



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 11: Sunday 14th June 2020

Dear Friends,

A group of people in our local churches take time each year to make knitted angels. During December, literally thousands of these angels are given out to people living around our churches, reminding those who are facing difficult times that they are not forgotten. These angels offer a symbol of encouragement and of hope.

A few weeks ago, a knitted angel arrived through our letterbox at home. It was indeed for us a sign of encouragement and hope. I think that this particular angel was also intended to make us laugh – which indeed it did – for, as you can see in the photograph, it bears (at least in beard shape) a passing resemblance to me! It didn't take me long to work



out that this particular angel was knitted by Jackie, a member at North Camp, and she gave me permission to include the picture of her knitted angel in this edition of 'The Anchor'.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *aggellos* is used to describe both supernatural and human agents of God. In some places the word is translated as 'angel', but in other places it is translated as 'messenger'. In Luke 1 v 26, for instance, this Greek word is used to speak of the supernatural Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary, while later in the Gospel, the same Greek word is used to speak of the human messenger, John the Baptist (Luke 7 v 27).

You will perhaps have heard others say, even if you haven't said it yourself, "Don't put me on a pedestal – I'm no angel!". While on one level this is obviously true, it is also true to say that each one of us is called by God to be a human messenger of the values of God's Kingdom.

We are called to make known the message of God's love as we support those in need. We are called to make know the message of God's justice as we speak up for the those who face racism and other forms of discrimination. We are called to make known the message of God's grace as we tell others about the Good News of Jesus.

We are all called to ask ourselves – "In what ways is God calling me to be an angel-messenger of God's love, justice and grace in the days ahead?"

Yours in His service,

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Worship Reflection

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. (Psalm 116 v 1-2)

Hymn (StF 553)

I am a new creation, No more in condemnation,
Here in the grace of God I stand.
My heart is overflowing, My love just keeps on growing,
Here in the grace of God I stand.

And I will praise you, Lord, Yes I will praise you,
Lord, And I will sing of all that you have done.
A joy that knows no limit, A lightness in my spirit
Here in the grace of God I stand.



Prayer

Loving God, as we draw near to you, draw near to us. Encircle us in your love, enable us by your power, enthuse us by your grace and enfold us in your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Bible Reading (Romans 5 v 1-8)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

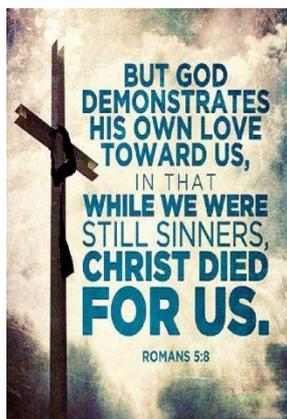
You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Reflection

Paul's letter to the Romans is widely acknowledged as his most sustained piece of theological writing. As a result, it is not a letter we should rush through, and attempt to read quickly, but instead we need to read it slowly, reflecting on the rich language and deep imagery used by Paul in these verses.

In these verses from Chapter 5 of the letter, Paul reminds us that our hope is not a hope which is only experienced when life is easy. In fact, Paul describes the opposite situation as he writes about how we can find hope even in our times of difficulty and suffering if we persevere and build our character as people of faith.

This hope, says Paul, is known to us through the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out into our hearts so that we might experience God's love in our lives. Paul goes on to remind us that God's love is not earned by our good behaviour but is ours because of God's free gift of grace. Paul proclaims this truth in a powerful and important sentence – "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us". This really is a verse worth reading through slowly time and time again.



Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week for -

- All victims of racism – past and present
- For those who fear – that they may find hope
- For those who lead us – that they might do so wisely

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

Hymn (StF 563)

O Jesus, I have promised, To serve you to the end;
Lord be for ever near me,
My master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle, If you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If you will be my Guide.

Final Prayer

Gracious God, we put everything into your hands. We lay everything on your altar. We take nothing back and we yield all things to your glory, now and for ever. Amen

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



This week's contribution is from Rachael from Aldershot

Jesus, my pain is so deep. My anger is fierce, my fear is crippling. And then in the midst of all of these emotions, numbness sets in. I struggle to know how to pray or where to begin! So I'm going to remind myself of truth. I know you are here with me in my grief. I know you are mending the brokenness in ways I can't always see. Lord, hold me in your arms, take this pain and help me bear it. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen

I wrote this prayer three years ago just after my mother died. I'd spent a lot of time with my Mum, in and out of the hospital, and then I received an unexpected call telling me to come to the hospital as this would be my last chance to see my Mum and to say goodbye. After my Mum's passing in the hospital, I found myself feeling lost and not knowing where to turn. I was in a lot of pain as I felt that I had not only lost my Mum but also my best friend. I found the one place that I could turn to was my faith to help me overcome the pain and anger at losing my Mum. I felt these words were a good way of showing my feelings and writing this prayer was a great help to me.

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