

Bulletin for Sunday 3 April 2022

Good morning, friends, on this, the fifth Sunday in Lent.

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

Hymn: Angel voices ever singing (R&S 405)

Prayer: Generous God, we thank you for
the things that brighten our lives,
for the gifts that money can't buy:
patches of blue sky and sunshine,
laughter and conversation with friends...
Too often your love and blessings go unnoticed,
so today we offer you our very grateful thanks.
We celebrate your generosity...
please help us to share it in our lives, too.
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: John 12: 1-8

Reflection: When I was in Primary School, before our school dinners we all had to say grace, in unison: 'For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.' It's a very well known prayer; and it's also very honest. It admits that you might not feel thankful yet, and asks that you may become thankful!
Mary of Bethany, on the other hand, seems already to have been lavishly and emotionally thankful; so much so that her response prompted criticism. Notice how Jesus had to stop them bullying her, by telling them to 'leave her alone' (verse 7). This wasn't a teaching opportunity about theories of wealth and poverty, but a moment of grief and wildly generous love from a woman who had no other way to articulate it. At that moment, it was an act of kindness which she needed to give; and one which Jesus, perhaps, needed

to receive. This was, after all, the day before his entry into Jerusalem, as he prepared himself for what would come.

This week we've seen examples of thankfulness - formal, but very real, at the service to give thanks for the life of Prince Philip - and less formal but absolutely heartfelt as refugees from the war in Ukraine are helped to escape, and received into the homes of total strangers. May we ourselves be thankful as we realise just how blessed we are, and may we respond generously in giving to others in need. Amen.

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth (R&S 41)

Prayers: God of love, generosity, and compassion,
we pray for all who have crossed our paths this week,
for those we've seen or heard about on the news,
especially those suffering in Ukraine, in Afghanistan,
or in other places of conflict and hunger.
We pray for our communities and our neighbours,
and for the family and friends that we love;
for those who are struggling, anxious or sad,
and for those who can't make ends meet...
We pray for ourselves, and our own needs,
and we commit to you the week ahead -
may it have many occasions for thankfulness!
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Now thank we all our God (R&S 72)

Blessing: May we be truly thankful...
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.

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