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Fourth Sunday of Epiphany – 29 January 2023

Matthew 5.1-12

I hope you will read the introduction to this passage, i.e. verses 1-2 and then very slowly, paying attention to every word, read the rest, i.e. verses 3-12.

In this magisterial passage, 'The One' who says, "Come to me for I am meek and lowly in heart", is revealing who He is in the Beatitudes Mt. 5.3-12. For Christ is the One who is pure in heart, for He alone reveals the fullness of God. v.8.

Jesus is the One who is the peacemaker, for He alone opens a way for you to be at peace with God v.9. Jesus Christ is the One who suffers for the sake of your future. v.10.

Jesus, the Son of God is the one who is merciful and reveals the gifts that flow from being merciful.v.7.

Jesus the Messiah shows through his life the absolute necessity of being committed to hunger and thirst for righteousness. v.6.

These words could only come from God, for we could never tell ourselves these truths. Collectively they reveal the most perfect human person that ever existed. For him, to live was to love.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom, will be led by Rev Linda Woollacott
Bible Readings: Micah 6.6-8: Psalm 85.5-12: Luke 10.25-32.

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Uniting Church, Sketty

Tea and chat/winter hub in Christ Well – Tuesday, 31st at 2 pm.

Prayer Chain

The Prayer Chain has been very important in the Church and Community for the last thirty years. Knowing that there is a group of people prepared to pray for you when you're in need is something which has brought comfort to many.

It is now time to re-launch the Prayer Chain to enable more people to be involved.

If you would like to be part of this important ministry, or would like to know how the prayer chain works, please speak to Mary Jeffreys.

A Prayer for any time – God our refuge and strength (Psalm 46)

God of mercy, grace and love, you are our foundation when life seems shaky

you are our shelter through the storms of life

you are our safe place when danger seems all around.

You are our refuge and strength, the one who holds all time and space together,

the one who frees us to live life to the full, the one who gives us the breath of new life.

In coming to you we find a refuge where faith is renewed, hope is restored, love is revived.

But we cannot linger in this place of sanctuary,

hiding from the duties, responsibilities and difficulties of life.

Strengthen us to face the trials of the world, inspire us to point to your love and work

equip us to point to your coming reign.

May the shelter we find in you always refresh us for renewed service and witness

for the sake of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Pope (URC Handbook 2023)



Thursday – Candlemas

2 February 2023

And Simeon took Jesus in his arms and blessed God, saying, “Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation” verses 28 and 29.

Hope can never disappoint

Here we have a comely and radiant image of Simeon holding the Christ child in his arms, and in so doing feels the presence of Jesus. Not surprisingly Simeon is bursting with pride and joy, and he tells us why he is so ‘pumped up’.

Hope will never ever disappoint. (Romans 5.5). It is impossible for God to deceive us, for he constantly helps us to see that life is worth living in hope, because when God promises, He delivers.

To live with your hopes in God is no idle escapism, for to live with hope in your heart helps you to look forward and know, ‘All will be well, because all is well’. By living honestly with the promises of Christ in your heart, helps you to leave behind what so many people are thinking about – survival, hanging in there, enduring and riding out the never ending storm of life. Treating life like this inevitably means you become fearful, anxious and step by step begin shutting yourself up in a world in which we swirl around in our ‘survival mode’.

Hope on the other hand encourages you to be bold, to take small initiatives, and have some fun being creative, and thereby connecting with others. Hope reminds us that God is walking beside us, holding our hand, and yes, at times carrying us, often when we don’t realize it, for He is so close to you.

So, today is another opportunity to sing with Simeon his song of hope, and with Simeon, know that, ‘Hope does not disappoint’.

Stephen



Snowdrops

(The Snowdrop is the flower of Candlemas)

Constant God, my faith is so fragile,
as frail as a snowdrop
shivering and shimmering
on the frozen ground.
Help me to be so earthed in you
that I can stand firm,
weathering the winter of the soul,
nodding defiance in the storms of life,
bending with the winds of change,
not breaking; bowing my head
in reverence to you, my loving Lord,
who causes me to dance for you
and, in companionship with others,
give glory to you.

Carol Dixon URC Prayer Handbook 2023

