

Leeds URC Partnership



GEOFF'S WEST PARK NEWSLETTER

6th May 2024

Dear Friends

Is there more blossom this year or are we becoming more aware of it? Now it's time to enjoy the chestnut and rowan tree flowers.



Their distinct appearance is there for all to see. Which is the best flower of so many on this climbing Montana clematis? There are so many good ones to choose from.



After Jesus' resurrection Peter had to come up with a way of choosing the best person to replace Judas Iscariot as the 12th disciple.



They narrowed it down to two people who'd known Jesus since he was baptised. One of these was chosen to join the disciples and be a witness to Jesus' resurrection. The church grew by these first disciples sharing their experiences of Jesus. This raises a question about how people can come to know Jesus now. How do we share what Jesus' resurrection means to us?



What is distinct in what we say and do can help to reveal Jesus to other people. We all have something to offer. We have different gifts and ways of expressing what we have learned by trusting and following Jesus. We may also see Jesus at work in people's lives. The love from God that made Jesus so special and attractive may already be present in those we get to know.



As we experience Jesus' presence around and among us may we make our distinctive contributions to sharing the Good News. May our prayers surround those we meet and the needs of the world as we also pray for our families, friends, and neighbours.

Every blessing

Geoff <><+

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Prayers and readings for Sunday 12th May

¹ Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; ² but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. ³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. From Psalm 1:1-3

Acts 1:15-17,21-26 Matthias the apostle

¹⁵ *In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, ¹⁶ 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— ¹⁷ for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.'*

²¹ *So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us— one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.'* ²³ *So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'* ²⁶ *And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.*

Peter proposes who should replace Judas. It should be someone who has been with them from the beginning who is a witness to the resurrection. Two names are proposed. After praying for guidance, lots are drawn, and Matthias becomes the new apostle. What roles do we fulfil in our lives? We are all different in temperament, gifts, and abilities, yet we all have something to offer – to others and to God. How do we know if we are called to a particular role? How do we identify potential in others?

We pray God will use our distinctiveness.

Come to God and be ready to listen.
Come to God and be willing to hear.
Bring your gifts and talents.
Bring your hearts and minds.
Come and find a way to serve today.

Generous God, we thank you for the good gifts we receive from you: for skills and abilities, for opportunities to serve.

We ask for the gift of discernment that we may know our own gifts and recognise the potential in others. Amen.

Lord, forgive us for the times when we don't pray before we act. When we don't pray before the big or small decisions. Forgive us for the times we don't see ourselves as special. When we don't let you use our unique talents. When we don't even realise we have talents. Forgive us and help us to put our trust in you.

'Whoever has the Son, has life.' (1 John 5:12)

Father God, you have given us eternal life in your precious Son, Jesus. Thank you for the assurance of your new life in us, and the blessing of your love and compassion.

Forgiving God, we come to you, and you make us whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Gracious God, where would we be without your Spirit? It moulds us, teaches us, fills us. When we hear your Word, we realise what a great God we have. What a privilege it is to follow you. Help us to learn so much more about you and know you more intimately. As a butterfly becomes a caterpillar, so you enable us to become the person you want us to be: like you. Amen.

Generous God, you give us all good and perfect gifts. We acknowledge our own skills and talents. We see your gifts in others too. *We thank you, O Lord.* Give us grace to hear your voice. Let us listen to each other. Teach us to trust in you, *and follow when you call.*

Give us grace to use our gifts to honour you and to serve others. Help us to work together for the good of all. *Amen.*