

Stokesley Methodist Church



Sunday 20th January, 2019

Welcome to Worship

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

10.30am Morning Worship led by Rev Richard Bradshaw

6.00pm Town Close with Lesley Jackson

A Gathering Prayer from the Roots Resources

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we gather before you with the spiritual gifts granted to us, to worship you. Come, Lord, and enable us to use our minds, our tongues and our hands, according to the gifts given, for the building up of us all. We come before you, Lord, with our gifts. We have not chosen them – the Spirit selected each one for us. We have done nothing to earn them; we have done nothing to deserve them. It is only by your grace that we can use them, for without you, we are nothing. Enable us to use our gifts for your holy purposes, as we unite before you in fellowship.

Amen.

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 62 v1-5 Zion's New Name

'The nations will see your righteousness, and all Kings your glory.'

Psalms 36 v5-10

'How priceless is your unfailing love.'

1 Corinthians 12 v1-11 Spiritual Gifts

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.'

John 2 v1-11 Jesus Changes Water to Wine

'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.'

Do What He Tells You To Do

How can you tell when it is time for things in the garden to begin to blossom and grow? The weather becomes warmer, the sun shines more, birds sing & you will see small green shoots coming out of the earth and buds forming on flowers and trees. These are signs that spring is coming and the earth is waking up; plants are getting ready to blossom and grow.

Now another question: how can you tell if someone is happy or sad? Well, you just have to look at a person's face to see if there is a smile or a frown. You listen to what the person says and the way the words are said. Sometimes you can even tell how a person is feeling by noticing their posture and the way they move. Are they full of energy or tired? These are signs that help us know what another person may be feeling.

We see signs in nature and signs in other people that help us understand what is happening and what might happen in the future.

The Bible gives us signs that help us understand who Jesus is. One story tells us about a miracle Jesus performed at a wedding. Have you ever been to a wedding where something went wrong? That does happen, you know. I went to a wedding one time when the minister called the bride by the wrong name throughout the entire ceremony. Hmm ... made me wonder if they were really married! Then there was the wedding when the father of the bride's mobile phone went off at the worst possible moment. To make matters worse, the groom reached over, took the phone out of his pocket, and answered it! If you use little children as the flower girl and the ring bearer, that provides many opportunities for humorous moments. I heard about one wedding when, at the close of the ceremony, when the minister said, "You may kiss the bride", the ring bearer leaned over and planted a kiss on the flower girl!

In today's Bible lesson from John's Gospel, Jesus went to a wedding. It was a big event and almost everyone in the town of Cana was there. Not only Jesus, but his disciples and Mary, his mother, were there. After the wedding there was a huge feast but a terrible thing happened – there was not enough wine to serve the guests. At that time, in many parts of the world, water was not clean enough to drink so people drank wine. The mother of Jesus heard what had happened and she didn't want her friend to be embarrassed, so she went looking for Jesus. When she found him, she said, "They don't have any more wine."

Jesus answered, 'Dear woman, why have you come to me? My time has not yet come.'

But Mary was not discouraged. She turned to the servants and said, "Do whatever he tells you to do."

Near the place where they were standing, there were six large stone water jars. Each jar would hold twenty or thirty gallons of water.

"Fill the jars with water," Jesus said to the servants. So they filled all the jars to the top. Then Jesus said to them, 'Now take some out and give it to the master of the feast.' The servants took the water to the master. When he tasted it, the water had turned to wine.

So, at this wedding in Cana, Jesus performed his first miracle and he did this as a sign that he was the Son of God – he showed his true glory. The Bible tells us that when the disciples saw what he had done they "believed in him" (John 2 v11). Because the servants did what Jesus told them to do, a good thing happened. Jesus wants good things to happen in our life too. If we do what Jesus tells us to do, good things will happen to us too.

In 1 Corinthians 12 v1-11, Paul writes to the Corinthians about the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. There are many gifts, ministries and activities given by God through the Spirit. Everyone has different gifts, but they are all given for the common good. By doing what we're told, by using what we've been given, we can do good and make good things happen.

Look around at the beautiful things in nature and the love that comes from others and see what signs you find that point to God. Then, believe.

A Sending Out Prayer

Strengthened by the gifts and bonds that unite us, may we go now as individuals in a divided world. May we sow seeds of peace and unity, and continue to work for God's ways outside these walls.

Amen