and accept, depending on the tone of voice in which you (in your head) hear it. Do you imagine Jesus sternly (even grumpily) refusing her help because she was an outsider, not a Jew? Or do you hear a real conversation - one in which these two very different people genuinely listen, hear each other, and are able to learn from each other? Whatever the tone at the start of the conversation, by the end it seems that just as God provided baskets of crumbs after the crowds had been fed, here Jesus is able to heal the daughter of an outsider, as the abundant crumbs of his ministry overflow the insider community in which it started. Thankfully for all of us!

<u>Hymn</u> :	There's a wideness in God's mercy	(R&S 353)
<u>Prayer:</u>	Loving and merciful God, we pray for those who feel they are outsiders: for refugees; for the homeless; for those sick or dying We pray too for the insiders: for those who have real power, and lives full of possibility We hold before you the gulf between the two - may we not believe that it is unbridgeable, but remember that all are your children, and all need bread. We pray for those closest to us for our communities and for ourselves Amen	
<u>Hymn</u> :	In Christ there is no East or West (R&S 647) May we have our eyes opened to see and hear that of God in everyone we meet. and may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and with all those we love this week and every week. Amen	

There will be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom this evening; contact me for an invitation, all very welcome as we hear of Joseph being reconciled with his brothers.

The Messenger deadline for material to Meredith is next Thursday (20th) please. Please let me know of any news or prayer requests to be shared. Anne Lewitt