

Bulletin for Sunday 16 October 2022

Good morning friends.

This Sunday our WSAM Group worship in Petworth will be a celebration of 50 years of the URC, and this Bulletin worship shares the same theme.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing our first hymn:

Hymn: Sing praise to the Lord! (R&S 49)

Prayers: Gracious God of past, present and future,
we praise you for the wonder of your creation;
we praise you for your love revealed in Christ;
and we praise you for the energy of your Spirit,
calling us onwards to share your love in hope.
When we cling on to the past,
or are fearful of what the future may hold,
forgive us and lead us on.....
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Leviticus 25: 8-12 and Luke 4: 16-21

Reflection: 1972, the year that the URC formally came into being, was a time of long hair and ridiculously wide bell-bottomed trousers - although photos of the new church's inaugural assembly show much more traditional outfits! On the world stage, relationships with China were thawing, but the Northern Ireland Troubles were at their height. Computers, the internet, mobile phones and easy, cheap, global communication were unheard of - a phone call to Australia had to be booked in advance and cost a small fortune. So people still wrote letters - and had to wait for them to arrive. Fifty years later we live in a different world. Not necessarily better or worse, just different. In Leviticus 25 we learn about the Jubilee, which is every fiftieth year. A year, according to Leviticus, when the relationships between God, the Earth, and humans are revised or

reset. Both Earth and people belong to God - and only to God - and are liberated and rested every fifty years at the Jubilee. This Jubilee reset is an opportunity to go back to God's original vision. Perhaps even to start again. So what was God's original vision for the URC? In 1972 it seemed clear to the pioneers of the denomination that we were called to pray and work - and act as a catalyst - for the visible unity of the church. That didn't happen in the way that we expected it to; and yet we find ourselves in a world where local churches work together increasingly, and also work more closely with 'secular' authorities, charities and other groups. It's worth remembering that God's vision may not be ours! Perhaps a bit of Jubilee reflection this year will help us hear where God's Spirit is calling us to go next, both locally and as a denomination.....

Hymn: The kingdom of God is justice and joy (R&S 200)

Prayers: Living God, maker of heaven and earth,
we pray both for those we see on the news,
and for our friends and neighbours close to home.
As Jesus spoke of his mission to the poor,
the captives, the blind and the oppressed,
so we pray for those struggling:
to make ends meet as prices rise,
or to get justice in a world which favours the powerful...
We pray for the URC, and for your church everywhere;
we hold before you those we love and worry about,
and also hold out to you our own hopes and fears...
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided (R&S 603)

Blessing: May we live as God calls us.....
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

No Sunday at Six service on Zoom this Sunday - back next week, 23rd.

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