

**Bulletin for Sunday    11th October 2020**

A very Good Morning to you all - I hope you've had a good week. In church we usually share the notices at the beginning, but here I add them at the end, so please look there!

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

Prayer: Loving God, you call us into your kingdom,  
into a different way of living and loving...  
Sometimes we are deaf to your voice;  
sometimes we put our own interpretation on what we hear;  
sometimes we postpone responding until another day....  
Loving God, invite us afresh; and help us to hear.  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we bring to you or give in your service,  
today and every day.    In Jesus' name, Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings:                                Isaiah chapter 25: verses 1-9    and  
Matthew chapter 22: verses 1-14

Reflection:    This parable, as passed on to us by Matthew, has some confusing details. But the main point which Jesus seems to be trying to get across is essentially the same as that in last week's reading: the religious leaders (and they were, of course, the political leaders, too) are making a big mistake. They risk excluding themselves from God's kingdom if they continue as they are, closing their ears, their hearts, their minds, to God's call. They are so sure of themselves...

But none of us can shape God's kingdom to fit around ourselves and our own priorities and agendas! Of course not.

God calls us, gently but persistently, to follow God's agenda, to share God's priorities and values... God invites us to the kingdom as it is. In fact we're called to follow Christ.

We are as varied, and in many ways we are as surprised and as unprepared, as those invited off the streets to the wedding banquet; yet God does call us... God calls us and feeds us generously - giving us so much. We just need to hear God's call above the loud voices of the everyday world.....                                May it be so; Amen

Hymn:            Great God, your love has called us here    (R&S 339)

Prayer:            God of compassion, we pray for each other...  
for those we know and love, and for those we don't...  
We pray for our own neighbours and communities,  
and for those we see fleetingly on the news in far off places.

We know that there are many suffering pain and anxiety,  
and many more living in loneliness and grief -  
we hold them all before you... and trust  
that you will show us where and how we can act in your name.  
We pray for your protection, your healing, and your blessing.  
May your kingdom come on earth, in Jesus' name. Amen

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

May we hear God's call, and choose to follow;  
and may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us and with all those we love  
this week and every week. Amen

If I had been choosing hymns regardless of the hymn book, I would have included 'For everyone born, a place at the table', to fit the theme of this service.

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Petworth have their Harvest Festival service this Sunday, and the congregation are invited to bring something for the food bank.

Sadly I have to let you know of the death of Revd. Michael Davies, at the age of 87. He was a minister and moderator in the URC, and worked for the World Council of Churches. In retirement he preached in our churches and will be remembered by many. The funeral on 19th October will be family only, but it is hoped it may be possible to livestream it.

October 2020 is the UK's 33rd occurrence of Black History Month - and perhaps the most important to date. There is an excellent new page on the URC website - Legacies of Slavery - with resources to explore, including a reading list, seminal movies, YouTube videos and more. I would certainly recommend it.

There will be a service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom on Sunday evening. This week, the golden calf! All welcome, online or using a landline phone, contact me if you need details.

Anne Lewitt