

**Bulletin for Sunday 4 September 2022**

Good morning friends.

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

Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation (R&S 74)

Prayers: God of creation, we praise and adore you...  
As we pause to listen for your voice,  
give us ears to hear and hearts to discern;  
and as we put down our worries, and turn to face you,  
help us to recognise the way of your Spirit's leading.  
Thank you for walking beside us through life -  
we long to know you more deeply,  
and to live as you call us.....  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and on everything we give in your service,  
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Deuteronomy 30: 15-20 and Luke 14: 25-33

Reflection: I spent last weekend at the Greenbelt Festival, enjoying interesting talks and discussions, music and worship, as well as catching up with friends and colleagues after the last couple of years. But I suspect the thing I will remember most from this year's festival is an extraordinary artwork. Suspended from the trees, just off the main path between the campsite and the centre of the festival, was a huge globe - 'Gaia'. Created by artist Luke Jerram, Gaia measures seven metres in diameter and is made from detailed NASA images of the earth's surface - giving a vast and realistic, three-dimensional model of our planet, floating just above head level, lit up from inside at night, and moving very slightly in the wind, as though alive. It created an experience a little like that of the astronauts who were able to view the earth from space, and acted like a magnet, attracting people of all ages, who stood and looked in awe at the beauty, fragility and sheer wonder of this planet.

The fragility, and the damage we have done (and are doing) to God's amazing creation are becoming ever-more apparent. Droughts and floods on an unprecedented scale, global heating and the loss of species after species...

Jesus spoke strongly about the importance of understanding and weighing up the costs of our actions; reading the signs and adapting to reality... May we hear his words, understand how God has created all life interconnected, and act with a greater sense of responsibility and care... We must urgently 'sit down and estimate the cost' (Luke 14: 28).

Hymn: God in his love for us lent us this planet (R&S 85)

Prayers: God of love, creator and sustainer of all that is,  
we hold before you our beautiful planet -  
your creation, and the only home of your children.  
We pray for the people, the animals and wildlife,  
and the land of Pakistan, facing devastating floods...  
and we pray also for those in East Africa suffering  
the worst drought in living memory...  
We hold before you our own communities:  
farmers struggling after the hot, dry summer,  
and everyone fearing a winter of rising energy bills...  
Compassionate God, hold us all in our need;  
show us the way forwards and how to help each other....  
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,  
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

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

Blessing: May we approach the natural world with awe and wonder,  
as we glimpse in it the nature of God, the Creator....  
and may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us and with all those we love,  
this week, and always. Amen

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Sunday at Six service on Zoom at 6pm this Sunday as usual - all welcome.

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