



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 6: Sunday 10th May 2020

Dear Friends,

I've been reflecting on how much has changed in so short a time. In one way, of course, the last six weeks of lockdown have seemed an eternity, but in another way, when I look back just a few months, I find a world where the rumours of a virus causing illness in China were only just beginning to be part of our news reports.

As a Methodist Minister, I can look back 35 years to my first appointment. Of course some practical things were different then – I wrote all my letters on a manual typewriter and it was some years before we had a telephone answering machine - but the pace of change in the practicalities of what I do seems to have been more rapid in the last few weeks than over many of those 35 years.

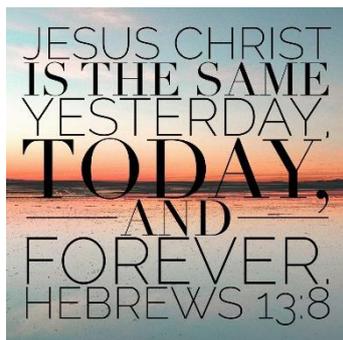


My 'pulpit' now looks very different than it did before I started my sabbatical – as the picture shows – but the message of the unchanging truth of the Gospel is one which continues to speak to the world today.

As we await the Prime Minister's statement this coming Sunday, we wonder what changes will become part of the 'new normal' over the months ahead. What we can know is that, in the words of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever". (Chapter 13 v 8)

Yours in His service,

Chris Blake



Worship Reflection

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits (Psalm 103 v 1-2)

Hymn (StF 492)

Christ be my leader by night as by day;
Safe through the darkness for he is the way.
Gladly I follow, my future his care,
Darkness is daylight when Jesus is there.

Prayer

Lord God,
for your greatness beyond our imagining,
your grace beyond deserving,
your goodness beyond measuring,
and you love beyond comparing,
we give you our praise. Amen

Bible Reading

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.' (John 14 v 1-8)

Reflection

Philip's words to Jesus are perhaps particularly relevant in a time of lockdown and in a time when some items are in short supply in the shops. What is it that we really need? A recent news report indicated that soap and hand gel were still being bought in significant amounts – but also noted that the sales of men's razors had fallen dramatically. Clearly many men who were now working at home had decided that shaving regularly was no longer essential.

In these days of restriction, we can't do all we would like to do, and we cannot perhaps find all that we would like to buy in the shops. This presents us with the question – 'What is it that we really need?' Philip's statement gives us an answer 'Show us the Father and that will be enough for us'.

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the resurrection we offer our prayers to God. We pray for:

- Our country's leaders, as decisions are made regarding the pathway ahead
- Parents and children struggling with unfamiliar patterns of life and schooling
- For those whose income has ceased and for those whose employment future is uncertain

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn (StF 531)

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Final Prayer

Gracious God, open our eyes to your presence and, as you walk with us, help us to walk with you. Amen.



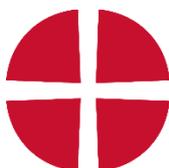
Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The free telephone line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

The Methodist Church has set up a similar free phone service to provide prayers and news from the Methodist Church.

Listen to a prayer: **0808 281 2514**

Listen to news: **0808 281 2478**



The Methodist Church is encouraging us all to 'tell our stories'. You are invited to choose a Bible or hymn verse, or perhaps a prayer that you have read or written, and to describe why that verse or prayer is particularly important to you. Contributions need to be no longer than 250 words.

This week's contribution is from Joy Blake.

It was very foggy as we approached Belfast Docks for the crossing to Stranraer following a few days with friends in Northern Ireland. Having boarded the ferry, we opted to stay on deck. As the crossing progressed, I started to jot down some thoughts. As the fog gradually dissipated and the sun, watery at first, became strong beams of warmth, this is the prayer-poem that I found slowly emerging.

Lord of the day, Lord of the night,
Lord of betwixt shades, I'm held in Your sight.

Lord of the sea, Lord of the land,
Lord of all places, I'm held in Your hand.

Lord of the storm, Lord of the calm,
Lord of all weather, I'm held in your palm.

Lord of the joy, Lord of the pain,
Lord of all feeling, With You I'll remain.

It's a prayer of thankfulness for being held by God, ending with a statement of personal faith and choice. Since giving my life to Jesus at the age of 6, on a still vividly-remembered Good Friday, there have been many years of travel. I am deeply thankful for the special moments, including that ferry crossing, when I've had a precious sense of His presence and peace. I'm hugely thankful, too, for the times when I've sensed the emerging from "night-time fog", including after a time when I'd been diagnosed as having depression. I pray that, in these challenging days, you'll know the Lord's presence and choose to say, "With You I'll remain".