

Bulletin for Sunday 19th September 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship..... and then praise God as we sing (as many times through as you feel is right...):

Hymn: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow (R&S 21)

Prayer: God, from whom all the blessings of life flow,
we thank you for the beauty and wonder all around us,
and for the friends and neighbours we share it all with.
May we remember to pause - to smell the flowers,
to hear the birds, and to watch the clouds blowing....
While you are far beyond our understanding,
we are challenged and reassured by your presence
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: Mark chapter 9, verses 30 to 37

Reflection: I think it's quite easy to see the disciples as childish in their desire to be 'greater' than one another. Like siblings squabbling in the back seat of the car, or youngsters in the playground using the old rhyme, 'I'm the king of the castle, get down you dirty rascal'. But I wonder whether we really grow out of that behaviour, or just hide it slightly? Office politics, staffroom rivalries, Cabinet reshuffles....

In the Middle Ages in some cathedrals there was a tradition of the 'Boy Bishop' who for one day of the year was allowed to parody the Bishop, wearing his vestments and creating amusement out of a mock reversal of the usual situation. It was a useful reminder, for those in power, of the importance of humility; and, for those not in power, a very popular custom! Jesus said that anyone wanting to be the first or greatest must reverse the usual status quo and become the least - the slave of all. Not in jest but in reality.

Then Jesus continued, saying that those who are powerless - the smallest, least noticed, unseen and unheard, untrendy and unpopular - are those we should welcome. Not the ones with money, influence or fame, but the ones unnoticed at the bottom of the pile. Two thousand years later, that is still quite a challenge!

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

Prayer: God who came among us as a servant
and taught us to love and serve one another,
we hold before you in prayer this troubled world.
Help us to see it as you do, paying special attention
to the weak, the overlooked, and the most needy.
May our churches be places of real welcome to all,
where each person is loved, respected and listened to.
We pray for all who suffer, in body or in mind.....
and for our communities, our loved ones and ourselves.
Loving God, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: My song is love unknown (R&S 207)

Blessing: May we see the world as Jesus saw it.....
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

We all have a part to play in caring and keeping each other safe; so please continue to wear masks in church, and let us know if you test positive for Covid soon after attending worship or another event in our buildings.

Sadly it's impossible to make our churches completely risk-free.

There will be an evening 'Sunday at Six' service on Zoom at 6pm as usual. All welcome.

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