

Bulletin for Sunday 20th August 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

I hope you are all well and gradually getting back to a more 'normal' life. As we open up more church activities I just wanted to ask you all, please, that if you have been with us in worship or at another event and later test positive for Covid, please let us know, so that we can ensure that others get tests as appropriate. Thank you!

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

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

Prayer: God of life, creator of everything we have ever known,
we are awed by the infinite reach of the universe...
and comforted by the smell of freshly mown grass.
From the beginning
you have been bringing beauty out of chaos,
and loving all that you made. So we respond in praise!
And we ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give, in your service,
now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 104 verses 10-26 and Mark ch.12 verses 28-34

Reflection: This Psalm is full of wonder at God's creation. All of God's creation, not just the domesticated bits! There is certainly thankfulness that grass grows for the cattle, and plants for people to eat; but there is also appreciation of wild animals and birds - even young lions, says the psalmist, are fed by God. Even more extraordinarily, a few verses further on earthquakes and volcanoes are mentioned as examples of God's power and glory. It can be easy to fall into the trap of assuming that we are at the centre, and that creation revolves around us and our needs. But the Bible tells us that God loves and delights in all that God has made. Not just us.

Sadly we have damaged creation. Gradually we are coming to realise the critical implications of species loss, pollution, and climate change. In other parts of the world people are feeling the effects more immediately, as their fields are lost to rising sea levels or to encroaching deserts, leaving them homeless and starving. These are our neighbours, and Jesus calls us to love them, not to turn away.

What then should we do? As Christians, aware of God's care for creation and for all people everywhere, we must surely be deeply concerned. We can pray; we can give; we can examine our own impact without rose-tinted spectacles; and we can join with others to speak up for change, even when that isn't comfortable or easy. This is a crisis of our making. The earth, as the psalm says, is full of God's creatures. Long may it remain so.

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

Prayer: God of compassion and understanding,
you know that we don't find change easy...
We pray for politicians and leaders
that they may have courage to take hard decisions...
We pray for those already threatened by climate change
that they may find ways to adapt and survive....
And we pray for ourselves, that we may have
the generosity to act in the best interest of others...
Loving God, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder (R&S 117)

Blessing: May we walk gently and with awe through God's creation;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

As we gradually open up, we all have a part to play in keeping each other safe; so please continue to wear masks indoors, and to give everyone space.
And bear in mind, it's impossible to make our churches completely risk-free.

There will be an evening 'Sunday at Six' service on Zoom at 6pm.

Anne Lewitt