

**Bulletin for Sunday 13th June 2021**

Good Morning, Friends.

Now that Summer seems finally to have arrived in earnest, I hope you are able to enjoy the sunshine and also the amazing growth of plants of all sorts - this Sunday's lectionary readings certainly feel very apt...

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

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

Prayer:           Creator God, you have given us the miracle of life,  
and for that we praise and thank you;  
you have given us hopes and dreams, which grow within us,  
and so with joy we praise and thank you;  
around us in the world the seeds of your Kingdom are growing,  
and so with faith we praise and thank you.  
Living God, as your Kingdom grows, from day to day,  
we ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we give in your service,  
now and always.  
We ask it in Jesus' name.       Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings:       Ezekiel chap. 17 verses 22-24 & Mark chap. 4 verses 26-34

Reflection:     One day last week, walking the dog in the evening, I made my way up the path through the Glebe Field in Pulborough and found that the grass on either side was well over waist high and flourishing.

Jesus and those listening to his parables were as familiar as we are with plants which, given the right conditions (and especially the right weather) will grow enthusiastically. It's easy to take that vigorous life and abundant growth for granted, and hardly notice it - or even to grumble about the work or the untidiness which results. But Jesus gently reminded those who would follow him that growth is God's gift, and to be marvelled at. While they reflected on the growth of crops and plants around them, and what they show us of God's power and presence in the world, he moved on to using that growth as a metaphor for spiritual growth - for the growth of God's rule (or God's kingdom). It's a metaphor which points forwards to the day when the whole world will eventually accept the will of God.

Each of us, like the farmer in the parable, can do our part and sow the seed, but not make it grow - only God can do that. And God does. The growth of the Kingdom is largely invisible... but it keeps on growing. The growth of the Kingdom is also inevitable - like tree roots splitting rock, and like grass needing mowing! Amen!

Hymn: We plough the fields and scatter (R&S 124)

Prayer: God of compassion and of justice,  
we hold before you in prayer today:  
powerful world leaders meeting in Cornwall,  
and every one of the people affected by their decisions...  
all those who campaign and work to  
feed the hungry, heal the sick and house the homeless...  
our communities, friends and families, and ourselves,  
that in us and around us your kingdom may grow....  
Living God, hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken,  
in Jesus' name Amen

Hymn: God is working his purpose out (R&S 573)

Blessing: May we be aware of beauty and life  
and the growth of God's kingdom in the world around us...  
and may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us and with all those we love  
now and always. Amen

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The funeral of Mrs Joan West will be held on Monday at 10.30am. As it is not possible for all friends to attend the service, it will be live-streamed online; please contact me (Anne) if you would like me to send you the details necessary to view it.

In all our churches morning worship at 10.30am is now being held indoors. Please let your Church Secretary know you want to attend, and remember masks and social distancing; congregational singing isn't allowed, and services are short and well ventilated!

The evening 'Sunday at Six' service, with hymns, is on Zoom at 6pm. All welcome. And the best chances to chat are at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms!

Anne Lewitt