

A Message from the Interim Moderator

Uncharted Waters

Dear friends,

These are unprecedented times. I have heard people say, "It's all rather strange." Others have expressed deep anxiety and growing concern with regard to the uncertainty of it all and, in particular the speed with which things are changing minute by minute. On the other hand, I am increasingly hearing people speak about, "Being in it together," as they work creatively to support the most vulnerable in our communities. Challenging times bring out the worst and the best in folks.

These uncharted waters are rough, taking their toll on us all. It looks like there will be no plain sailing for a long time. We are already battening down the hatches and doing everything we can to keep folks as safe as possible but not totally isolated.

My thoughts and prayer are very much with each of you, especially with the bereaved, the sick, the housebound, and those whose working patterns have been severely threatened. No one is exempt from the situation we are enduring and no one is, therefore, exempt from our thoughts and prayers.

The church is concerned for any spiritual or physical needs you may have during this time and is looking at ways in which we can continue to be there for you and share God's word with you through our modern technology. This includes a thought for the day; mini services and live podcasts on many church Facebook pages. For those not using such technology, please, remember that you can enjoy Sunday Services on the Radio and television.

A well-loved old hymn asks: "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?" The answer comes back, "We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll; fastened to the Rock which cannot move; grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!" CH4: 737

As a means of keeping in touch, many local churches have established "telephone trees" which means we can maintain contact by phone. Unfortunately, we do not have all the numbers we need. If you would like us to keep in touch via the phone, please phone the Locum Minister on 872253 with your number and we will make sure it is added to our list of contacts. Members can of course contact others by phone too.

None of us know what the immediate future brings but with God's help and the assistance of everyone in the church family, we can overcome many of the difficulties.

Yours in Christ's name Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher Interim Moderator

Funeral Services Contact: Mr Jim Cowan 07966-489609

Pastoral Care Contact: Rev Sandra Mathers OLM 01324-872253

SUNDAY REFLECTION

Written by Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher – Interim Moderator

CALL to WORSHIP

Jesus is the Rock of my salvation and his banner over me is love.

HYMN: Mission Praise: 183

Love is flowing like a river
Flowing out through you and me
Spreading out into the desert
Setting all the captives free.

Faith is flowing like a river
Flowing out through you and me
Spreading out into the desert
Setting all the captives free

PRAYER

Lord, as I sit in the confinement of my own home or in front of a computer screen, help me to become aware of your presence through the words I read and the thoughts they bring to my mind.

In your company, I need never feel alone, so I now take a moment in silence, to be still for the presence of the Lord.

(Time of Silence)

Lord, all over the land, people need the comfort of your Word, the reassurance of your presence and the joy of knowing that you are with us always.

Thank you, Lord for being a God who never turns away from me – even when I am tempted to turn from you. Thank you for understanding my vulnerability and my concern at this difficult time.

Speak to me, Lord, through the actions of people who care for me and seek to help me in whatever way they can. Give me the grace needed to accept their help and the ability to express my thanks for it.

In this way, Lord, I will learn to receive your blessings graciously and see you in those who are channels of your peace, bearers of your love and heralds of your Word. Amen

SCRIPTURE 1 Kings 17: 1-16 NIV

Elijah and the Time without Rain

Elijah was a prophet. The Lord said to Elijah, "Leave this place and go east. Hide near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. You can get your water from that stream, and I have commanded ravens to bring food to you there." ⁵So Elijah did what the LORD told him to do. Ravens brought Elijah food every morning and every evening, and he drank water from the stream.

There was no rain, so after a while the stream became dry. The LORD said to Elijah, "Go to Zarephath in Sidon and stay there. There is a widow there that I commanded to take care of you."

So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there gathering wood for a fire. Elijah said to her, "Would you bring me a small cup of water to drink?" As she was going to get the water, Elijah said, "Bring me a piece of bread too, please."

The woman answered, "I promise you, before the LORD your God, that I have nothing but a handful of flour in a jar and a little bit of olive oil in a jug. I came here to gather a few pieces of wood for a fire to cook our last meal.

Elijah said to the woman, "Don't worry. Go home and cook your food as you said. But first make a small piece of bread from the flour that you have and bring it to me. Then cook some for yourself and your son. The LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'that jar of flour will never be empty and the jug will always have oil in it. This will continue until the day the LORD sends rain to the land.'

PRAYER

Lord, in these difficult days give me faith that is strong like that of Elijah. Help me to believe that you will guide me through the challenges I am facing and provide me with everything I need.

When I feel that many of the good things I have long taken for granted are drying up, help me to recognise those who are there for me in my time of need.

If, Lord, I have to be like the widow in this story, then take me, Lord, to the people you know I can help. Make me willing to share what I have so that it becomes so much more, Even if I think I have little, let me offer it willingly for the good of all. Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord you taught me to pray further saying, Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

SHORT REFLECTION

When I think that I am the one who is to help others – as rightly I should - it's surprising how often I discover that others are helping me.

Today, having come home with many bouquets to deliver tomorrow to some of our housebound - as a means of letting them know that the church is remembering them- I arrived at the Manse to find a number of gifts expressing other people's care and concern for me. What a kind and caring community I live and work in. Thank you.

What struck me most by these acts of kindness and generosity is the desire for people in our community to show their support and concern for others.

Many similar acts of kindness are happening all across the community – often discreetly and with no praise being sought.

Elijah was longing for a drink of water. The river was drying up because there had been no rain. The widow didn't know how she would make a meal for her son. She had only a handful of flour. They were both in need, yet, willing to help each other. The widow offered the little she had. Elijah upheld his faith in God. In response the woman's jug was filled to overflowing.

We are all in this difficult situation together. By helping each other and by trusting in God's desire to provide for us, we will get through it, one way or another.

I know it will not be easy and I know we probably have worse to face. Of course we will be afraid.

Elijah said to the woman who feared for her life, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said." She went and there was food every day.

In the midst of our fear, let us be hopeful too as we surrender our needs and our concerns into God's hands.

POEM

In response to the many acts of kindness I am seeing in the midst of these unprecedented times, I have written this little poem, which I share with you.

The Ocean of Kindness

Written by Jean W Gallacher © JWG 2020

It takes many drops of water
 To make a river flow
It takes fewer acts of kindness
 To help a community show
 The weight of its resilience
 When trust is running low
 The power of its compassion
When people really need to know
 That we are in it together
 And will weather the storm
 As supporting one another
Becomes the heart-warming new norm
Neighbours, strangers, across the land
 To new rules must conform
Shaping space for the kind-hearted
Good deeds we all need to perform
Through which we all help to create
 The Ocean of Kindness
Where every drop of goodness helps
 It flow humbly in its grandness

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HYMN: CH4: 237

Look forward in faith Andrew J. Scoby (b.1935)

Look forward in faith

All time is in God's hand

Walk humbly with him

And trust his future plan

God has wisely led

His people by his power

Look forward in hope

He gives us each new hour

Look forward in faith

The world is in God's care

His purpose of love

He calls on us to share

In our neighbour's need

The Lord is present still

He blesses the meek!

The earth will know God's will

BLESSING

To Him who is able to do more than we can ever imagine possible,

Be all glory, honour and praise,

And to you, the blessings of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

This day and always

Amen