

Bulletin for Sunday 11th April 2021

Good Morning!

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

Hymn: New every morning is the love (R&S 536)

Prayer: God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
we praise you for the morning,
and for the constancy and patience of your love.
As you were made known
to those who met the risen Jesus,
may we also experience you in our lives.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give in your service,
today and every day.
Through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: John chapter 20 verses 19 to 31

Reflection:

As the oldest child of three, I remember watching my mother bathing the baby, and testing the temperature of the bath water - almost as a reflex - with her elbow. Young as I was, I could understand the importance of that. When things are important to us we need to test them; we need to make sure that they are really right.

Doubt isn't a bad thing if it means testing and checking something we really care about, whether it's the tread on our car tyres, the battery in our smoke alarm, or the temperature of a baby's bath. We doubt them - and we test them - precisely because they are so important. Thomas was a faithful disciple and friend of Jesus, and it mattered very much to him to know what had happened after the crucifixion. He could have just gone along with what the others were saying, but that didn't feel right to him. This was difficult to believe, but it was also crucial - so he needed to test it out carefully for himself.

It is rarely a good idea to accept that everything we are told is true - whether it's an unsolicited phonecall claiming to come from the bank, or a bold and sweeping statement by a politician desperate to be re-elected. When the truth matters - and it usually does - we are well advised to test it by asking questions and digging a bit deeper. And when it comes to our faith and beliefs, then doubts, questions and conversations, listening to others' experiences - and our own - are vitally important to developing and strengthening our personal faith. May we have the courage to seek and test the truth. Amen

Hymn: I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship (R&S 265)

Prayer: Compassionate God
We hold before you this morning
the Queen and her family and all who mourn,
giving thanks for the life and service of Prince Philip.
We pray also for all in pain or in poor health,
and those left starving or homeless by war;
for those who suffer - and those who care.
We hold before you those closest to us,
and all the concerns of our hearts
along with our own prayers, spoken or unspoken,
in the name of the risen Jesus. Amen

Hymn: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us (R&S 543)

Blessing: May we have the courage to ask questions...
and to seek the truth;
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

As we return to worshipping together, please remember that we need to wear masks; maintain a distance from each other; and not chat, especially indoors. Singing is only possible outdoors, services must be short, and extra ventilation may make it chilly! Crucially, you **must** let your Church Secretary know you want to attend.

In our Billingshurst and Petworth buildings worship is being held indoors.
In Pulborough it will be held outside on the grass. All services start at 10.30am.

For those who prefer to continue worshipping from home for now, I will be leading services on Zoom again this Sunday at 10.30am and at 6.00pm.

And for all of us there is a chance to chat at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms.

Anne Lewitt