



News from Abridge Village Church

Although sadly we've not been able to meet together in the church since Christmas, the church has nevertheless been used, not only for prayer but also as a film studio! We have been recording services on the premises in partnership with St. Mary's Lambourne, and we've been able to make these available on YouTube, alongside our church-at-home paper resource for those not online. This lockdown has been particularly hard especially during the winter months, but it is encouraging that it has also enabled the church to explore new ways of communicating the story of Jesus by making use of the technology of the 21st-century. And by including videos from outside contributors, who have recorded a message from their homes, we have still enjoyed having visiting speakers, albeit virtually!

This month a member of our congregation, Sheila Bell, has written the following piece as an encouragement during these lockdown months. She has also included one of her poems, which we hope you'll find a blessing. Sheila writes:

I expect like most people you have felt life very hard this past year of the pandemic, when everyday routines have been far from normal. Life has been topsy-turvy and very different to what we have been used to. When days are dark and life is uncertain, we look forward to the light at the end of the tunnel, where our spirits can be lifted and there comes a ray of hope to lead us into the future. I wonder what you hope for, for the future? Is it to go back to the norm or to look forward to new things?

The Bible tells us, 'If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come'. (2 Corinthians 5:17). God is a God of new beginnings. Although God remains the same yesterday today and forever and God's word remains faithful and true, he alone can change hearts and lives when we turn to God and receive the free gift of grace. The amazing love and grace displayed by Jesus on the cross for us and his resurrection at Easter is a gift waiting for us whenever we reach out to receive it.

Standing somewhere in the shadows

*I was standing in the shadows where everything looked grey.
There was no ray of cheerfulness to brighten up my day.
Then all at once across my path, there came a ray of light.
I then felt so uplifted, for my pathway now was bright.
I heard somebody speak to me, but no one was around.
I knew that it was Jesus, as I stood on hallowed ground.
He said, 'I've come to lead the way, I am this dark world's light
And all who follow me, shall never walk in darkest night,
But shall have the light of life'. What a message to proclaim!
I had to stand in awe of him, and praise his holy name.
Whatever you are going through, Jesus knows and cares.
He wants to make your pathway bright, to hear your needy prayers.
Standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find he understands,
And you will recognise him by the nail prints in his hands.*

Sheila M Bell

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