

**Bulletin for Sunday 13 March 2022**

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: Living God, we come to you today

just as we are...

We come with our joys and our sorrows,

with our hopes and with our deepest fears;

we come with thanks for your gifts and blessings

but also with anxiety about the future.

Mostly we come to listen for you, and to worship you,

seeking your face, and trusting in your love.

We ask your blessing on everything we do,

and on everything we give in your service,

today and every day. In Jesus 'name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Reading:           Luke 13: 31-35

Reflection:

Jesus was aware of the danger of going up to Jerusalem, and the likelihood that it would end in his death; and he must surely have been scared by it; but he kept going. Why? He wasn't motivated by brave thoughts of defeating the ruling powers - after all, he had no army, only a crowd of unarmed pilgrims. Nor was he enthusiastically looking for a martyr's death to draw attention and acclaim - his behaviour never suggests that. No, I think he was sustained and propelled by his own core values, the things he really believed in, that were part of him, that made him tick - by his love for the people and by his longing to protect and save them, even if they didn't understand what he was saying and doing and weren't willing to be gathered under his wing.

Leaders - then as now - tend to project themselves as strong and powerful. Their clothes, their speeches, their whole image is designed, consciously or not, to enhance their power and make them seem invincibly strong. They might portray themselves in animal terms as a lion, or an eagle, and expect people to be impressed and willing to follow. But would anyone be inspired or roused by a leader who likened themselves to a hen gathering her chicks for protection? Yet that is what Jesus did. His self-understanding and the purpose of his life were based on love and caring, protection and kindness. And that love for us took him to Jerusalem and to the cross.

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

Prayers: God of hope  
as we see anxiety, fear and frustration rise,  
in ourselves as well as those around us,  
save us from the darkness of despair  
and draw us into the hope that leads to change...  
God of compassion  
as we see lives shattered and cities destroyed,  
show us the hard path towards peace and rebuilding,  
rather than the road of hatred and revenge...  
God of love  
when homeless, hungry, desperate people  
look for shelter and a safe place to stay,  
show us how to gather them under our wings...  
God of all, we hold before you our communities,  
especially those we love and worry about,  
including those known to us in pain, sickness or loss.  
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers  
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts... Amen

Hymn: O Love of God, how strong and true (R&S 100)

Blessing: May we live out our faith in kindness,  
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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There will be a ' Sunday at Six 'Zoom at 6pm this Sunday - all welcome.

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