



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 39: Sunday 31st January 2021

Dear Friends,

The recent inauguration of the President and Vice President of the United States was remarkable for many reasons. We give thanks to God that the handover of responsibility to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris took place safely and peacefully and in a ceremony which offered hope for the future. There were many words spoken in the inauguration ceremony which were memorable, but two moments struck me as being particularly insightful.

The first was when Joe Biden in his acceptance speech quoted a favourite phase of President Bill Clinton and said,



“We will lead not by the example of our power but by the power of our example”.

The second came at the end of the poem written by Amanda Gorman, America’s Youth Poet Laureate. Her poem ended with these words,



“When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we’re brave enough to

see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it”.

These two powerful statements are united in that they both speak of the importance of living out what we believe in our words and our actions. As I listened to those words spoken at the inauguration, I was reminded of the words of Jesus which are recorded in John’s Gospel *“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”.* (John 13 v 34).

Jesus says that people will know that we are his followers not when we speak about love, but when we show love to one another in the very practicalities of our daily lives.

In some ways our opportunities to show love in action might seem limited in these lockdown days – but opportunities to show faith in action still remain. We can pick up the telephone and give time to speak with a friend. We can send an encouraging text to someone who is struggling, or we can post a card or small gift to someone who is living alone. For those of us who share a home or ‘bubble’ with others, there are, of course, face to face opportunities to demonstrate God’s love in action in these challenging times.

Living out our faith in action is not always easy, but in seeking to make Jesus known to others I am sure that what is important is not ‘the example of our power but the power of our example’. This can at times be challenging but the end of Amanda Gorman’s poem invites us to be ‘brave enough to be it’.

Yours in His service

Worship Reflection

Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. (Psalm 111 v 1)

Hymn (StF 186)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Prayer: Sovereign Lord, faithful and true, in you we put our trust. To you be praise and glory, now and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Bible Reading (Psalm 11 v 2-10)

Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures for ever. He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate. He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant for ever.

He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness. He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant for ever – holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

Reflection This week's Psalm reflects on God's faithfulness. Interestingly, just a couple of weeks after we have shared in our annual Covenant Service, this idea of God's faithfulness is twice expressed through the idea of 'covenant'.

In the Bible we can read about a number of occasions when this language is used.

In Genesis chapter 9 v 12, when, after the flood, God places a rainbow in the sky, God says to Noah, *'This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come'*.

In Genesis 17 we can read of God's covenant with Abraham. In verse 7 of that chapter God says to Abraham, *'I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you'*.

And of course, in Jeremiah chapter 31 we read in v 31 these words, *'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah'*.

That new covenant was made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus and when we respond to God's invitation to enter into this new covenant, we are enabled to know the faithful love of God which is described by the writer of this week's Psalm.

In the last verse of the Psalm the writer speaks of the 'fear of the Lord'. Fear in this context means having a deep respect, reverence and awe for God's power and authority rather than being afraid of God. This deep awe and respect for God's faithfulness is indeed the 'beginning of wisdom'.

Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- For all who work in the NHS and in care homes who are on the front line of the battle with Covid-19.
- For those without internet access who find making regular contact with family and friends difficult in these lockdown days.

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

Hymn (StF 559)

Lord, You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Jesus, take my life and lead me on
Lord, You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Let me be to You a sacrifice.

Final Prayer:

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

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 Frances Gawthrop from Aldershot.

My father loved being by the sea. It was not a surprise last summer when Dad asked if we would take him to



Hillhead. Hillhead is on Southampton Water and was one of Dad's favourite places. In recent years Mum and Dad would often go there for a day out.

The weather was fine for our trip to Hillhead on 7th July 2020. Dad got breathless walking, so we took a wheelchair and Colin pushed him for a 'walk' along the promenade. We enjoyed a picnic lunch looking out to sea as we watched the tide come in. After lunch I pushed Dad onto the platform above the steps leading to the beach. The sea surrounded us on three sides. We didn't talk, we both knew it would be the last time Dad would sit beside the sea. I prayed for Dad and thank God that when his time came a month later, he was peaceful.

We did not know at the time it would be Dad's last day out but we had a wonderful time which will always be a precious memory.