



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 24: Sunday 27th September 2020

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday saw the first gathering for worship of the Aldershot congregation since the start of the lockdown. There were 19 people (and a dog!) present for this service which followed a similar pattern to the service at North Camp the previous week, with socially distanced seating and the requirement for a shortened service without any singing.



Despite the obvious limitations as to what could happen in the service, those present valued the opportunity to be back in the building and to see each other's faces (well the top half of each other's faces at least!).



The beautiful weather provided an opportunity, after the service, for a relaxed

time of socially distanced conversation in the church car park as people caught up with each other's news.

If you are wondering about the dog – Nico is being trained as a 'Hearing Dog for Deaf People'. Part of that training involves experiencing a wide range of situations so that, as an assistance dog, he won't panic in unusual contexts. It was Nico's first visit to church and, although the recorded music being played through the church's sound system was a new experience for him, he coped well with that first visit.

So both North Camp and Aldershot have now opened their buildings for their first services. Clearly the services were different from those we shared before the lockdown, but, in both church buildings, those who were able to be present appreciated all the work that had been carried out by the Risk Assessment teams and others to make it possible for us to gather together in this way.

Yours in His service,

Chris Blake

Worship Reflection

Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God. (Psalm 147 v 1)

Hymn (StF 334)

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.

*praise
the
LORD!*

Prayer: To you, O God, be praise and glory, worship and adoration, today and always. Amen.

Bible Reading (Exodus 17 v 1-7)

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, travelling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarrelled with Moses and said, 'Give us water to drink.'

Moses replied, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?'

But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, 'Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?'

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.'

The Lord answered Moses, 'Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.' So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the Lord saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

Reflection: The hymn 'Father, hear the prayer we offer' has, as its third verse, the words: *Not for ever by still waters would we idly rest and stay; but would strike the living fountains, from the rocks along our way.*

The image used in that verse of the hymn comes from this week's Old Testament reading which describes how Moses, guided by God, provided water from a rock when the people complained that they were thirsty as they were travelling through the Desert of Sin.

The Israelites had escaped from slavery in Egypt and were being led towards the Promised Land. God had already acted in miraculous ways by parting the waters of the sea (Exodus 14 v 21) and by providing daily food in the form of manna (Exodus 16 v 13-16), but still the people grumbled and wondered if they would have been better off remaining in Egypt. So God provided a miraculous supply of water in a desert place to refresh and renew the people.

This is a wonderful image of how, when we find ourselves in dry and difficult places in our lives, we can turn to God for refreshment and renewal. The Israelites were travelling through a place that was literally called the 'Desert of Sin' (verse 1) and we can know that when we figuratively find ourselves in such a place, then God's refreshing love and grace made possible through Jesus can bring us forgiveness and renewal.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray especially this week -



- For God's refreshment and renewal when we find ourselves in a desert place in our lives
- For all whose lives are made more difficult by the new restrictions imposed this week in response to rising Covid infection levels.

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

Hymn (StF 518)

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength, that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Final Prayer:

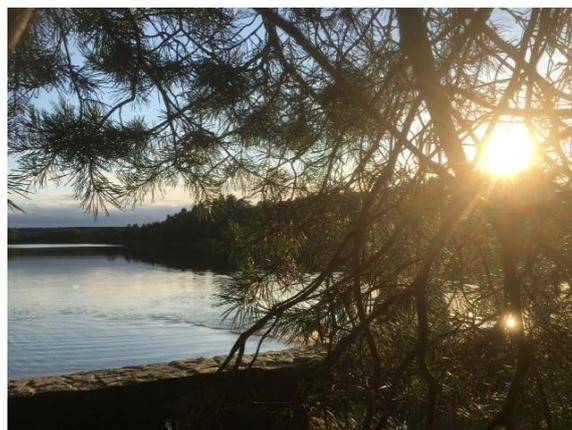
Living God, may our lips speak of you, our actions honour you and our lives proclaim you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Glimpses of God's Glory



You are invited to submit a photograph or photographs that you or someone you know has taken which could be described as a 'Glimpse of God's Glory'. Please include 100 to 150 words describing what the photograph or photographs mean to you.

This week's contribution is from Denny Davies from North Camp.



Denny writes, "During the last few months I have really felt that water, in the form of rivers, sea or lakes has been a source of great peace and strength to me. Times have been tough for everyone and my husband and I frequently visit Little Frensham Pond, usually for a snatched hour at the end of the day. My breathing slows and I feel at peace, watching the changing light and seasons that can only be created by God. It is such a lovely place, with something new to see every visit. The beauty of the sunset, the joy of watching dogs and children in the water, the wildlife and the flowers, all conspire to remind me who is in charge and to rest in Him".

