**10am All Age Eucharist on Sunday 11 February 2024 with baptism and admission of children and young people to communion – Revd Ceri Payne**

**Mark 9:2-9 and 2 Cor 4:3-6: God meets us in the middle of things for his glory**

If you know the musical “*The Sound of Music*”, you might recall Maria teaching the Von Trapp children to sing with *“Let's start at the very beginning****,*** *A very good place to start…”* and continuing *“When you read, you begin with A-B-C, When you sing, you begin with Do-Re-Mi”*.

But where do you begin to teach what it means to be baptised? Where is a good place to start, when you are explaining the Eucharist?

Former Archbishop of Canterbury and Master of Magdalene College, Rowan Williams, wrote that “***the theologian is always beginning in the middle of things***”.

Perhaps there is a sense in which God meets us in the middle of things.

We weren’t, of course, starting from scratch with our first session of our Holy Communion Club, 4 Sundays ago. The young people being baptised and admitted to communion today are wondrously diverse: some are choristers, some are not; some have been at Great St Mary’s since they were tiny, others have been part of churches in other cities and in other countries. And each of them is on a journey of faith as individual as they are, guided by the Holy Spirit into the knowledge of the God who created and knows each one of us as individuals.

God meets each one of us where we are.

Jesus and his disciples were right in the middle of a hectic and exhausting round of travelling far and wide and teaching crowds of people when Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain, by themselves. Yet Jesus chose that time to give them a shared experience that would transform their understanding of who he was; and to give them a glimpse of the glory of God. Those times when our understanding of God has been totally transformed can come when we’re least expecting them.

God often meets us when we’re in the middle of things.

And yet often, when we look back with hindsight, we can see that God’s timing was perfect.

Over the last few weeks in Holy Communion Club, we’ve thought about how baptism and communion bring us into the family of God, uniting us with Jesus – with ***“God’s Son, the Beloved”*** - as children of God, and as the body of Christ.

About the new covenant that we are remembering in the Eucharist. The covenant that doesn’t depend upon us keeping God’s law (which we could never do), but upon trusting in the power of Jesus’ death on the cross to bring forgiveness, and to reconcile all of God’s people to himself.

We’ve thought about faith, and family, and fellowship.

And about following Jesus.

These are the ideas that have been bubbling up, and prompting questions, as we’ve been preparing for today.

As we begin to put our trust in Jesus we discover that faith, and forgiveness, and fellowship, and being part of the family of God, are not just ideas, or fine-sounding words. Not just something that we *convince ourselves* that we experience. Like the glory of God that Peter James and John could see in Jesus, these things are not just a trick of the light, but become reality, in ways that none of us can fully understand, or can entirely express. They become real for us through our baptism and through the Eucharist, through communion.

Baptism and the Eucharist are both sacraments. And so the water of baptism is not just water, but becomes for us the water of life, submerging the sin of our old lives and enabling us to be reborn in our new lives in Jesus.

And the bread and the wine, too, is not just a symbol but also, somehow, the real presence of Jesus: nourishing us, strengthening us, sustaining us.

Always good for us, even when we feel that we’re not good enough for God.

Bringing us God’s love and healing and peace; the sharing of it reconciling us and drawing us closer, to God and to one another.

Creating community; confirming, commissioning, celebrating.

We can know God, in the middle of things.

We can see God in the ordinary things of life, as God makes the ordinary extraordinary, and gives us a glimpse of the glory that is to come.

A little later, we will light candles as a reminder that we go out as a light in the world, able to walk in the light of Christ all the days of our lives. Trusting in Jesus, the Beloved Son. Trusting in God who said, ***“let light shine out of darkness”***, and who has given us, in Jesus, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

Amen.