



## Bulletin 30

Dear Church!

18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Have you ever had that experience where when you learn something new, or appreciate something of the faith more deeply, you see it expressing itself in everything? *“How did I miss that before?”* We find ourselves asking ourselves!

*“Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways; reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find, in deeper reverence, praise.”*

Wrote the American Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier in the opening verse of his hymn, taken from his longer and rather more obscure poem, "The Brewing of Soma".

I'm not one for 'preaching from hymns' but so often the great hymn writers manage to encapsulate deeper truth than we at first grasp in their verses. On reading the Bible and discovering something for ourselves, we later realise they were there way ahead of us and have caught our new learning in a mere two lines of their hymn!

The remaining verses of Whittier's hymn are worthy of listing here for further reflection:

*In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea, the gracious calling of the Lord, let us, like them, without a word, rise up and follow Thee.*

*O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with thee the silence of eternity, Interpreted by love!*

*With that deep hush subduing all, our words and works that drown the tender whisper of thy call, as noiseless let thy blessing fall as fell thy manna down.*

*Drop Thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of thy peace.*

*Breathe through the heats of our desire thy coolness and Thy balm; let sense be dumb, let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire, O still, small voice of calm.*

I'm captivated afresh by the whole countenance of the hymn but in particular, the phrases, *In simple trust; the silence of eternity; our words and works that drown the tender whisper of thy call; let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of thy peace;* and of course the hymn's parting words: *let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire, O still, small voice of calm.*

In our Lent course, and expressed to a degree in this hymn, is the inherent strength and power of our faith which lies in its utter simplicity (*in simple trust*). God has stepped down from heaven (from *the silence of eternity*) into his broken world to lead his people home.

How could the world miss such a momentous thing? I think it must be that it's seemingly such an impossible idea even to contemplate – that an almighty God should exist, let alone offer himself on behalf of those he created – that in the clamouring noise and constant distraction of our world we never stop to listen or fully consider the implications of such a thing (*our words and works that drown the tender whisper of thy call*). If only we would give more time and, most importantly, head-space, to contemplate the simple, proven truth of the work of the cross!

My hope and prayer this coming Easter week is that we will plan our time so that *flesh* may retire; and the Lord may have quality space in our lives to *speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire*, with that *still, small voice of calm*.

In particular I am keen for us to work on two perspectives in living out our faith:

**Realising the beautiful simplicity of what our loving Father has done.**

**Learning to live this earthly, mortal life in the light of our promised eternal life.**

Reading through the book of The Acts of the Apostles I am constantly brought back to the way in which **the early disciples simply told the truth about what they had seen and heard**. *That* was what unleashed the power of the church, *that's* what gave them unlimited potential. *That's* what we need to focus on afresh as a church if we want to witness a similar manifestation of the Lord's almighty power. As Paul wrote to the Roman church (1:16), "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

And closely linked to simple proclamation is the absolute reality of our heavenly inheritance. The surer we are of what Jesus has promised through his resurrection, the surer we will be in living and proclaiming the simple Gospel message. We must close the yawning gap between our earthly mortality and our heavenly immortality. The wider that gap, the less real will be our experience of faith and our urgency in sharing simple Gospel truth. **The narrower the gap, the more we will 'not be able to stop speaking of what we have seen and heard' as was the case with the first believers in Acts 4:20.**

**With regard to the above, please see if you can carve out some time for the Good Friday Three Hours to listen and respond to that still small voice of calm!**

**And perhaps some time to relax over creating an Easter craft that you could make to place in church at Emmanuel for the 11am Easter Saturday display (let us know if it would help if we picked it up from you!).**

**Continued Lenten blessings!!**

**Rev Karl**

(Scroll down to find an advance release of information on our Easter Week Activity planning – more detail, especially on venues open for physical attendance, Zoom Addresses and Facebook details, next weekend!)

## The Coming Easter Week at a Glance!

*To aid you in your advance planning – more detail to follow next weekend!!!*

### Easter Week Together:

Kingzkidz and Pathfinders will be sent their own 'Passport for Holy Week' with activities to do during the week

Easter Crafts can be delivered to church during the Easter week, in time for Saturday morning filming on 'Facebook Live'

**Palm Sunday:** Make your own palm crosses – \* instructions will be posted on Facebook and the website

- 10@10 + zoom for Kingzkidz – making Easter Gardens,
- 10:30am main gathering on 'Facebook Live' (or in church)
- 4:30pm Pathfinders on Zoom

St Paul's – 10am service in church

### **Maundy Thursday:**

7:00pm Celebration of the Passover and the Lord's Supper in our homes but together via 'Zoom', \*instructions for preparations will be posted on Facebook and the website, and will be included in next week's notices

### **Good Friday:**

- 10@10 + zoom for Kingzkidz and Pathfinders; a brief thought from 'The Treeline' with Rev Karl (Easter explained with verses from scripture)
- 11am sharing hot-cross buns and coffee on zoom \*a recipe will be posted on Facebook and Website and will be included in next week's notices
- 12noon - 3 hours at the Cross: reflections from 'The Treeline' prayerfully reflecting on the 40 verses from Old & New Testament with Rev Karl.

St Paul's 10.00am service in church

### **Saturday:**

11am Easter Craft display filmed live on Facebook

### **Easter Sunday:**

- 10@10 + zoom for Kingzkidz – with their Easter gardens
- 10:30am main Celebration remains geared to 'Facebook Live' (Those wishing to attend Emmanuel in person are welcome, please leave a message on parish office 01752 260317 by Maundy Thursday so that we know numbers for safe seating)
- 4:30pm Pathfinders on Zoom

St Paul's – 10am service in church