

**Bulletin for Sunday 17th January 2021**

Good morning and very warm greetings to all of you!

As the evenings get a little bit longer, and a few flowers start to appear, let's all hope for better things coming very soon.

We will have a Zoom service at 10.30am again this Sunday. If you don't have the link from last week and would like to join us, get in touch with me, or with Gerald or Brenda.

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Let's begin our worship by remembering that we worship together, wherever we are... and by holding each other in prayer... and then let's praise God as we sing:

Hymn: You are the King of Glory (R&S 271) [as many times as you like!]

Prayer: Loving God, you know us, and our potential...  
and, knowing and loving us, you speak to us in many ways....  
Help us to hear your voice and to recognise it,  
whether we hear it through others, or through experiences,  
through Scripture, prayer or silence....  
Speak - and help us to listen... and understand... and respond.  
We ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we give in your service,  
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 139 verses 1-6 & 13-18 and John chapter 1 verses 43-51

Reflection: Tomorrow is the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - the annual reminder that all who follow Christ are one in Christ, and our divisions are a human creation which can stand (disastrously) between us and God. I believe God intends us to have unity... but I don't think that necessarily implies uniformity.

Variety is, proverbially, the spice of life. The world is full of wonderful tastes and smells, food and drink in almost infinite variety. And that variety is in itself a gift - part of the amazing complexity of the world we live in.

But it's not just food and drink that comes in such diversity. The whole of God's creation seems to be shot through with intentional and complex variety - it's never meant to be monotonous or dull! And surely we, as people created by God - 'knit together' by God, as the psalmist says - also reflect that deliberate difference, that wealth of variation in every aspect of our being. We are all different - and all meant to be different. But we can all work and grow towards God's kingdom together. Indeed we absolutely need each other in order to do so.

Philip and Nathanael, in today's reading, sound to me as though they were very different people. Philip heard the call and followed easily and immediately; Nathanael found it much harder, and needed all the encouragement of his friend... but with Philip's help he got there.

God calls us, knowing us as we are, in all our complexity and with all our differences. May we hear God's voice, both as individuals and as Christians held together in unity by God's love and by God's will; and may we respond together in unity as we are called. Amen

Hymn: Jesus call us! O'er the tumult (R&S 355)

Prayer: Compassionate God  
We pray for those living with Covid-19,  
or living in fear of it...  
We pray for those whose jobs have been lost  
or whose businesses are closed, shops locked up...  
We pray for those who are lonely, anxious or in debt...  
We hold before you our local communities,  
and all those we love, and miss, and worry about...  
Hear all the prayers of all our hearts... Amen

Hymn: Will you come and follow me (R&S 558)

Blessing: May we recognise God's voice, and then help others to hear it;  
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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We will continue to worship on Zoom each Sunday at 10.30am and 6.00pm until it's safe to meet together again in our church buildings. On Zoom we can also sing hymns and talk to each other. There's also the usual chance to chat at the 11.30 'After Church Coffee' Zooms. All are very welcome - contact me for more details if you need them.

Anne Lewitt