

PSALMS OF HOPE

@UnitedChurchFerdown

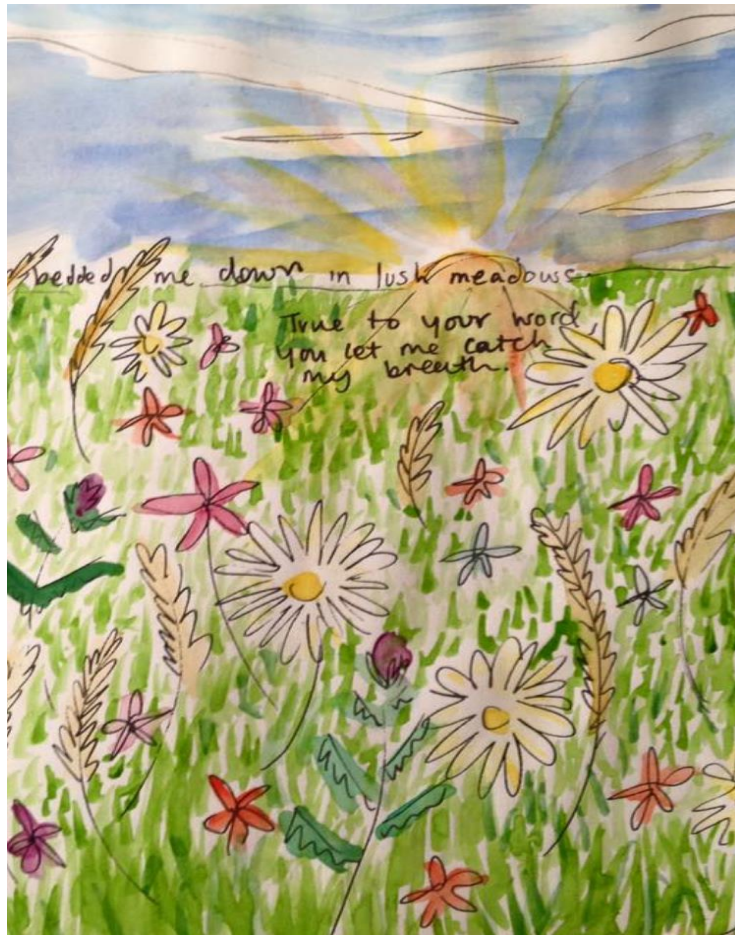


United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Tuesday 7th March

Reflection #14

OUT OF THE DARKNESS



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:

At the end of my street where I did most of my growing up was a train station. It's called a train station but is just two really long platforms of stone with a bench, a notice board and some shelter on the up line. Once upon a time my bit of Bristol had four stations, a turntable and loads of sidings. It did well to survive Beeching and two further cost-cutting exercises but now it's just two unmanned slabs of stone.

We were coming home one day on an old diesel train where you closed the doors yourself and we were getting off the train at our station after a day in town. I jumped off and then suddenly there was screaming behind me. I turned to see my Mum screaming and my Dad had turned a funny red and purple colour. A friend who was with us was shouting 'No!' over and over again while hanging off the emergency brake cord. I walked forward to see what was wrong as people started to reach down under the train ... My brother had not minded the gap! He had fallen down between the train and the platform and I saw an image that is forever in my head. My little brother was there crying on the rail next to the massive train wheel. It was the darkness and the screaming that told me there was a threat of death in that moment. Then suddenly there was light – a bright light that hit my brother. The guard had turned up, he shone his light, he took control, got down under the train and lifted the young boy out of the darkness! We had cake and ice cream for tea that night!



Read: Psalm 23 (NIV)

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
³ he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever

Consider:

Our Good Shepherd is there to guide us through the valley of darkness. That term is used to describe the times of trials and suffering that come into our lives. At present we know people who are going through such a valley, experiencing the pain and sorrow too.

Don't be confused about where this ends. We should face the valley of darkness bravely as we will find the guard, our shepherd, our Jesus in there.

Pray:

Pray against all of the darkness in the world today – in your family, among your friends, in our community and throughout the world.

Try it out:

Light a candle today asking God for someone who is facing darkness. As you look at the light pray that they might find THE light in their darkness.