

Bulletin for Sunday 9th May 2021

Greetings, friends. Today (9th May) is Christian Aid Sunday, with Christian Aid Week (10th-16th) starting tomorrow. I'm sure most of us have done door-to-door collecting for Christian Aid in the past, with the familiar red envelopes. That may no longer be possible, but around the world Christian Aid's partners and their communities are still in need of financial support and prayer. We can give through their website at christianaid.org.uk or by phone on 020 7523 2269 and we'll think of them in worship this morning.

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

Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! (R&S 74)

Prayer: God of all that has life and breath,
we praise you for what we experience with our senses:
the beauty of the world and the creativity of its people.
In awe we praise you for mountains and oceans;
in gratitude we praise you for soil and for seeds;
in hope we praise you for those working for a better, fairer, world.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give in your service,
today and every day.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: John chapter 15 verses 9-17

Reflection: "You are my friends if you do what I command you".

It's a strange sort of friend that commands you to do something; and these are strange commands. To me they seem more like teachings. So could we perhaps paraphrase something like, "You are my friends if you accept what I've taught you"? I think that's part of the way there, but Jesus wants action - doing - not just acceptance of teachings and values. He himself was active in healing and in seeking justice, and he wants his friends to follow him.

Christian Aid's partners work to tackle many challenges faced by the poorest people on the planet. People suffering because of injustice and conditions which are outside their own control, often now exacerbated by climate change. In parts of Kenya, and some other countries, climate change affecting the rainfall has made the water supply precarious, so that less food can be grown and more people are left hungry. But there are solutions, such as dams, which can help... if sufficient resources can be found; and this is where Christian Aid Week donations come in. To act to help, in this sort of situation, is to obey Jesus' commandment to love one another. God is love, and as we demonstrate our love in action this week, we show how we have not only heard Jesus' teaching, and adopted his values, but also followed both his example and his commands to demonstrate God's love by loving each other. Amen.

Hymn: A new commandment I give unto you (R&S 745)

Prayer: God of love and compassion,
We hold before you this damaged world,
and all its suffering people.....
As we pray for the coming of a better world
with justice, kindness and humility at its heart,
give us confidence to stand against injustice.
We pray for Christian Aid and their partners around the world;
and we hold before you our communities, those close to us
and the concerns on our hearts....
Loving God, hear our prayers, spoken or unspoken,
in Jesus' name Amen

Hymn: The love of God comes close (R&S 107)

Blessing: May love and joy come close to us all this week;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

In our Billingshurst and Petworth buildings morning worship is being held indoors.
In Pulborough it is held outside on the grass. All services start at 10.30am.
Please remember masks and social distancing; singing isn't allowed indoors, services are short
and well ventilated! Let your Church Secretary know you want to attend.
On Zoom, the evening 'Sunday at Six' service, with hymns, is at 6pm. We continue to explore the
book of Genesis - all welcome.
For all of us there is a chance to chat at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms.

May Price's funeral will be held at 1pm on Tuesday - all who knew her will want to keep Craig and
the family in our prayers.

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