**Sunday 28th June 2020** WORSHIP AT HOME: **Matthew 10.40-42**

Welcome to our act of Worship

Call to worship

Jesus said, ‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.’ *Matthew 10v40*

HYMN: Ye holy angels bright...

HP20, MP783, RS293, STF69

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the Wiltshire United Area)

*Prayer of Praise*

Mighty and merciful God, we meet to celebrate your greatness.
We join with the hosts of heaven to sing your praise and to offer you worship.
For you are worthy of adoration from every mouth,
and every tongue should praise you.
You created the earth by your power; you save the human race by your mercy; and make it new by your grace.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we offer you our grateful praise. **Amen**

*Prayer of Confession*

We confess that we have not always given of our best,
we have not always lived as people with faith,
welcoming the stranger;
and there have been times when we have given way to sin,
and not always shown kindness to our neighbours.
Hold us in your love,
as we make our confession in the silence…
With a love we cannot imagine,
and mercy that never fails to forgive,
grant us your pardon, O God,
that we might live by your grace,
and your grace alone.

**Amen.**

HYMN O for a heart to praise my God

HP536, MP495, RS514, STF507

**GOSPEL Matthew 10.40-42**

**40****‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

Reflection

A patient recently told how he had just retired from full-time ministry after 47years. He said how he started attending church as a teenager, going to a Central Hall in the days when the evening congregation would be several thousand. What impressed him was that on his first visit a Welcome Steward had asked his name, and on the next Sunday he had been welcomed by name by that person, whom he described as “The Shaker In”. As the patient reflected about his ministry, time and again he referred to the impact of the welcome by “The Shaker In” who remembered his name.

Being welcomed matters, how true is that in our faith. Think of that most famous parable of the Lost Son (Luke15) who not only completely “mucks up” but arrives home with the odour of pig and travel hanging around him, he is NOT told first to go and bathe, but is welcomed by an embrace! Within our Gospel reading “Welcome” is the most prominent word. In the culture of the day to receive a person’s envoy or messenger was the same as to receive the person themself. And even in the humblest of household’s hospitality, even if it was simply a drink of water would be offered. Something as simple as that is not lost on Jesus in verse 42. Think also of Matthew 25v35-40 “when the Son of Man comes in glory” he will welcome and reward those who in giving a drink to one of his “brothers” are viewed as having ministered to Jesus himself.

At this time when our church buildings are not open for public worship and we are thinking about the “new normal” of what it will be like when they do, what needs to be uppermost is how welcome we make people feel. We would do well to bear in minds the words of St Paul who says “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. *Romans 15:7*

As well as in Church we also need to focus on how welcoming we can be as individual Christians, because each of us are part of the “body of Christ.” Welcome can be to anyone – anywhere in the world. But thinking “local” it can seem really difficult, not least because of continuing restrictions on meeting, but let us hold in mind words of the *American poet writer Max Eastman, “*A smile is the universal welcome.”  Perhaps in light of that and in this time of pandemic we should remind ourselves of words by Spike Milligan

*Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.
So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!*

Said Jesus **‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.’**

Prayer of Response

Teach us, good Lord to serve thee as thou deservest,
         to give and not to count the cost;
         to fight and not to heed the wounds;
         to toil and not to seek for rest;
         to labour and not to ask for any reward;
         except that of knowing that we do thy will.

**Amen**. *St Ignatius Loyola (1491 - 1556)*

HYMN Let us build a house where love can dwell

HP-, MP-, RS-, STF409

Our Prayers

Welcoming God we pray for the Church throughout the world, that may always greet the newcomer, the stranger and all who are vulnerable.  Help us always to follow Jesus’ words and advice on hospitality and generous giving and realise that accepting someone’s help is as good as giving someone help.

Creator God,  we pray for people in parts of the world where life is precarious, whether through disaster, poverty, disease, war or the present pandemic. We pray that the time may be hastened when there is peace on earth, goodwill between all people and an readily available cure for Covid-19.

Gracious God, we pray for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit and for those who care for them. We pray for the sick; for those who mourn; for those without faith, hope or love.

Merciful God, we remember before God those who have died and those who are bereaved by their passing.  We give back to you, Lord, those whom you gave to us. Your son taught us that life is eternal and that love cannot die.

Faithful God in the week that lies before us may we reflect your loving welcome to ALL and in doing so, show everyone we meet that we are followers of Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN I will sing the wondrous story

HP223, MP315, RS-, STF323

Blessing

May the God who welcomes:

Be with us to guide us,

Within us to strengthen us,

Beside us to protect us,

Above us to raise us,

Beneath us to uphold us,

Before us to lead us,

Behind us to guard us,

Ever about us,

This day and evermore;

This day and evermore. **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire United Area

Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not be open, but the Church is alive.***

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love and prayers.*

***Storytelling*** *–* an enacted Gospel reading for little people using actions *(in italics):*

Jesus said this: ‘Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me*(shake hands with the person sat next to you).*

Anyone who welcomes me welcomes God, who sent me *(point upwards).*

Anyone who gives even a drink of cold water to one of my friends*(mime giving a cup of water to the person next to you) will be rewarded.’ (shake hands again with those sat next to you.)*

Amen *(put hands together)*

***Praise Hymn*** to the tune of ‘Bobby Shafto’
**I am welcome, so are you (x3)
welcomed all by Jesus.**

***Create***

Write ‘welcome’ in block letters across the middle of a large sheet of paper. Pour poster paint onto large, flat plates. Invite everyone to use the paint to make handprints around the letters. Provide bowls of water for cleaning up. Display the banner for all to see.

**THROUGH THE WEEK: Something to reflect on - How welcoming are we? How welcoming should we be?**

***Words of Welcome from Coventry Cathedral***

***We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, straight, gay, questioning, well-heeled or down at heel. We especially welcome wailing babies and excited toddlers.***

***We welcome you whether you can sing like Pavarotti or just growl quietly to yourself. You’re welcome here if you’re ‘just browsing,’ just woken up or just got out of prison. We don’t care if you’re more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury, or haven’t been to church since Christmas ten years ago.***

***We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome keep-fit mums, football dads, starving artists, tree-huggers, latte-sippers, vegetarians, junk-food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you’re having problems, are down in the dumps or don’t like ‘organised religion.’ (We’re not that keen on it either!)***

***We offer a welcome to those who think the earth is flat, work too hard, don’t work, can’t spell, or are here because granny is visiting and wanted to come to the Cathedral.***

***We welcome those who are inked, pierced, both or neither. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throat as kids or got lost on the ring road and wound up here by mistake. We welcome pilgrims, tourists, seekers, doubters… and you!***

HYMNS AND SONGS

**Ye holy angels bright, T DARWELL**
who wait at God's right hand,
or through the realms of light
fly at your Lord's command,
assist our song,
for else the theme
too high doth seem
for mortal tongue.

Ye blessed souls at rest,
who ran this earthly race
and now, from sin released,
behold your Saviour’s face,
his praises sound,
as in his sight
with sweet delight
ye do abound.

Ye saints, who toil below,
adore your heavenly King,
and onward as ye go
some joyful anthem sing;
take what he gives
and praise him still,
through good or ill,
who ever lives!

My soul, bear thou thy part,
triumph in God above:
and with a well-tuned heart
sing thou the songs of love!
Let all thy days
till life shall end,
whate'er he send,
be filled with praise!

**O for a heart to praise my God,** **T ST STEPHEN**
a heart from sin set free;
a heart that's sprinkled with the blood
so freely shed for me:

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
my great Redeemer's throne;
where only Christ is heard to speak,
where Jesus reigns alone:

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
believing, true, and clean,
which neither life nor death can part
from him that dwells within:

A heart in every thought renewed,
and full of love divine;
perfect and right and pure and good —
a copy, Lord, of thine.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
come quickly from above;
write thy new name upon my heart,
thy new, best name of Love.

**Let us build a house** where love can dwell and all can safely live.
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true.
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus;
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;
A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space,
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us;
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone,
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face,
Let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace.
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

**I will sing the wondrous story T** **HYFRODOL**
Of the Christ Who died for me;
How He left the clouds in glory
For the cross of Calvary.

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ Who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea.

I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way.

I was bruised, but Jesus healed me,
Faint was I from many a fall,
Sight was gone, and fears possessed me,
But He freed me from them all.

Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrow's path I often tread,
But His presence still is with me;
By His guiding hand I'm led.
He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet;
Then He'll bear me safely over,
Where the loved ones I shall meet.

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