

**Bulletin for Sunday**      **6th September 2020**

Good morning! As we move into September the seasons are turning fast: the schools are back, leaves are changing colour, and blackberries are free for all to pick in the hedgerows. Each September churches worldwide celebrate Creation Time - a chance to be more aware of the wonders of God's creation; and also aware of the threats to this wonderful world and all its inhabitants from the effects of the climate crisis.

Hymn:              All creatures of our God and king                              (R&S 39)

Prayer: Great God, creator of all that is,  
as we look around at the intricacy of trees and plants,  
we praise you!  
God of the vastness of all that is,  
we wonder at the stars and imagine the infinity of space...  
and we praise you!  
God of all peoples and communities,  
we recognise your love, and care, and patience with us...  
and we praise you from our hearts!  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we bring to you or give in your service,  
today and every day. In Jesus' name, Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings:              Ezekiel chapter 33: verses 7-11      and  
Matthew chapter 16: verses 21-28

Reflection:      Seasons give us a sense of security - a regularity which gives a shape to our lives. We associate seasons with particular colours, certain sorts of weather, seasonal foods... But what if that sense of security is misplaced?

For decades there have been warning signs of environmental change, as the climate of this world - God's world - goes into crisis. If we read Ezekiel in this light, we hear how the prophet must urgently share with the people the warnings which God sends. If the prophet withholds those warnings, then he himself takes the blame; but if he passes them on, then everyone is responsible for their own actions in response. God tasks Ezekiel with ensuring that everyone knows that they must change.

Churches in the global south have been warning us for a number of years that they are facing dire effects from climate change. Are they the prophets we should listen to? What about the activists and campaigners? Or perhaps creation itself, with terrible losses in the wildfires in Australia, California, the Amazon... with the death of glaciers... with the pain of the extinction of species after species... perhaps this is the message we should listen to? All these voices call us to respond; to change.

Ezekiel reminds us that God doesn't want to punish our guilt, but to encourage us to repent - to change. Matthew reminds us of that again: we are to work together in community to help each other change. And when we do, God is with us.

So let's work together, and help each other to change, to understand the needs of this wonderful world, to be part of the solution; so that all may truly live. Amen

Hymn: Lord, speak to me, that I may speak (R&S 613)

Prayer: God of creation... and of compassion,  
please hear both our fears and our needs...  
We pray for our neighbours who share this world with us:  
humans and other creatures struggling with changing climates,  
forests swept by fire, rivers drying up, ice caps dwindling...  
We pray for peace, as shortages lead to conflict,  
and conflict leads to pain and grief, and to refugees...  
We hold before you those closer to home,  
those who we love and particularly worry about.....  
and all these prayers we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: God of grace and God of glory (R&S 344)

May God grant us both the wisdom and the courage  
to look honestly, and act responsibly, for the good of all...

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

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There will again be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom on Sunday evening. All welcome, online or using a landline phone, contact me for details if you want to join us for the first time.

Anne Lewitt