

Deacon's Thoughts...

As I sit at my desk to write to you I am listening to a new CD, bought especially to help lift me during these dark times. It is Rend Collective's 'Choose to Worship', and that's exactly what it helps me to do – choose to worship.

There are days when I just want to hide away and cry. The news I see is all so negative – why, oh why can't we be fed the figures of those who have recovered from Covid-19 as the main headlines each night, rather than the frightening numbers, too many to comprehend, of those who have died? (Don't answer that, I do know the reason, I'm just noting that we're continually fed negative, frightening news).

For someone who has suffered with depression for a few years, helped by counselling and time spent with family and friends, this is not an easy time. I know that this will resonate with many, and yet we're so slow to be open about our real feelings.

We are living in a time when we're all impacted from the grief of loss – loss of normality; loss of contacts; loss of freedom; loss of church gathering; loss of security; loss of routine; and for some, loss of loved ones and friends...

It is important that we recognise this and acknowledge that it is not easy.

As I listened to a service recently, I was reminded that as they walked the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), the two followers of Jesus were in a state of bewilderment. They had been in Jerusalem as Christ had been crucified and all their hopes had fallen around them "we had hoped..." Things were not turning out as they expected or wanted.

Jesus came and walked beside them in their confusion and distress, listening as they explained what had been happening, and He walks with us today in all we're experiencing. He listens, and then, just as He spoke to the followers on that road, so He speaks to us. Where we are.

I had such hopes for 2020. Three of our children were to get married, as was the daughter of my best friend, our wider family. I was to have a sabbatical and work with Papyrus, and Flourish in Ireland, to develop resources for churches and ministers of all faiths to support them in mental health wellbeing and suicide prevention and bereavement. And we were to finally travel to Mexico with a group of young adults to learn from the Methodist church over there.

My hopes haven't gone but are somewhat delayed, 2020 is looking so very different from the year we were expecting.

But each morning as I venture out for my walk with Ziva, the dog, I lift my eyes and look around at all that God has created in this area. And it is incredible! I don't need to make an effort to hear the birds now as they are no longer competing with planes and vehicles, their song is loud and uplifting. And as I write this I can look out of the window and see the sun pouring through the fresh green leaves on the trees. So much has been put on hold, but not the natural world. It shouts out the newness of spring and with it the wonder of God. The song 'How great Thou art' comes to mind and I've been known to sing it as I walk through the local woods!

God is good and God is still God!

Then sings my soul...

And so I choose to worship.

I choose to look to God as my Lord and my Saviour.

I believe that God is so much bigger than covid-19.

I believe that He is with each of us as we try to get through each day, wondering what the next one will bring.

I believe that He is with all those who are grieving at this time.

I believe that He is with us in our joys and sorrows.

I believe that He loves us unconditionally and is waiting to hear from us.

I believe that He walks with us and listens to our anxieties and fears.

I believe that He is with us as we try to understand what this situation means.

I believe He knows just how hard we find it to be distanced from our families and friends.

I believe that from all this, God will make something new.

I believe that as we spend time with Him in prayer and worship so He will give us the strength to get through this time and will help us to envisage what the church could look like when Covid-19 is a distant memory.

I choose to worship... can you?

Stay safe

You Matter

Shalom

Helen 28/04/20