

Bulletin for Sunday 21st November 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

We pause as we prepare to worship..... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Thou whose almighty word (R&S 38)

Prayer: God of both might and mystery,
 you are our source of truth and light...
 We have many names for you,
 but you are beyond our imagination and understanding...
 Be with us, and help us to hear your truth.
 We ask your blessing on everything that we do,
 and everything that we give, in your service,
 now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John chapter 18, verses 33-38

Reflection: It is the morning after Jesus was arrested, and he is on trial before Pilate, the Roman leader. This is just one scene in a narrative structured as a drama - Pilate comes in and out, because the religious leaders insist on standing outside his headquarters, trying to avoid ritual uncleanness before the Passover. In these verses, however, we see Pilate indoors, talking with Jesus.

On the face of it, Pilate is the one with the power: the judge, the representative of human authority. But we, as readers, are aware that the real judge, the truly powerful person in this exchange, is Jesus, the prisoner. Pilate can't understand Jesus' authority, although he can sense it.

Jesus want to talk about 'truth', but this is a strange idea to Pilate, who actually asks, "What is truth?" For him, life is absolutely all about power and authority, which is to be grasped and held onto by any means available, completely regardless of either truth or justice. He lives in a world of carefully maintained illusion - the illusion of his own importance - so the thought that truth might be real and out of his control is threatening.

Jesus has come to make the truth known - the truth of his own identity and authority; the truth about God's kingdom, God's rule; and the truth that that ultimate authority is grounded not in violence and lies, but in love. Amen.

Hymn: Not far beyond the sea, nor high (R&S 318)

Prayer: God of compassion,
we pray for those hurt by bullying, abuse or racism...
may we always speak up for justice and for truth;
we pray for the homeless and refugees seeking safety...
may we open our hearts to those in need;
and we pray for politicians and those in public life...
may they serve with integrity and care for the powerless,
and may we be faithful in prayer for them.
We hold before you those who feel alone or anxious,
the hungry, the sick and the grieving...
we remember especially our own communities,
those we love... and those we are concerned about...
Loving God, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: The Lord is King! lift up your voice (R&S 76)

Blessing: May we take the truth seriously, and listen for 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

There will be a ' Sunday at Six 'service on Zoom at 6pm - all welcome.

Please continue to remember that we all have a part to play in caring for each other and doing what we can to keep everyone safe from Covid, which includes letting us know if you have a positive Covid test after recently being in church. Sadly it's impossible to make our churches completely risk-free.

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