

Bulletin for Sunday

25th October 2020

Good Morning - a very warm welcome to everyone sharing in this act of worship - or even just checking the notices!

Please pray for each other, as we worship together in spirit, despite being apart.

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

Prayer: Loving God, we praise and worship you!
We are separated... and yet in spirit we worship together:
may we have a sense of our friends around us.
We thank you for our church family and all it means to us;
we thank you for all you have given to us,
and ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we bring to you or give in your service,
today and every day.
Bless us with your presence
Speak... and help us to hear... In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew chapter 22: verses 34-46

Reflection: We all have to start somewhere. Writing a book starts with a few words on a page, knitting a blanket with casting on the first stitches; walking the longest path begins when you put one foot in front of the other... But how you start matters too. The first sentence of a story can grab the reader - or make them put it down again. The initial tension on the needles determines how the knitting will turn out; and the direction you set off in is liable to affect where you end up!
Foundations matter. Not only do they represent the start of something - starting in the right way and growing in the right direction - but they also hold together and make safe the later building as it grows and then as it is used.
Jesus is talking about getting the most basic foundations of our lives right. I was going to say, the spiritual foundations, but love of God and love of our neighbour are so much more than 'spiritual foundations'. They are practical and very down to earth foundations for the ways we think and behave, all the time. They provide a safe start from which to build lives in tune with God's intentions for us; but they aren't left behind as we grow and learn. Rather, they continue to be the most important - increasingly important - principles

behind the things we feel and think and say and do. They aren't just ideas to understand, but a whole way of life.

Loving God and loving our neighbour are the foundations of a fulfilling life, because they keep us securely rooted in relationship to God and to God's children, our brothers, sisters, and neighbours. Could we do that on our own? I doubt it. We can love because God first loved us, and in so doing laid the very best foundation stone of all.

Hymn: Brother, sister, let me serve you (R&S 474)

Prayer: God of compassion, we pray for the world:
in the face of so much pain and need
you call us to service, in the footsteps of Christ.
We hold before you the people around us -
those we know and understand... and those we don't.
You know their hopes and fears; and how we can help.
Show us how to use the gifts and talents you have given us -
how to be fully ourselves and also committed to serve others.
How to love you... and our neighbour...
We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: God is love: let heaven adore him (R&S 95)

May love provide us with a strong foundation;
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

The evenings are drawing in and next Saturday is Hallowe'en. Let's hope and pray that all the frights are gentle and mixed with laughter, and that everyone stays safe.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1: 5

A reminder to all those attending worship in our churches: please don't forget the importance of wearing masks, using hand sanitiser, and remaining socially distanced, especially before and after worship. Let's keep each other safe.

There will be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom at 6pm on Sunday. This week, Moses dies without quite reaching the promised land... All welcome, online or using a landline phone, contact me if you need details.

Anne Lewitt