

Virtual Church South Woodham Ferrers November 29th 2020

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord:

let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving

and extol him with music and song.” Psalm 95:1-2 NIV

Sing, read or listen to: Praise my soul the King of Heaven <https://youtu.be/GyRIVbdsi4c>

Let us pray:

Loving God, we adore you,

Sovereign of all, we praise your holy name.

For you are our God and our King:

We are the people of your pasture

and the sheep of your hand.

Suffering Christ, we adore you,

Saviour of all, we praise your holy name.

For you are our God and our King:

We are the people of your pasture

and the sheep of your hand.

Joyous Spirit, we adore you,

Freedom of all, we praise your holy name.

For you are our God and our King:

We are the people of your pasture

and the sheep of your hand.

Shepherd God – our maker, redeemer and friend – we adore you,

singing for joy in your presence,

worshipping you with thanksgiving,

humbling our pride with praise.

For you are our strength, our protection and our hope,

source of goodness and love, faith and healing;

and with all the earth we call out to you in gladness,

before the world we bless you as our King.

For you are our God and our King:

We are the people of your pasture

and the sheep of your hand. Amen

Hello and, how are you? We find ourselves now in the midst of a second wave of the virus and a second lockdown, the cloud that we hoped had been passing over has lingered a little while longer. Recently, however, there have been sunny spells with the news of progress in finding a vaccine; and we must all remember the rainbow that was cast across this world, shining brightly through the cloud of the first wave, by the way in which communities drew together and neighbours reached out to help those in need whether those needs were physical, social or spiritual. This week's Gospel reading highlights what the Lord has to say about such acts of kindness.

Read: Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Jesus tells us clearly that He recognises and values such actions, whatever form they take and whoever they are to.

“... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. ... [For] Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” [Matthew 25:34-35 and 25:40]

Perhaps today, Christ would add ...

“I was in lockdown and you brought me shopping, I was lonely and you telephoned me for a chat, I was frightened and you reassured me, I needed to see a friendly face and you Skyped me, I was struggling under a dark cloud and you shared the light of hope with me.”

During the first lockdown, I commented that in some ways I hoped that we would not go back to the pre-Covid “normal”, as kindness and thoughtfulness towards our fellow man or woman seemed to have become more common than in former busier times. So as we endure this second wave and face up to further weeks in lockdown, let us not lose sight of the rainbow that brought smiles to faces through those weeks under that seemingly endless cloud. Let us continue to share these random acts of kindness as we walk through the storm in the sure and certain knowledge that we need never walk alone.

<https://youtu.be/7du-RHGrJrA>

And as we approach the start of Advent in the coming weeks, let us never forget that in every day we will meet so many people that we can take with us on that journey of hope, if we can share just a glimpse of that light with them.

Keep safe and stay well, and may God bless you and those you love in the days ahead.

Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for the rainbow which You cast before us, the promise that in You our hope is secure and our path will be lit.

We remember those who first showed us that light and allowed us to walk with them.

May we now carry the torch that others may follow where You lead us.

Grant each of us protection and assurance through these days and keep others ever at the forefront of our minds and in our hearts.

As we walk through the storm, may our heads be held high in the confidence that we need never walk alone.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Bind us together” https://youtu.be/wRwfTS_Ne0o

Blessing : We share the Grace together in the Unity of His Light, the source of all hope.

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,

the love of God

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all, evermore. Amen

Light of the world

<https://youtu.be/7kN5iR7BUOg>