

Bulletin for Sunday

8th May 2020

Dear Friends

A very Good Morning to you all, and hopefully another sunny one.

Today's reading is familiar, often chosen for funerals. But a 'way' has to have a beginning and a middle as well as an ending...

'Jesus said...."I am the way, and the truth, and the life."'

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

Prayer: Our God, you are always ahead of us, leading us on
when we cannot see the way.
You are always beside us, in step with us
as we look for reassurance; for familiarity; not least for hope...
We thank you for bringing us safely this far
and ask for your hand, to lead us securely into the unseen future. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John 14: 1-14

Reflection: Because we are now several weeks after Easter it's worth reminding ourselves that this reading comes from before Easter - from the teachings of Jesus at the Last Supper. Jesus was giving the disciples a final revision lesson on 'how to live as my followers when I am not with you'; but they didn't understand.

We can know the way to somewhere, even if the distance is great and the journey complex, if we are really familiar with it. Or we can get lost going round the corner if we have never been there before. For the disciples this was totally new territory.

You know the joke about the person asked for directions, who says, 'well if you want to go to there, I shouldn't start from here...' But in truth we can only ever start from where we are, and trust that God, who brought us here, will travel with us. Our onward journey always starts from the here and the now.

Thomas thought he needed to know the destination - the end of his journey - to know which way to go from here; but Jesus turned the question and answer round. Thomas, like all of us, needed not a compass direction to follow, but a relationship with Jesus to

lead him through the twists and turns of life. Have you ever walked a labyrinth? They are sometimes laid out, like two-dimensional mazes, on the floors of great cathedrals or in gardens; it's said they originated in the Middle Ages as a substitute for going on pilgrimage. Walking one, you go a long way, and in many directions, before eventually reaching your destination; giving you plentiful opportunities to reflect on your life.

The disciples would no longer follow Jesus around Galilee; but they needed all the more to follow his example and the things he had taught. They couldn't see the future, but they could stay in touch with God and trust to be led in God's way. So can we.

Hymn: Jesus the Lord says, I am the Bread (R&S 199)

Prayer: God of life, all your children are looking for a way forward.
In a week when we have remembered the ending of one conflict
bless all those who seek for a peaceful way forward.
In a week when we support the vital work of Christian Aid
bless those working towards a fairer way forward for all.
At a time when many are isolated and lonely
bless them with hope for a warmer, more welcoming way forward.
For all - sick, worried, frustrated, grieving, exhausted....
You are the way; so take our hands and lead us forward. Amen

Hymn: Love divine, all loves excelling (R&S 663)

As we walk the way through life with Christ,
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

Last week the hymn that I added as an extra, after the service, attracted more comment than all the others - so I venture again to suggest that, had we been worshipping with the blessing of a live organist, I would have chosen a hymn not in R & S - 'Longing for Light' (with the chorus, 'Christ be our light') by Bernadette Farrell. If you have access to YouTube you'll find it in several versions, for different musical tastes.

Every blessing for the week ahead.
Anne Lewitt