

Bulletin for Sunday 23 January 2022

Good morning, friends - I hope you're managing to stay warm. This is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, so as we worship let's remember what unites us all in Christ.

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

Hymn: Make way, make way for Christ the King (R&S 141)

Prayer: God of all, we come to worship you -
to pray and praise you, to give thanks,
and to take time to listen for your word,
just as Jesus did in Nazareth...
Help us to understand that
whether we are gathered or apart
we are all in your presence,
and we are all part of the body of Christ,
serving in the work you call us to...
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. In Jesus 'name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Luke 4: 14-21

Reflection: Jesus is in his home town, just embarking on his new life and ministry - but he doesn't hesitate to be bold and controversial. Jesus chose to read passages from the prophet Isaiah that speak not of the rich and powerful but of the poor and oppressed. He was deliberately disruptive - because people were suffering; and because he wanted to remind everyone that this is not the way God wants the world to be.

Who are the disruptive voices calling for God's upside-down kingdom values today? Are they in Parliament... or the church...? Or are they, perhaps, in social justice movements, such as MeToo, or Black Lives Matter?

The congregation in the Synagogue in Nazareth were used to hearing that scripture read. They just weren't used to it being read the way Jesus read it - implying that it should change the way they thought and acted. What about us? Are we also so used to it that we don't hear how surprising it is, that Jesus came to the poor, not the rich, and to the oppressed, rather than the successful? May God help us to hear. Amen

Hymn: The kingdom of God is justice and joy (R&S 200)

Prayer: Loving and compassionate God,
as prices rise, we pray for those who struggle,
and ask your blessing on food banks and charities;
as courts, prisons and the justice system are strained,
we pray that justice is served and all are treated fairly.
We hold before you those trapped in lives of addiction,
those struggling with anxiety, and those who live in fear...
We pray this week especially for Christian Unity...
and we pray for our neighbours,
for all those we love, and for ourselves...
Through our prayers, our words and our actions
may your kingdom come on earth.
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts... Amen

Hymn: Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes (R&S 137)

Blessing: May God's kingdom come on earth...
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

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

We all have a part to play in caring for each other in a continuing time of Covid - wearing masks, giving people space and having plenty of ventilation all help. Remember, some people may be much more vulnerable than others, despite vaccinations. Please also let us know if you have a positive Covid test after recently being in church.

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