West Sussex Area Ministry, United Reformed Church (Billingshurst, Petworth and Pulborough)

 **Bulletin for Sunday 20 February 2022**

Good morning, friends. I hope you all survived the storm without too much damage or difficulty, and that the next week is a bit calmer.

Let’s pause as we prepare to worship… and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him (R&S 116)

Prayer: God of light and love,

 because you know us through and through

 you see the light in each of us which we fail to see

 and the goodness in others which we fail to recognise.

 You are the source of light and love

 and you nurture and encourage them in us.
 We praise and thank you that through your love

 we can begin to see others as you see them.

 So help us to love, and teach us to live in your light.

 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: Genesis 45: 3-11, 15 and Luke 6: 27-38

Reflection: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” So said Jesus. This is sometimes known as the Golden Rule, and acknowledged in a quite similar form by most religions and philosophies. It seems so simple… why, in real life, does it turn out to be so challenging? Surely we would all like to receive kindness, love and respect? But showing kindness, love and respect to everyone else is not necessarily easy. Especially when Jesus then explicitly tells us that this isn’t just about how we treat our friends and neighbours, but also - actually, especially - about how we treat our enemies! Really not simple at all… It is so much easier to respond to any form of threat or unkindness with instinctive retaliation, but Jesus calls for something radically different - for attitudes and actions that seek the good of the ‘other’, the ‘enemy’. This is the way of love which builds up any community, and which transforms us, perhaps slowly(!) into the people God made us to be. “Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” Amen

Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace (R&S 629)

Prayer: God of infinite compassion,

 we pray for all those threatened by violence

 or by the consequences of others anger or greed.

 We pray too for those threatened by inner conflict,

 by turmoil, anxiety, anger or addiction.

 We especially pray your peace for those suffering

 the consequences of others wars, including children.

 And we hold before you those who are fearful,

 those who are ill and those who are grieving, especially those known to us, in our families,

 our churches, and our communities…

 We hold before you all those we love and worry about…

 In Jesus’ name we ask all our prayers

 including the unspoken prayers of our hearts… Amen

Hymn: The King of love my Shepherd is (R&S 552)

Blessing: May we know ourselves to be loved

 and seek only good for others…

 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’ 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, do all help. Remember, some people may be much more vulnerable than others. Please also let us know if you have a positive Covid test after recently being in church.

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