



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 44: Sunday 14th March 2021



Dear Friends,

This week we arrive not only at the Fourth Sunday of Lent, but also at Mothering Sunday.

The celebration of Mothering Sunday has a long and rich history. From as long ago as the 8th century, the Bible readings traditionally read at this 'mid-point' of Lent related to the idea of motherhood in terms of the Christian faith. This is particularly the case with the reading from Paul's letter to the Galatians which refers in chapter 4 v 26 to Jerusalem as 'our mother'.



This idea of referring to a spiritual home in terms of motherhood led later to Mothering Sunday becoming a day when people returned to their 'mother church'. This was perhaps the church where they were baptised, or the local cathedral. By the year 1644, those who followed this pattern were said to have gone 'mothering'. In later times, Mothering Sunday became a day when domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother church, usually with their own mothers and other family members.

More recently, the day has increasingly focused on our human mothers and, in the midst of our celebration of the good aspects of family life, we must not forget those who live in fractured families separated from their mothers or those who have lost their own mothers over the last twelve months.

Clearly in our modern world we can easily get distracted by the commercialisation of such days, but, as we thank God for good and enriching family relationships, we are invited to remember the spiritual origins of Mothering Sunday and to thank God for our 'spiritual homes' and for those who have been part of our own faith journey.

Yours in His service

Chris Blake

Worship Reflection

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever. (Psalm 107 v 1)

Hymn (StF 81)

Now thank we all our God,
with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.



Prayer: Living God, remind us today of your greatness and power, your will and purpose, and your grace and mercy and may that knowledge shape who we are and all we do. Amen.

Bible Reading

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.'

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

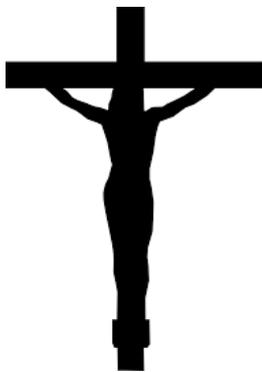
Reflection

This week's set Gospel reading contains the powerful verse, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3 v 16). This verse proclaims the wonderful Good News that God:

- Loved the world
- Gave his Son
- Invited us all.

Each of those three statements is important and together they proclaim the message of grace which is at the very heart of the Christian faith.

The verse before those well known words is perhaps less familiar, but it is no less important, because its description of the 'Son of Man' being lifted up reminds us that when God 'Loved',



'Gave' and 'Invited' it was not without cost.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross of crucifixion so that evil could be defeated and God's love could be made available to all who would accept the message of the God who 'Loved' and 'Gave' and 'Invited'.

Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- For shops and hospitality businesses as they plan to reopen their doors once again
- For those waiting for non-Covid treatment or surgery that has been delayed by the pandemic

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

Hymn (StF 503)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Final Prayer: Sovereign God, for your blessings too many to number, and your goodness too wonderful for words, we give you our praise. Amen



Precious Memories

You are invited to submit a short article describing a significant person, place or event under the heading of 'Precious Memories'. You might like to describe how that person, place or event was significant in your own faith journey.

This week's 'Precious memory' is from Rosemary Sewell from Aldershot. Rosemary says, "This memory is precious because God turned a disaster into a blessing!"

'In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'
1 Thessalonians 5 v18 NIV.

Years ago, I was joint leader of a Bible study group in Ash Vale, meeting in a member's home on a Monday morning. I awoke to a problem: I needed petrol and cash to buy it. Going to the local Sub Post Office/shop, I found an angry, dispute in full-swing. (*'Thankyou God'*). The dispute continued, I waited and waited. (*'Thankyou God'*.) I had no other choice. (*'Thankyou God.'* Thinking *'I may be a bit late'*)

At last, I was served. (*'Thankyou God'*) and I sped to the nearest garage. It was empty, (*'Thankyou God'*). Having been served, the man said, pointing at a Christian sticker on my car 'Do you believe in that?' 'Oh, yes', I replied, and he asked, 'Are you in a rush, do you have time?' (*'Thank You God'*. Thinking *'Maybe I'll get there for coffee'*) 'No, no rush'



He then started to tell me he used to go to church, but having taken over running the youth group, it died. He felt so guilty at letting God down, he felt he couldn't stay. (***'Thank you God!'***). Our church didn't have a group, so I had joined that one. I told him, I saw the members joined together, grow up together, paired off, and get married! The disbelief and then relief in his face was wonderful to see! (***'Thank You God!'***)

I made it to my meeting - late and was made a cuppa whilst I told them how God had delayed me to help another and restore his faith. **THANK YOU GOD!**

Bible Reading: © Biblica 2011. Some prayers: Methodist Prayer Handbook © TMCP 2019/2020. Some prayers taken from "2000 prayers for public worship" by Nick Fawcett. CCLI No 000295.