

PSALMS OF HOPE

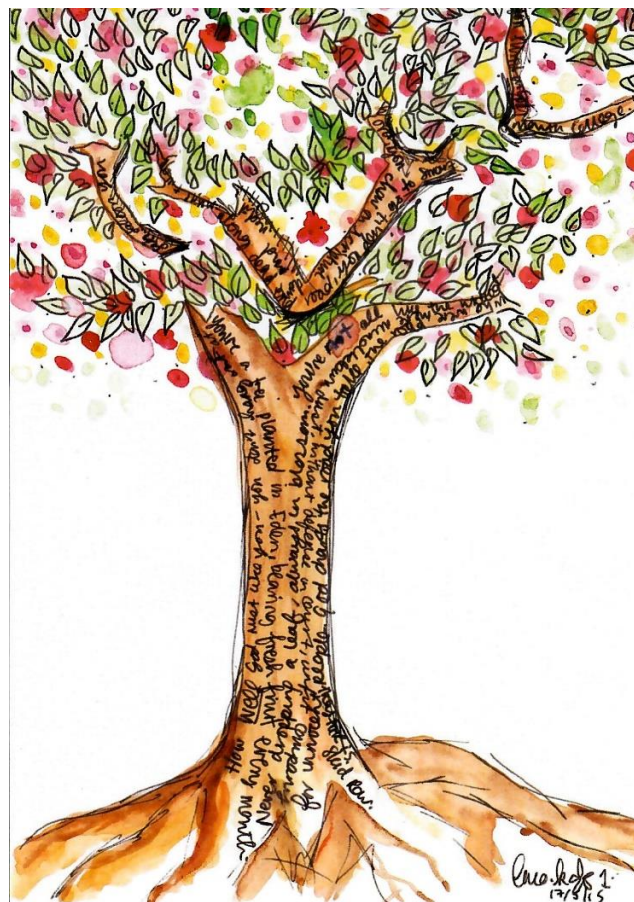
@UnitedChurchFerndown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Wednesday 22nd February
Ash Wednesday

Reflection #1

ROUTED IN CHRIST



Pray:

Lord, let everything I do in this season of Lent come from You, be inspired by You. I long to be closer to You. I long to receive the hope that You offer. Help me to remember that nothing is more important than You in my life Help me to rely on You for help. I want to walk in your footsteps, Jesus. I confess that I have often felt I knew better and ignored Your presence. Heal me, Lord, and help me to find You in the darkness of my life. Let me reach out and feel your hand and love there to guide me. Speak to me in this moment, Lord God. **Amen.**

Introduction:

Baptists don't have a tradition of Pilgrimage. Walking from home to a special place focussing on our spiritual journey at the same time as being on a physical journey! I have done this in the past! I walked to Glastonbury and at the end thousands of us took communion together. It was extraordinary! Praying, thinking, and laughing whilst walking, not just for an hour each week but constantly over a number of days was a spiritual highlight over my personal walk with God. Lent is about a journey with Jesus towards the cross. Today is Ash Wednesday when tradition states that we remember that we are sinners, we are people that have not always done what God would have liked, and we start our journey of renewal in Christ ending in the triumph of the resurrection of Jesus. Our first Psalm is the first Psalm and it talks of walking in the right way...



Read:

Psalm 1 (NIV)

¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers.
⁴ Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

Consider:

This year has been hard, and I have wondered what God is up to in all of this but I persevered because I knew that this was God's call, God's path for my life. There are things I discovered in the darkness that I could never have discovered in the light. The Psalmist tells us to delight ourselves in the law of Lord and to meditate on it day and night. We delight in God's way because He is wise and knows stuff we don't know, and He is worth it. He is worthy of sacrificing for, suffering for, struggling for. He is the God of the cross; He is the tender-hearted Father of kindness; He is the merciful Counsellor who is ever present with us. He wants our best and we can trust Him so we delight in his ways even if and when we don't understand them. We take joy and delight in the following because of Who we follow not because of where we tread on the way. We meditate on his law - we chew on it, ponder it, consider it.

You discover that persisting in the long, hard way has allowed you to grow deep roots; the deep roots were essential to withstand the high winds of the storms of life and the parched arid spaces of the dry seasons of life. The deep roots were crucial to draw all of the necessary nutrients of life from the soil of God's goodness. The deep roots were vital for your long-term prosperity. But the deep roots couldn't have been formed without following God's way, without the struggle, without the perseverance. And the tree without deep roots doesn't thrive, doesn't survive. The tree can't get deep roots without God's way. The massive tree with deep roots has prospered many years by the stream, but it started as a sapling that had to endure through all sorts of weather. Such is God's way - those who walk in it are wise.

Pray:

Pray that as you start this Lenten journey you will delight in God's word and therefore be nourished by the Living Water. Ultimately pray that this walk will help you thrive.

Try it out:

If reading the bible everyday is new to you, commit yourself to this adventure. If you're new to this idea or been doing this for a while why not get a notebook or a journal and write down anything God has to say to you through His word or these writing or directly through His spirit.