

PSALMS
OF HOPE

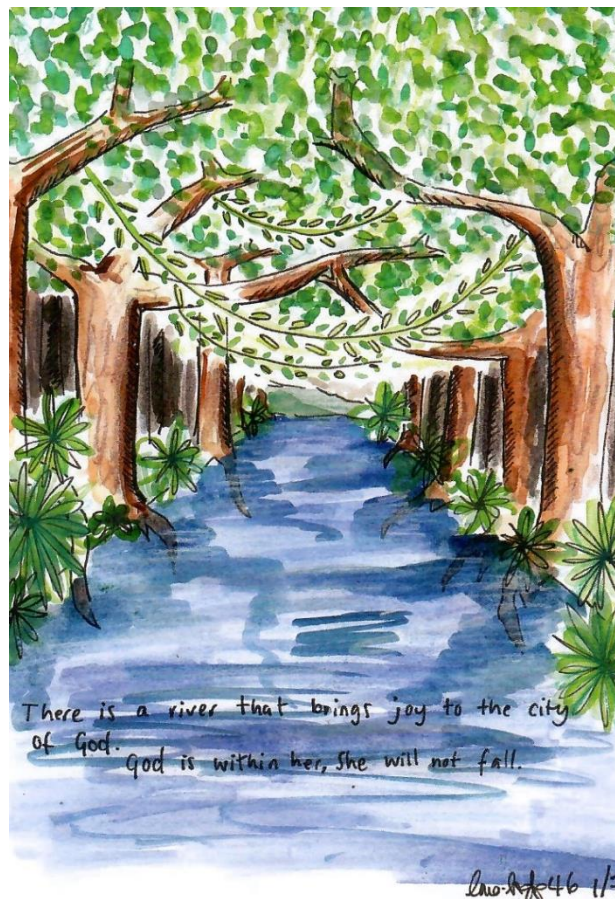
@UnitedChurchFerdown

United Church Ferndown's 2023 Lent Programme

Friday 17th March

Reflection #24

THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR FORTRESS



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:

Most of us get that the COVID years were bad. Who would have thought that it would have become 'the norm' to be walking around wearing face masks and keeping our distance from other people ... and so many people taken ill and some, sadly, dying. Some who were extremely vulnerable, shielded for so long. It hasn't been easy – they missed not being able to see friends and family ... to be hugged and to hug ... Maybe the COVID years were not your worst time. Maybe you have a battle with another health issue or maybe you were caught in relationship breakdown or a financial storm. I have found that it is in the storm when I become most aware of the Lord's presence and purpose in my life.

**Read:****Psalm 46 (NIV)**

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.'

¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Consider:

As we go through this time of Lent, leading up to remembering the great sacrifice that Christ made on the cross so that we could have forgiveness and peace with God, let's remember that he is our refuge and strength ... therefore we will not fear. He says: 'Be still, and know that I am God.' We can be confident that, despite the circumstances that we find ourselves in, our God is our 'ever-present help in trouble'. Let's take time to be still and let's avail ourselves of the strength that he gives us.

Pray:

Thank you, Lord, that you are our refuge and strength whatever we go through. Help us to fully put our trust in you.

Try it out:

Let's take time each day to be still and reflect on God's goodness in our lives, however hard the circumstances are. I recommend starting each day with a time of reading, prayer and reflection.

