

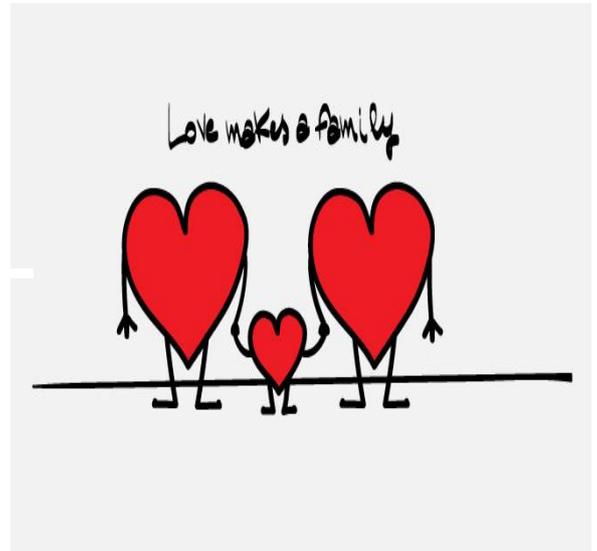
Apart but Together Worship

Hornsea URC Sunday 10th May – For the beauty of the earth verse 4

Opening sentences:

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above
for all gentle thoughts and mild:

Gracious God to these we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.



Welcome to our fourth week looking at the hymn 'For the beauty of the earth'.

Towards the end of this service there will be an opportunity to follow a communion service so if you would like to join in please get some grape juice/blackcurrant and some bread ready now.

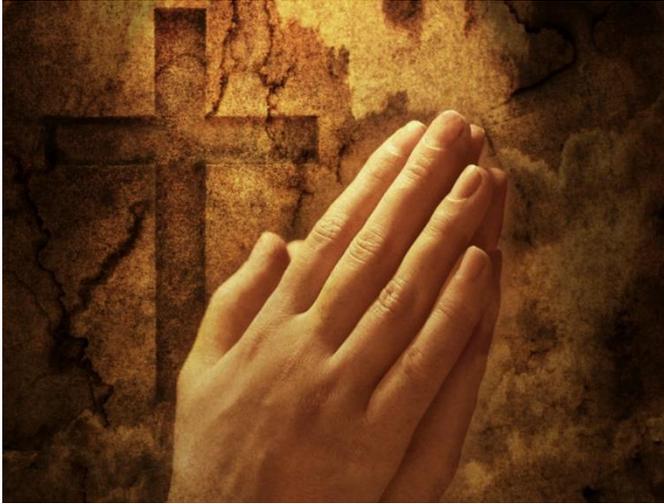
Our first reading today is John 13:34-35

“And now I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

Our first hymn today from R&S is number 745 and is based on this reading, and will be sung for us by Mike, here is the link:

[Click here to watch A New Commandment](#)

Let us pray:



Lord as we gather in the harbour of your safety

We thank you for fellowship and for family.

We ask that you strengthen us, restore us, and inspire us with your love.

Lord, fill us with your peace, so that as we journey onwards we would pour out your love and grace to others.

Amen

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And we say together:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

your kingdom come.

your will be done.

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation.

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory

for ever and ever.

Amen.

Our second hymn is Brother Sister let me serve you and here is the link:

[Brother. Sister let me serve you](#)

Our next reading is from Matthew Chapter 5 verses 43-48

Love for Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies.’ 44 But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. 46 Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! 47 And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! 48 You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Our 3rd hymn is Love each other and here is the link: [Love each other](#)

The following readings come from ‘The Word for Today’

What’s good for the goose...



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If you have ever been in Pennsylvania in early winter, you’ll have seen the skies literally darken as multitudes of Canadian geese gather for their annual flight to the sunny south. Let’s look at their behaviour and see if we can learn from it.

Geese fly united; they don’t fly separately, in random style, because no goose alone can go that distance. They’re designed to fly in their characteristic V formation. When a bird flaps its wings the air movement created provides an uplift, easing the workload of the bird behind it. Together, their flight range increases about 71%. Even the youngest, weakest and oldest geese can make the trip. They accomplish together what they could never accomplish alone. There’s a lesson here: When the Bible says, ‘Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..’(Hebrews 10:25), it means, ‘Stay in fellowship with one another, and enjoy the uplift it provides.’ You’re not called to fly solo. ‘The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet. “I don’t need you!” (1 Corinthians 12:21) Occasionally a goose strays off on its own but soon becomes exhausted. Loses altitude and ultimately pulls wearily back into formation. Look at the birds and learn!

Every formation has to have a 'point goose' out front, who leads and sets the pace for the others. It's a tough position because the point goose cuts the headwinds, meets the changing weather conditions, and is first to feel the rain in his face, the snow in his eyes and the ice on his wings. He keeps the formation on target whatever the situation. It's hard, exhausting and lonely at times because there is nobody ahead of him to be the wind beneath his wings. The formation depends on him to persevere, stay on track and get the skein safely to its destination.

A church usually has its point goose, the minister. Each department has its point geese, youth, finance, evangelism and so on. They lead, set the pace and give direction for those who follow. There are two common roles in the church; the under employed and the over-functioning. Point ministries are the latter, so they tend to burn out frequently. Just before the point goose is exhausted, a space opens in the formation and he slips back into it while another bird replaces him, seamlessly becoming the next point goose. Standing in for each other preserves the life of the formation. This is what Paul meant: 'The whole of the body is held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part..' (Ephesians 4:16) Don't be content to be a consumer; instead be a producer! A great church isn't about paid staff; rather, it's about volunteers willing to stand in whenever needed. Look at the birds and learn!

In the world of the geese, the aged, very young, and infirm are kept protected in the rear of the formation. But they aren't isolated, discounted or considered useless; in fact, they fulfil a vital role. *They become the honking section and cheer for the leaders.* Inevitably, bad weather threatens the mission. The going gets tough and the tough are struggling. From the rear of the formation a lone honk sounds, initiating a geese chorus honking encouragement to the point goose. Paul understood this; 'encourage one another and build each other up..' (1 Thessalonians 5:11) He knew we need a 'honking section' supporting us with uplifting words and prayer. Many a servant of Christ has crossed their deepest valley on a wing, a prayer and a honk from some old scarred, battle-hardened, straggle-feathered, half bald honker of encouragement, who was too stubborn to let a brother or sister quit on their watch!

Occasionally, a strident, out-of-tune goose complains loudly and irritatingly. Within moments the honking section kicks in, drowning out the grumbler, restoring order and unity. The church's problem isn't too many people speaking negatively, it's too few speaking positively! When someone cries 'defeat', honk back, 'victory'. When they cry 'fear, honk back, 'faith'. A few words of encouragement can overpower a storm of complaints. So, join the honking section and be known as Barnabas, whose name means 'Son of encouragement'. Look at the birds and learn!

With geese, their relationship is 'till death do us part'. They take it seriously. They're fully committed. When the ravages of time or circumstances make it impossible for a bird to continue the trip and it begins to lose altitude or fails to keep abreast of the formation, the gaggle provides it with comfort, nurture and protection. Two strong geese leave the formation, flying with the 'patient' safely between them, find a sheltered location with food and water and make a home for the needy bird. They'll stay with their ward until it recovers or dies, before joining another formation. For them everything goes 'on hold' to care for another bird! What an example of Christ-like relationship and self-sacrificing love. ...God has combined the members of the body...that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it...' (1 Corinthians 12:24-26) In today's culture we discount and marginalise the needy, including those no longer functioning as they once did. But God demands that we 'have equal concern for each other' especially with those suffering. If a gaggle of birds can do it, surely God's family ought to do it too. 'Look at the birds in the sky!' Jesus directs. If they can do it for each other, '...aren't you worth more than the birds?' (Matthew 6:26). One of the two greatest commandments (not suggestions) Christ gave us is, '...love your neighbour as yourself.

There is no commandment greater..'(Mark12:31). When word circulates that we love each other in this way, they'll beat down the doors of our church to get in! Look at the birds and learn!

Lost and stray geese are always welcomed into the formation. Its not an exclusive club for the elite. Birds separated from other formations, isolated by weather, accident or infirmity, are given full family status. The formation will alter its plans, reschedule its arrival time and inconvenience itself to accommodate any strangers seeking its acceptance. Many newcomers arrive dirty, bedraggled and ill-fed. They're never turned away. In the same way, God's church isn't a museum for masterpieces- it's a hospital for those who have been hurt by life, even self-inflicted hurt. Jesus said '...all who are weary and carry heavy burdens...' are accepted. (Matthew 11:28) 'I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also...there shall be one flock and one shepherd.' (John 10:16) Christ has no higher agenda than to recruit, save and adopt the stranger into His flock. You say, 'But they are not my kind of people; they don't look like, talk or smell like me!' So what? We don't get to choose our biological or spiritual siblings; God does. If they rub us up like sandpaper they're helping rub off the rough edges and polish us up. Want to see the material God builds the church with? Prepare yourself for a shock, '...the unrighteous...fornicators...idolaters...adulterers...homosexuals...thieves And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.' (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We were taken into the formation we were washed, sanctified, justified and given full family status. Look at the birds and learn!

Reflection:

The geese have really got it right. They know just how to love and care for each other, they look after the older ailing birds, and they welcome any bird into their formation to complete their journey. We can learn a lot from these geese.

Most often, love isn't rocket science, it can be as simple as greeting someone with a smile or asking the cashier in the supermarket how their day is going.

Aren't you uplifted when someone reaches out to you with even the smallest kindness, especially when it was unexpected? Try doing the same for someone else. There is an old song which says –

Have you had a kindness shown?

Pass it on

Wasn't meant for you alone

Pass it on.

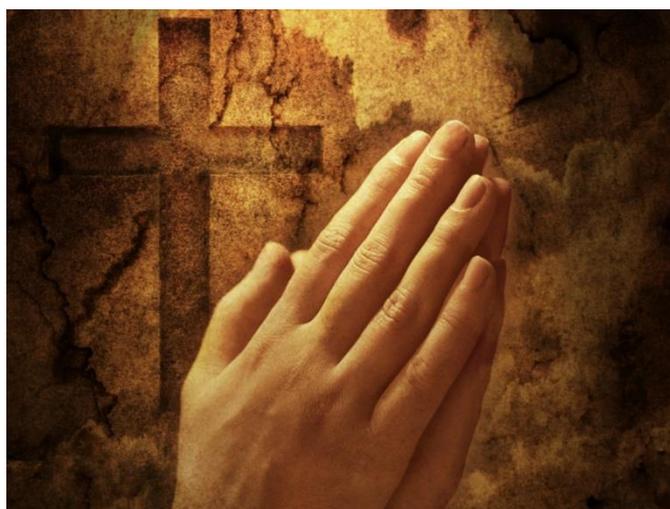
You'll love in the way only you can. We are all different. Mother Teresa loved others with many small acts of kindness, and these collected into a lifetime of love.

Being a loving person is indeed a journey, choosing to love others happens one small kindness at a time.

COMMUNION

As it is the second Sunday of the month, we share together in the sacrament of Communion. You can watch this by clicking the link. If you want to take part, please make sure you have your bread and grape juice/blackcurrant ready.

[Click here for COMMUNION](#)



Let us pray:

Lord we would like to live in a country where justice and equality are seen in all areas. Where governments locally and nationally strive to be open and honest. Where everyone has a roof over their heads and food on their plates.

Sadly, this is not always the case Lord, so we hold in our hearts today the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed and all who are unloved and uncared for. Surround them with your love, show us how to care.

We pray for all those who support your work in the world and for the people they help.

At this difficult time Lord, we pray for all countries struggling with the corona virus. We pray for the people who are ill with the virus and for those who have sadly died. We pray for their families and for the medical teams working hard in difficult situations.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.

Our final hymn is 523 in Rejoice and Sing: Give me joy in my heart, and here is the link:

[Give me Joy in my heart](#)

Blessing:

May God's blessing surround you each day

As you trust in Him and walk in His ways.

And may His presence within guard and keep you from sin.

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love. Amen.