

**Bulletin for Sunday 7th March 2021**

Good morning to you all!

The skies may be a bit greyer this morning, but the primroses are flowering in Wiggonholt churchyard and the gorse on the heath is coming into bloom. I love that so many Spring flowers are in different shades of yellow, to lift our mood as we travel through Lent.

Let's pause as we come before God... and then let's praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Let all the world in every corner sing (R&S 114)

Prayer: Awesome God, Creator of the universe and infinity beyond...  
we take time this morning to worship you,  
to praise you; to thank you; and to renew our love for you.  
Make us ready to hear your voice; to answer your call;  
to change, and to grow into the people you want us to be.  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we give in your service,  
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John chapter 2 verses 13-22

Reflection:

We are proud of our church buildings - we remember their history and their builders, we care for them and we show them off to visitors. They are important to us, even though we know that the Church is really the people...

The Temple in Jerusalem was huge, imposing and beautiful. Only a few parts remain today, but they are impressive - constructed from absolutely colossal blocks of stone. At the time of Jesus' ministry it was nearly but not quite complete, having been under construction for the best part of fifty years. It was believed to be a connecting space where heaven touched earth. The Jews were very proud of it and shocked when Jesus, the itinerant Galilean teacher, first caused chaos amongst the traders, and then made what sounded like threats to the structure of the Temple itself.

Of course Jesus wasn't about to either demolish or rebuild the magnificent stone structure - he was talking about something completely different. He was foretelling his death and his resurrection, and teaching that heaven and earth didn't connect at a particular geographical location - rather, heaven and earth were (and are) connected through him. After his death and resurrection his disciples came to understand that they didn't need a particular place to worship God, because Jesus had built that bridge, and made that connection.

We - God's people, the Church - are the body of Christ in the world today. We are still under construction - a work in progress - just like the Jerusalem Temple; with much to learn, and much growing to do. Jesus was unhappy with the state of the temple, and by overturning tables and chasing away the animals, he made his point clear. What do we need to do, or to throw out, to bring the Church closer to God's intentions for it?

Hymn: O Breath of life, come sweeping through us (R&S 302)

Prayer: Compassionate God  
We hold before you our broken world,  
praying for the people of Myanmar, of Yemen,  
and of other places filled with violence and despair.  
We pray for children without food, young people without a future,  
and older people without dignity or hope.  
We hold before you our communities and all in need here,  
including those we love, care for and worry about.  
Hear all our prayers, spoken or unspoken, in Jesus' name, Amen

Hymn: Brother, Sister, let me serve you (R&S 474)

Blessing: May we be part of the community of God's people in this place;  
  
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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While our buildings are shut, we continue to worship together on Zoom each Sunday at 10.30am and again at 6.00pm; and we enjoy a chance to chat at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms.

The third Zoom Lent Group session, from 'God of Surprises' by Gerard Hughes, will be on Tuesday, March 9th, at 7.30pm; all very welcome - more details from Gerald or me.

Anne Lewitt