

Bulletin for Sunday 1st August 2021

Good Morning, Friends.

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

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

Prayer: Lord of Life, you know us and you love us,
 and we are comforted by your presence with us.
 We praise you this morning
 for the beauty of the growing, flowering, fruiting world,
 and for the creativity and care we see around us.
 As we pause, to worship, and to listen,
 we ask your blessing on everything we do,
 and everything we give in your service,
 now and always. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Exodus 16: verses 2-4 and 9-15 and John ch. 6 verses 24-35

Reflection: There's nothing like an empty, rumbling, gnawing stomach to make you miserable and grumpy! The Israelites only have to get really hungry and somehow their sense of proportion and their collective memory fails completely. They convince themselves that they would rather be back in Egypt where "we... ate our fill of bread..." Death with an empty stomach somehow now feels worse to them than death with a full one. God - well aware of their feelings - listens to their grumbling and provides food for them, morning and evening, with real and miraculous generosity.

The Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught, includes a petition for our 'daily bread'. Bread for themselves and their children was absolutely essential to the hungry peasants who were hanging on his every word - hence their apparent fixation with the loaves and fishes which he had so recently shared with them. Jesus understood that, and he made sure they were fed when they were hungry. But he also frequently used bread as a metaphor for other things. Here he uses 'bread' to refer not just to food but to everything we really need; and most especially he teaches about the living bread (or bread of life) which is the gift God gives us in Jesus. Bread for body, mind and spirit, available to all.

This Living Bread will feed and nourish and sustain us for the whole of our lives. Amen!

Hymn: Jesus the Lord says, I am the bread (R&S 199)

Prayer: Compassionate God, we hold before you today:
those who volunteer with food banks...
those who cook and serve food to the homeless...
and those who teach children to garden and to cook...
may they be strengthened and their work be blessed.
We pray for those who are often hungry
and for those who are anxious about food...
We pray too for all those hungry to know Christ.
Bless each coffee we share with friends,
and each meal we eat with loved ones;
thank you for understanding that we are grateful,
whether we remember to say so or not...
Giver of all good gifts, hear all our prayers,
spoken and unspoken. In Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn: How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord (R&S 589)

Blessing: May we bring bread to those who are hungry;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

We are aiming to open worship up gently and gradually, while keeping it as safe as possible. We all have our part to play in keeping each other safe, so you are encouraged to continue to wear masks, and to give everyone the space they need.

But remember, it is NOT POSSIBLE to make our churches completely risk-free!

The After Church Coffee Zooms have been discontinued; but the evening 'Sunday at Six' service, with hymns, continues on Zoom at 6pm.

Anne Lewitt