

World Day of Prayer 2024

Burnham Church played host to the World Day of Prayer event on Friday 1st May, welcoming members from all the Churches around the Burnham area.

The service was put together by Christian women in Palestine, using the olive branch as a symbol everlasting and abundant life, as they can live for thousands of years. Stories shared of the lives of three different women witnessed to the power of bearing together in love.

The service ended with this powerful reflection:

*Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it.*

Put peace into each other's hands.
Put peace- it requires action Lord.
Prayerful action.
Not just hoping for something,
Yearning for something
Even praying for something,
but actively doing something.

And *put* peace into each other's hands Lord?
But what about my viewpoint and opinion?
Because to put something into someone
Else's hand means
Giving it away,
Not holding on to what is mine,
Letting go.

It might be a bit easier
If I knew I would be giving it to those I know and love,
Those I trust.
But what about the "other"?
Those who are different to me?
Those I don't agree with?
Those I'm not sure I can trust?
My thoughts, viewpoint, hopes, prayers – given away.

And as I stand, momentarily empty-handed, how do I feel?
There is a vulnerability to giving, offering peace.
Will it be rebuffed mocked?
Or accepted? Welcomed?

*Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it.*

Like a treasure hold it.
A reminder, Lord, that this is something precious,
This gift of peace we give to each other.

Having given, can I now recognise it's worth?
Can I treasure it?
Indeed, can I even accept it?

That's not so strange a question as it may seem.
Because, again, it's be easier from those I know and love,
Those I trust.
Bucan I receive it from the "other"?
Those who are different to me
Those I don't agree with?
Those I'm not sure I can trust?

Surely one of the most significant parts
Of the Parable of the Good Samaritan
Lies in the wounded traveller accepting help, care and provision,
From one of the Samaritans, who were so despised
Very definitely the "other",
The "different"
The "I don't agree with them"
The "I never trusted them".

Giving and receiving peace
Requires generosity of spirit,
Openness and trust,
As well as the humility to accept.
It's a precious thing, then!

Lord grant us grace to
Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it.
Amen



