

## Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Let there be light!

Good is stronger than evil;  
love is stronger than hate;  
light is stronger than  
darkness; life is stronger  
than death. Victory is ours,  
through him who loves us.

Desmond Tutu

[www.ETORAMTVC.COM](http://www.ETORAMTVC.COM)

### Reflection from Revd. Becky.

In Genesis, God speaks an amazing world into being... teaming with life and God's goodness is at its heart. God simply speaks and there is

light. Psalm 33 puts it so poetically 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made their starry host by the breath of his mouth.' This voice is not a one off speech; in Hebrew thought God's voice is an invisible pulse which ceaselessly imparts vitality into all existence. We hold onto the hope-filled metaphor that God continually speaks to create and recreate.

In Hebrew stories the might and power of God are shown, but also the tenderness by which God watches the doe and her fawn, the young in the wilds (Job 39). There are hints that God plays with and enjoys creation. (Trevor Dennis) God shows himself in all things. Grace and nature are linked.

The first 'thing' to be created is Light. Light. The life force of the world. The main building block for life. Humans need it to grow our food, maintain our body clocks, to perceive the world. Trees need it for photosynthesis. Even birds need so many hours of light to kick start their hormones to breed. Kestrels use ultra violet light to find their prey. Voles need it to see their own runway markings at night. Underwater creatures use it to attract or to spot prey.

Light symbolises God's presence; God's guidance illuminating the way; God's all seeing- for nothing and no one can hide from God. Jesus declares that he is the light of the world. And as Christians, we are called to be children of light. St Paul's letters tell us that God's light shines in our hearts. ( 2 Corinthians 4).

So what has this to do with the climate? We know that a colossal amount of electricity is used to produce light. The presence or absence of electricity has an effect on the quality of people's lives. Kerosine lamps cause poisoning, burning coal and charcoal cause major burns among families in the developing world. Hydro-electric power and solar power bring these communities transformation. Villages in Nepal can now use lights for their children to study and complete homework, hospitals now have lighting for further treatments. Villages in Senegal can now connect to the world through their mobile phones. Affordable clean energy is just one of the 7 sustainable development goals of the United Nations in order to enable people to move out of poverty. More than 920 million people have gained access to electricity since 2010. There are still approximately 840 people without it, mainly in sub Saharan Africa.

And we in the West need to invest in renewable energy. If we continue to invest in carbon based fuels and do not reduce our emissions by 45 % in the next ten years over 100 million people will be pushed back into poverty.

### Genesis 1 v 1-5

**1** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

### John 1 v 1-5

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

**Extra reading: Colossians 1 v 15-20**

The CEO for the World Wildlife fund put it this way- 'Maybe God is puzzled why after all we know about climate change we haven't taken the hint to use more easily accessible and safe sources of energy rather than inaccessible dangerous ones!'

And so I return to speech... God's speech and actions are never discrete- Jesus was always walking the talk! Thabo Macgoba, Archbishop of Southern Africa says this- *words, words, words will not reverse the environmental degradation of carbon emissions, but our actions together can. Change begins with us!*

So as Christians, let's learn, speak and act. We *can* change our domestic energy supplier to one that uses renewable energy, we *can* eat less dairy and meat, we *can* invest in electric cars or use public transport, we *can* reduce the amount of energy we consume. We *can* lobby our MP. We *can* plant trees.

Doing something about climate change is about living out our faith. Take responsibility for the planet which is a gift to us. Love our neighbour as ourselves. Step into the light of knowledge and love that God has given us, and open our eyes to the dark places in our own lives and in the world.

*Blessed be you the light of life, source of the sacred flame within each of us, light which the darkness cannot put out, I rise up with you this day. I rest with you this night. (Tess Ward.)*

- How seriously do you take your responsibility to be a custodian of God's creation and, in the process, our world's survival?
- Where does light feature in your own life. Can you share any experiences that have given you a new appreciation of light?

Reflection is based on a summary of 'Saying Yes to Life' Chapter 1. by Ruth Valerio. Revd Becky

#### Hymn Reflection from Malcolm Sturgess

This week's hymn is one of those which is almost too popular for its own good. We more or less know it off by heart, so may not always think too much what the excellent words are actually saying. It is certainly a suitable hymn for all sorts of seasons. It goes well with the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, so is suitable for Advent and Christmas, and any other time we have that reading. It is good for the "Creation Season" (i.e. now) and ideal for Trinity, in that it has a "God" verse, a "Jesus" verse, a "Holy Ghost" verse and a Trinity verse. Please re-read the words before they are sung on Sunday, and relish just how good they are: the "glorious ray" of the Gospel; "sight to the inly-blind"; the lamp of grace shining in earth's darkest place. The old 1926 *Songs of Praise* also said it was suitable for Missions, when we felt ourselves to be enlightened and earth's darkest places were in Africa, etc..

The tune we sing it to is called *Moscow*, but why, I'm afraid I have no idea. It was a tune commissioned from an Italian called F. Giardini (1716 - 1796), who was a virtuoso violinist, but it was commissioned for a different hymn, and was then called *Italian Hymn*. James Marriott, who wrote the words of our hymn, was only 16 in 1796, so unlikely to need a hymn tune. In fact he wrote the words specifically to go with our National Anthem tune. The tune is sometimes, appropriately, called *Trinity*, and the Seventh Day Adventists have used it. But not Mr Marriott. Some choirmasters, including myself, like to pay tribute to James Marriott's intentions by singing the last verse to the National Anthem tune. It gives a good emphasis to The Trinity to change tunes. Being in the same key, same rhythm, and same style, it is easy to carry across from verse 3 to verse 4 seamlessly.

Thou whose almighty Word  
Chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight;  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel-day  
Sheds not its glorious ray,  
Let there be light!

Thou who didst come to bring  
On thy redeeming wing  
Healing and sight,  
Health to the sick in mind,  
Sight to the inly-blind,  
Ah! now to all mankind  
Let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,  
Life-giving, holy Dove,  
Speed forth thy flight!  
Move on the waters' face,  
Bearing the lamp of grace,  
And in earth's darkest place  
Let there be light!

Blessèd and holy Three,  
Glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, love, might;  
Boundless as ocean tide  
Rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world far and wide  
Let there be light!