

Back to Church by Judy Smith

It's 8.30 am and it's Sunday morning. I am up, dressed and ready to leave the house (bit of an effort!). Colin has already left. I am excited to be going to meet and worship with other people from the church family. I know what it looks like inside the church, so it won't be a surprise to see how far apart the chairs are and how bare it looks.

I arrive at the church and cross the car park. The doors to the church are wide open, it looks so welcoming. Lauraine and Colin are waiting to greet me. As I approach I slip on my face mask. I have my temperature taken (phew, it's normal!) and sanitise my hands. There is classical music playing, people are sitting quietly and expectantly waiting for the service to begin. The atmosphere is reverent and peaceful. The doors are open and there is a cooling breeze blowing through.

Clive starts the service promptly at 9. It is a traditional red book communion service. The familiar words resonate and touch the soul. The breeze catches the flags and they rustle and flutter happily. It feels like a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work. Clive's sermon is about healing - Bartimaeus' encounter with Jesus just before He entered Jericho. It is so relevant for us today, when many people feel bruised and battered and alone. Jesus can and will heal if we allow Him to.

During the administration of the communion more classical music is played and as we sit back in our seats I do indeed feel that Jesus is present with us. After the blessing we leave the church quietly and thoughtfully to the theme tune from ET and indeed we do feel that we have come home. Socially distanced socialising takes place in the car park before we leave. We are all smiling. It has been such a positive and fulfilling experience. All our thanks go out to Clive, Lauraine and Colin for the preparation it has taken to make sure that we could worship together again in safety. God be praised!