

Bulletin for Sunday

20th September 2020

Good morning! As this strange summer finally draws to a close, I hope you can all enjoy the blessing of this one last warm and sunny weekend!

Hymn: Awake, awake to love and work! (R&S 608)

Prayer: God, who made the earth, the air, the sky, the sea,
 who gave the light its birth - God cares for me.
 God, who made the grass, the flower, the fruit, the tree,
 the day and night to pass - God cares for me.
 God, who sent his Son to die on Calvary,
 will, when life's clouds come on, still care for me.

God of harvest and community,
known to us all our lives through familiar hymns
and through shared worship in well-loved buildings,
this year when things have to be different
hold us all safely and lead us gently forwards.

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

Reading: Matthew chapter 20: verses 1-16

Reflection: Right from when we are very young, we are brought up to the idea of rewards for good work, whether it's a star or a sticker for good behaviour or school work, or pocket money for doing small jobs around the house or garden. It may not be perfect, but we soon get the idea that effort is rewarded, and extra effort is rewarded even more. So this story comes as a bit of a shock - to us, and probably also to its original hearers - because Jesus seems to be saying that God doesn't think or act like that. God, in this and in other parables, such as the story of the 'prodigal son', is generous to both the deserving and the undeserving.... or, at least, those we might be inclined to think of as undeserving. God - as portrayed by Jesus, just doesn't seem to share our understanding of 'fairness'. This parable makes absolutely no judgement about how deserving any of the labourers were.

How do you feel - is it better that each worker should be paid for how much work they've done, or that each should receive what they really need to live on? In the Lord's Prayer we ask for our 'daily bread', and in this passage we see how God's provision is based on grace, on love and on generosity. Not on fairness, but something more than that. Amen.

Hymn: Great God, your love has called us here (R&S 339)

Prayer: Loving and infinitely compassionate God,
you give with a generosity - both open-handed and even-handed -
which we find difficult to imagine or understand...
We pray for those in real need:
in need of their daily bread, or a regular job;
in need of medical care or a roof over their head...
Detach us from our own concerns
so that we feel their pain... and learn to truly share your gifts.
We hold before you all those we love; those we worry about;
those we feel responsible for.....
Hear our prayers, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: The Lord is King! lift up your voice (R&S 76)

May we find unexpected treasures
within the challenges of this coming week;
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

As cases of the virus start to go up again, please remember that for everybody's sake we must take care to keep our distance and to leave at the end of the service without lingering to chat. The 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' meetings on Zoom are a better opportunity to catch up safely with news, in comfort, at home.

There will again be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom on Sunday evening. We shall be hearing the story of manna raining from heaven for the hungry Israelites, and singing hymns to Ellen's piano accompaniment. All very welcome, online or using a landline phone, contact me for details if you want to join us for the first time.

Anne Lewitt