



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 21: Sunday 6th September 2020

Dear Friends,

The first day of September is always a significant time for me. On a personal level it marks the anniversary of the day that Joy and I shared our first 'date'. That was on the 1st September 1972 – so this year was our 48th 'going out' anniversary!



On a different level, the 1st September also marks the day when Methodist Ministers who are on the move, start their new appointments. So, this year, the 1st September marked the 35th anniversary of our move to Rainham in the the Barking and Dagenham area, the 30th anniversary of our move to Verwood in Dorset, the 19th anniversary of our move to Cornwall, the 12th anniversary of our move to Cliff College in Derbyshire and the 4th anniversary of our move to where we now live.

On a more immediate level, if we look back just one year to the start of September 2019, none of us would have had any idea of what would happen over the twelve months between then and now. Equally, pondering the twelve months ahead can leave us with a similar sense of uncertainty.

What we can know is that we will not journey into the next year alone. Within our churches, we can continue to offer pastoral support and care to each other and individually, and together we can trust in the promise of Jesus at the end of Matthew's Gospel, "And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age". (Matthew 28 v 20).

There is an old hymn (StF 638) which begins with these words:

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

At the start of another September, with all the challenges that may be ahead of us, the invitation to praise God with our voices and our hearts is one that encourages us all onwards in our journey as disciples of Jesus.

Yours in His service,

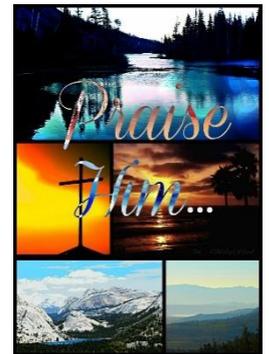
Chris Blake

Worship Reflection

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. (Psalm 149 v 2-3)

Hymn (StF 83)

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored,
forgiven,
who like thee his praise should sing?
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!



Prayer: Living God, grow in us so that we may grow in you. Feed us by your Spirit, nurture us through the living presence of Christ so that we may live to your praise and glory. Amen.

Bible Reading (Exodus 12 v 1-11)

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 'This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire – with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

Reflection

Over twenty years ago now, I had the privilege of sharing in a short study tour of Israel / Palestine. Some of the 'holy places' had become very busy tourist attractions, but other places we visited, particularly those on the shore of Lake Galilee, were relatively unchanged, and we were able to imagine ourselves back in the time of Jesus, listening to his teaching, with the beauty of the lake in the background.

Remembering significant spiritual events of the past and reliving those events in our imaginations is a powerful experience. For Jews, the reliving of the events of the Passover, events which are described in this week's reading from the Old Testament, is perhaps the pinnacle of the spiritual year. Families gather together to share the Passover meal and, by tradition, the youngest person present will ask a series of set questions which prompt the retelling, and reimagining, of the escape of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. This retelling includes the way in which those who were to share in this act of salvation had marked the surrounds of their doors with the blood of the sacrificial lamb.



For Christians, the link between the events of the first Passover and the saving work of Jesus are clear to see. As we remember the death of Jesus on the cross and relive that moment in our imaginations, we are reminded of how John the Baptist referred to Jesus as 'the Lamb of God' (John 1 v 29). The blood of Jesus, shed on the cross, offers us all the opportunity to escape from our failures and wrong choices and to know God's forgiveness and new beginnings in our lives. Jesus is for us the 'Passover Lamb' who makes it possible for us to share in God's salvation.

Just like those Jewish slaves in Egypt many centuries ago who ate that first Passover meal with their sandals on and their cloaks tucked into their belts so that they would be ready to escape at a moment's notice, we too must be ready to respond, without delay, when Jesus invites us to follow him.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week -

- For those who have been made unemployed during the pandemic
- For head teachers and others making final arrangements for their schools to re-open.

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

Hymn (StF 287)

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Final Prayer:

Sovereign God, you have called us to be your people: help us to live as your children to the glory of your name. Amen.

Glimpses of God's Glory



Over recent weeks it has been good to include various short testimonies under the 'This is my Story' heading. If you have not yet submitted an article and you would like to do so, then please send it to me, and I will find space to include what you write in a future edition.

However, I also want to start a new 'feature' which I am calling 'Glimpses of God's Glory'. I invite you to submit a photograph that you have taken of an aspect of the world around us which could be described as a 'Glimpse of God's Glory'. It might be a view from your window or a photograph you have taken while you have been 'out and about'. When you send me the photograph please include 100 to 150 words describing where and when the photograph was taken and describing why that image is to you a 'Glimpse of God's Glory'.

I look forward to receiving your photographs.

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