

**Bulletin for Sunday 24 July 2022**

Good morning friends.

After an unusually hot few days, I hope you are all feeling refreshed and more energised by the slightly cooler temperatures.

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

Hymn:      Awake, awake to love and work      (R&S 608)

Prayers:      Loving God, always close to us,  
as we take time to reflect and to worship you  
may we be aware that we are all your children,  
and you care for us more than we understand.  
You teach us right and wrong, and how to live,  
and by your example we learn to love and care.  
For all this we praise and thank you.  
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:      Psalm 138      and      Luke 11: 1-13

Reflection:

At Easter we planted a little crab apple tree in front of the Pulborough church building. The grass all around it has dried out and gone brown, as it has in most places, but where I have been regularly watering the tree there is a tiny 'oasis' of green in the midst of the dry, dead grass. I think prayer can create similar places of fresh life and growth in our lives, if we let it.

So often we learn by seeing what others do... Here, some, at least, of the disciples had noticed how important prayer was to Jesus, and they wanted to learn to pray for themselves - to experience what they could see that Jesus was experiencing when he took time to make contact with God in prayer. Obviously John the Baptist had been giving lessons to the loyal disciples who still followed him, and Jesus' followers were a bit

concerned that they were missing something. As, of course, they were, if they didn't have the confidence to approach God directly for themselves in praise and supplication.

By praying, and by including in our prayers our concerns not just for ourselves but also for others, we maintain and build our relationship with God and with our neighbours. Of course we don't have to pray in a long and perfectly polished monologue - the Holy Spirit is constantly present with us, nudging and encouraging, reminding and prompting us to listen in prayer as well as pouring out our own worries. Jesus taught the disciples - and us - to pray as a community, using phrases such as 'give us', 'forgive us', 'lead us', and 'deliver us', but these words can be used whether we are gathered together or praying alone - we remain essentially one family, the children of 'Our Father in heaven'. Amen

Hymn: What a friend we have in Jesus (R&S 413)

Prayers: God of compassion, we live in a very large world  
full of people and events about which we know little...  
Having experienced a heatwave this week,  
we pray for all those affected regularly  
by oppressive heat and drought,  
especially people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya  
facing starvation if the rains don't come.  
We pray for our own communities and loved ones,  
and we hold before you those known to us  
who are sick, or lonely, or grieving.....  
In Jesus' name we ask all our prayers,  
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us (R&S 373)

Blessing: May we think before we pray, and pray before we act;  
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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There will be a Sunday at Six service on Zoom at 6pm as usual - all welcome.

Anne Lewitt phone (01798) 872535 email [ailewitt@gmail.com](mailto:ailewitt@gmail.com) [day off Thursday]