



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 14: Sunday 5th July 2020

Dear Friends,

The current pandemic has brought pain and loss to many families, but, mixed in with the stories of sadness, there are stories which speak to us of hope and of new beginnings.

Just a few days ago, the television news reported the story of Mandy Mitchell – pictured here with her husband Kevin.



Mandy, a health care worker from North Devon, was seriously ill with coronavirus. She spent 93 days in intensive care. Specialists from around the country were involved in planning the best treatment for Mandy and gradually she began to recover.

While she was still sedated, her colleagues programmed the 28-mile route from the hospital to Mandy's home into one of the hospital's cycling machines. Initially, Mandy wasn't able to ride the machine herself, but, before she left hospital, she was well enough to use the cycling machine to complete the computer simulated journey. As she left hospital Mandy said, "The cycle machine journey has been really helpful, I've been on my way home since I regained consciousness and now I'm about to get there".



Reading Mandy's account in the newspaper and seeing the pictures of Mandy's neighbours lining the streets as the

ambulance returned her home, brought tears to my eyes, but Mandy's story also spoke to me about the importance of 'coming home'.

In physical terms it is good to have a place of safety, security and welcome that we can call 'home' and to be home-less or to only know a home which is far from safe can be a desperately painful experience.

St Augustine once said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You." It's a very powerful sentence which reminds us that we have a spiritual home which we can only find when we enter into a relationship with God by accepting the forgiveness that Jesus made possible. Until we make that journey home, our hearts will always be restless.

Mandy Mitchell saw her recovery in terms of her 'journey home'. In a very real sense, we are invited as followers of Jesus, to journey home to God where we can find safety, security and welcome.



Yours in His service,

Chris Blake

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Worship Reflection

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. (Psalm 46 v 1-2)

Hymn (StF 418)

We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for all throughout the earth;
The gospel of a Saviour's name:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.

Prayer Almighty God, teach us each day to know and love you better so that all that we are and do may be pleasing in your sight. Amen

Bible Reading (Matthew 11 v 25-30)

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Reflection



The words of Jesus at the end of this week's Bible reading offer a significant insight into what it means to be a disciple.

We are perhaps familiar with the yoke worn by animals pulling a cart or a plough, but we are perhaps less familiar with a human yoke which has the aim of making it easier for the person wearing the yoke to carry their load.

Later in Matthew's Gospel Jesus speaks of the actions of the Pharisees' using the image of a heavy yoke when he says, "The Pharisees tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others" (Matthew 23 v 4). In using this description, Jesus is speaking about the many detailed and burdensome regulations which the Pharisees have added to God's commands.

In contrast, the yoke of Christian discipleship is easy (the original Greek literally means 'kind') and light and comfortably fitting. As the followers of Jesus, we are, of course, called to yoke-wearing obedience, but we can be thankful because the yoke that Jesus gives is 'kind' and 'light' and will give us life and joy.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week for -

- The people of Leicester as they face a longer period in lockdown
- For local businesses as they explore how they can reopen in a safe and Covid-secure way
- For the most vulnerable in our communities as some aspects of emergency support come to an end

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

Hymn (StF 550)

Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go
My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only thee, resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do

Give me to bear thy easy yoke
And every moment watch and pray,
And still to things eternal look
And hasten to thy glorious day.

Final Prayer Gracious God, keep our eyes open

to your presence and, as you walk with us, help us to walk with you. Amen.

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.



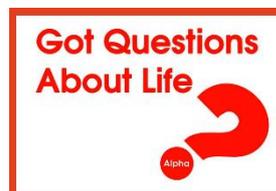
This week's contribution is from Richard Hoyland from North Camp.

"Well Richard, I'm going to church now, you're welcome to come or you can remain here with Ray and watch Australian Football on TV?"

This was the choice presented to me by my cousin with whom I was staying for the weekend. It was 2008 and I was in the middle of a five week visit to Australia where I had not been since 1951. It was on that earlier visit, as a young boy in a small "township" outside Melbourne, that I first became aware of God's protective hand. I had experienced His protection and guidance throughout my life and especially during these five weeks on my own in Australia.



After a brief pause, I opted for church. I had not been to a Sunday service for some decades and this turned out to be so different to what I expected! Guitars accompanied the worship songs, the words were projected on a screen for all to read and afterwards were tea, biscuits and friendly chat. This was a revelation to me having been used to formalised C of E services in my childhood, then ritualistic Catholic services following marriage.



Weeks later on returning to England and my retirement flat in Farnborough I became acquainted with Janet who had recently taken another flat in the

building. When she asked if I would like to be her guest at an Alpha supper at North Camp Methodist Church I readily agreed. I was back in the fold! The parable of the lost sheep springs to mind.

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