

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 42**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. I reflect on my experience of leading our initial post lockdown Communion in the Group ten days ago.

This edition also includes a schedule of services so far arranged in the Group for August.

## **Scripture Passage**

*Psalm 126*

<sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup> Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

<sup>4</sup> Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

<sup>5</sup> May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

<sup>6</sup> Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

## Reflection

The Sunday before last, 19<sup>th</sup> July, I had the privilege of leading the Communion service at St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot. This was the first service of public worship in the Group since the suspension of services at the start of lockdown.

So what were my feelings about this service? The first word that comes to mind is 'Authentic'. Yes, there is no getting away from the fact that, for the sake of protecting ourselves and others from the virus, there were a number of changes that needed to be made. So we could not sing hymns (though we had the pleasure of listening on this occasion to our organist Malcolm) and Communion could only be distributed in the form of bread.

And yet as the service went on I stopped being conscious of these changes and started being caught up into worship. For although the lack of singing necessarily made it a quiet service it was nevertheless an occasion of joy.

Joy, first of all, at seeing others face to face at a service of public worship even though at an appropriate distance. Joy at seeing the church used once more for the main purpose for which it was built. And joy also at celebrating Communion, a much needed sign of hope of the Kingdom of God.

And there were gains as well as losses in the new format of the service. Someone commented to me afterwards that the relative quietness of the service meant that it was possible to focus to a greater extent on the words of service and to ponder their significance.

Our reading is Psalm 126. This helped me to develop a wider perspective on and deeper understanding of our current circumstances.

We do not know the exact context in which this psalm was written. Clearly it came at a low ebb in national fortunes in which God was beginning to come to the rescue of His people. Most likely, this relates to the exile of the people of Israel in Babylon and their subsequent return to their own land.

As I thought about this psalm in the light of these events it shed fresh light for me on what has been happening for us over the past few months. Before celebrating Communion at Compton Pauncefoot there had been a gap of four months and four days since I last celebrated Communion in the Camelot Group. This may feel like a long time. And yet we need to remember that it took the best part of 50 years for the first Jewish exiles in Babylon to be able to return to their own country. During all that time they never lost faith that God would once again act to turn their circumstances around.

But when they did come back it was to a scene of devastation. Jerusalem their capital city had been destroyed. But the surrounding towns and cities also lay in ruins while the countryside was no longer prosperous agricultural land but had gone to waste in the past 50 years or so.

And so while the joy of the return is undoubted, 'our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy', there is also a recognition that their position is still very precarious and that much more needs to happen for a full restoration to take place.

So at the same time as rejoicing there is also the need for earnest prayer 'Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.' Then they recognise that what is most needed is to make a start on the daunting task of rebuilding and that this will be hard work. They will 'sow in tears'. And yet as they keep faith with God and take such steps as they can towards a full restoration of their fortunes so they receive the sustaining promise that 'Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.'

We can learn much from this. First of all from their experience of patient and faithful waiting. But then also from their response on returning to their land. This is one both of joy and also of prayerful expectation that there is more to come. And yet the work is not entirely God's to do. They (and we) have their part to play in making a faithful start in the work of restoration. The difficult work of sowing needs to be done so that in time the joy of harvest might come.

*Tristram*

### **Points for Prayers**

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ, for joy in what we see God doing and a prayerful expectation that there is more to come
- Thanksgiving for our initial service in the Group following the easing of lockdown and prayers for the other ones planned in August
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- For small weddings taking place in the benefice on 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

## **Services of public worship in August**

I can now set out the following schedule of services of public worship planned for August. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Any additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

11.00am, Group Communion, St Michael's North Cadbury

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

9.30am, Communion, Galhampton

9.30am, Communion, St John the Baptist North Cheriton

### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August

9.30am, Communion, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot

11.00am, Sunday Worship, St Michael's North Cadbury

11.00am, Communion, St Peter and St Paul, Maperton

### Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August

9.30am, Communion, St Thomas a Becket, South Cadbury

9.30am, Communion, St John the Baptist, North Cheriton

11.00am, Communion, St Michael's North Cadbury

### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August

6.30pm, Evensong, Galhampton

## **Reopening churches for private prayer**

The commencement of a number of services across the Group means that the arrangements for private prayer will now change. The arrangements for August (so far as they are known) are as follows:-

### Sunday Morning Openings

#### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

North Cheriton open from 9.30am to 10.30am

#### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

South Cadbury open from 10.00am to 11.30am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30am to 10.30am.

#### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August

North Cheriton open from 9.30am to 10.30am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30am to 10.30am.

### Midweek Openings

#### Wednesday afternoons, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>

North Cadbury, open from 2.30pm to 4.00pm (please note there is no opening on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August because of a wedding on that day).

#### Galhampton

Midweek opening times for Galhampton are under review.

*Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family*

*We pray that 'we might live in love,  
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)