



# The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 40: Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021



Dear Friends,

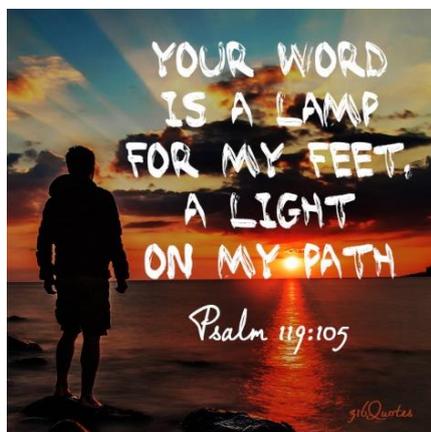
As we continue to travel through these 'lockdown days', our political leaders are being increasingly asked to provide a 'route map' for the way out of the restrictions that we currently face. People want to know when the schools will reopen, when they might be able to go on holiday or when they might be able to meet up with family once more.

The reasons for asking politicians these questions are understandable – but so are the reasons why politicians are reluctant to answer them in any detail. We may have hopes for the future but giving details or dates for a route map is simply not possible until Covid-19 is more under control.

Even in more normal times, we sometimes wonder what the future holds, and we want to understand the route map of our lives for the months or years ahead. However, we understand in our hearts that knowing the future is simply not possible and that, even if we could know the future in that way, it would not be helpful for us.

**The Bible is not a book of future predictions – but it is a book of faithful promises.**

As we read the Bible, we are reminded time and time again that we can trust in God as we travel into the unknown future. Psalm 119 is the longest of the Psalms. It is composed of twenty-two



stanzas, following the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Within a stanza, each verse begins with the same Hebrew letter. The whole Psalm is a

reminder and an invitation to trust in the word of God and to walk in his ways.

Perhaps the most well-known verse in the Psalm is verse 105 which reads, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path". As we reflect on that particular faithful promise, we can know that, as we travel into the unknown future, we may not have a detailed route map, but we do have the assurance that God will always be with us to provide us with 'light for our path'.

Yours in His service

*Chris Blake*

## Worship Reflection

Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147 v 1-3)

### Hymn (StF 548)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God  
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, nourish us through your word, nurture us through your grace, feed us through your Spirit and fill us with your love. Amen.

### Bible Reading (1 Corinthians 9 v 19-23)

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Reflection This week's reading from chapter nine of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is not the easiest to follow. It is part of a much longer discussion which starts in the previous chapter about food sacrificed to idols. Paul is clear that

idols have no real power and so there is no harm in eating meat that has been offered in pagan temples – but he is also aware that eating such meat might trouble others and so he is arguing that it would be good to refrain from doing so rather than risk unsettling someone else’s growing faith. In saying, “I have become all things to all people”, Paul is indicating that he wants to do all he can to be able to share his faith with others.

We may not face this same debate today, but the question of how we respect the beliefs of others in order to build bridges with them is still an important one.

In our families, and amongst our friends, there will be those whose lifestyles and beliefs will be different from ours – but we are challenged by Paul’s words to avoid causing them offence over matters which are not of fundamental importance. Paul is not saying ‘anything goes’ about his own faith or behaviour but he is encouraging us to build bridges with others, even those who live their lives differently from the way we live ours. We are to do this so that we may have opportunities to share our faith with them

### Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- For the fair and just distribution of vaccines throughout the nations of the world.
- For all who work in the NHS and in care homes

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

### 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.

Final Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, grant that everything we are, and all we say and do, may respond to your praise and glory, for your name’s sake. Amen.

## **The Anchor**

The Anchor is taking a short break next week before we begin the journey of Lent together. The next edition will be prepared, God willing for Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup>. See you then.

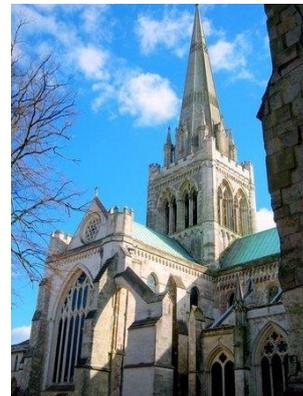


## **Precious Memories**

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 Jane Hughes from North Camp.

There is a painting in Chichester Cathedral, too contemporary for my taste. I would glance at it and walk on.



Then on one occasion something compelled me to stop and look. The picture was full of darkness, jagged shapes, clashing colours, confusion, and distortion. I was suddenly aware of a friend who was in hospital with depression. Were these the horrors going through her mind? On a table by the picture were candles and prayer cards. As my candle flame grew, I knelt and prayed St Richard’s prayer.

After many months my friend made a complete recovery and returned to her teaching post. When I next visited the Cathedral, the painting was still on display – but now I could only see beautiful colours, order and peace. I lit a candle and prayed with thanks.

## **ST RICHARD’S PRAYER**

Thanks be to thee  
My Lord Jesus Christ  
For all the benefits thou hast given me  
For all the pains and insults  
Which thou hast borne for me.  
O most merciful Redeemer,  
Friend and Brother,  
May I know thee more clearly  
Love thee more dearly  
And follow thee more nearly.  
Amen

Prayer of St Richard  
Bishop of Chichester (from 1245 to 1253)