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

## Bulletin for Sunday 1st November 2020

Very warm greetings to you all, despite the less than welcoming weather outside! Thankfully we can still worship this morning, wherever we are, and hold each other in prayer as we do so. Today we celebrate All Saints day.

Hymn: For all the saints, who from their labours rest (R&S 658)

Prayer: God of yesterday and today, of all people everywhere,

we praise and thank you for the many whose commitment, courage and faith

have brought the church, through the ages, to today.

We thank you for all you have given to us, and ask your blessing on everything we do,

and everything we bring to you or give in your service,

today and every day.

Bless us with your presence

Speak... and help us to hear... In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew chapter 23: verses 1-12

<u>Reflection</u>: Actions speak louder than words... There are so many words: words we read, words we hear on TV or radio, words in emails and texts and adverts and songs. So many that we don't properly listen to any of them - do you ever get to the end of a weather forecast and realise you've no idea what they said tomorrow's weather will do? Many of the people whose words surround us - politicians and newsreaders, comedians, actors and singers - aren't people who we know 'in real life'; so telling the true words from the fiction, the God-given wisdom from the advertising spin, is difficult.

Jesus, in this passage, tells his disciples to ignore the actions of the religious teachers, but to listen to their words - because their actions are their own but their words come from God, through scripture and the religious tradition.

The saints who went before us - and those who surround us now - are not, of course, just famous people with halos in old stories. Rather, they are those faithful souls, in very 'real life' who have both shown us, and taught us through their words, the good news of God's love for us. May we treasure their words and their actions. Amen

Hymn: From heaven you came, helpless babe (R&S 522)

Prayer: God of compassion,

we remember those called by you in the past who faithfully served you by loving their neighbour:

may we follow in their footsteps.

We hold before you those in need:
because of lives blighted by homelessness or poverty;
because of grief, loneliness or anxiety;
because of illness and pain......
God of compassion, we give thanks for all those who care:
for dedicated professionals and generous volunteers,
and also for friends and family struggling to cope.
Bless them with hope, with humour, and with love.
In Jesus' name, Amen

Hymn:

Thy hand, O God, has guided thy flock from age to age (R&S 567)

May we remember with love those who went before us and showed us the way; 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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Important: If you have been in one of our churches and subsequently (within the following week or two) get a positive Covid test result, please notify the Church Secretary (or me, if it's easier) so that we can ensure that everybody is contacted, using the contact details which we hold. The official system seems to be struggling, so this is vital. Thanks.

Pulborough members and friends - the Annual Church Meeting will be held on Zoom on Sunday 22nd November at 12 noon. Reports and papers available very soon.

A reminder to all those attending worship in our churches: please don't forget the importance of wearing masks, using hand sanitiser, and remaining socially distanced, especially before and after worship. Please let's keep each other safe.

There will be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom at 6pm on Sunday. All welcome, online or using a landline phone, contact me if you need details.

Anne Lewitt