

The power of belief

Heather Smith *reflects on* Genesis 15:1-12. 17-18

Abram had not exactly covered himself with glory since God set him on his path to the land that God planned to give him. After arriving in Canaan with his nephew Lot, a famine sent him to Egypt in search of food and, afraid for his own safety, he said that his wife Sarai was his sister but neglected to mention that she was also his wife. Poor Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house, but when God sent plagues Pharaoh realised something was not quite right. On the other hand, Abram bravely rescued Lot when he had been captured by enemies and stuck scrupulously to a promise not to take any goods from the King of Sodom. In today's reading, God makes a covenant with Abram. Recognising that Abram is, like all of us, neither all good nor all bad, God gives Abram the chance to believe, and when he does, it tips the balance.

It seems odd that just believing counted as being righteous, no matter what Abram had done in the past, or would do in the future. But believing God is the key to right behaviour. Abram did not always get it right even after this hugely significant commitment of God's, and neither do we. But believing works deep inside us, working its change, slowly but surely making us the people that God planned. 😊



God, whose grace is eternal, plant within us a deep seed of belief that sustains and changes us as we journey with you. Amen.

The ordination of women Part 2 – “not in the Bible”

by Heather Cooke

Ten years ago, something controversial happened, over twenty years after the foundations had been laid. So divisive was the consecration of Libby Lane as the first woman bishop in the Church of England, that a protester interrupted the service in York Minster, shouting “Not in the Bible!” One of the first women priests consecrated in 1994, she became suffragan Bishop of Stockport at that service in 2015, then diocesan Bishop of Derby four years later.

The subject of women priests and bishops has always been controversial, and even today a

minority of Anglicans share the views of that lone protester.

It's true that no women bishops are mentioned in the Bible. Indeed, the only possible reference to bishops at all is in 1 Timothy 3:2, depending how it's translated. Yet in just over thirty years of women priests, ten for women bishops, these servants of Christ and their communities have surely proved their worth.

Heather was ordained deacon in 1999 and priest in 2000, both at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Suffolk. She is now “retired” but takes one service a month, in between attending heavy-metal gigs. 😊

World Poetry Day

by Caroline Hodgson

In recent issues of *Sunday Link* we've been hearing about “Poetry and Faith”. So it's timely that this coming Friday is World Poetry Day (www.unesco.org/en/days/poetry). The website for this UNESCO initiative makes a bold assertion: “In every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.”

With that in mind, during the coming weeks of Lent why not set aside some time to read or write poetry? You might decide to write a poetic reflection after prayer, or when you've read the Gospel reading set for that day. Or you could take a subject such as “faith”, “Jesus”, or “peace”. Start with a blank page, set a timer for five minutes (you'll be surprised how long that seems!) and write continuously, without thinking too much about it. You can always tear it up or shred it afterwards, but you might be surprised at the results. 😊

“During Lent, let us find concrete ways to overcome our indifference.”

Pope Francis

Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 16th March

Good morning and welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led by Mrs Diana Middleditch. The stewards today are Tina Wise and Christine Lydford. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 23 rd March	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Peter Ellis
Sunday 30 th March	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Sunday 6 th April	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Reverend Dr Gareth Higgs
Sunday 13 th April	10.45 am	Palm Sunday: Morning Worship led by Mr Brian Skelley
Friday 18 th April	10.45 am	Good Friday: Service led by Reverend Dr Mark Kimber followed by refreshments in hall
Sunday 20 th April	10.45 am	Easter Sunday: Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Sunday 27 th April	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Keith Beckingham
Sunday 4 th May	10.45 am	Church Anniversary service led by Reverend Pauline Crispin, followed by lunch in the hall
Sunday 11 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Deacon Glenda Sidding
Sunday 18 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Dr Mark Kimber
Sunday 25 th May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Barrie Knight

Colehill Methodist: Every Monday, 11.00 am to 12.00 noon(ish), Bible Study, coffee, prayers and plenty of chat. All welcome.

Bible in a year: 16th – 22nd March: Deuteronomy 28 – Joshua 12 and Mark 14:54 – Luke 1:56

Meet Reverend Dr Mark Kimber: Most Fridays Mark will be available in the Okeford Room from 10.00 am to 11.00 am for anyone who wishes to have a chat with him. However, on the third Friday of each month there will be a session entitled '**Meeting with Mark**' to which you are cordially invited.

Lent Bible Studies: These will be hosted by Colehill Methodist, lasting for the four Mondays in March.

Lent Lunches: An early reminder of this year's six Lent lunches which will be held as usual on Tuesdays in Lent beginning March 11th through to 15th April. The first one will be at Wimborne Methodist.

Wimborne Methodist – 'I am Mark': Friday 21st March at 7.00 pm. This is a dramatic retelling of St Mark's Gospel performed by Stefan Smart which has received really positive reviews across the country and been performed at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Woodlands Methodist: Worship for You service, 13th April, 6.00 pm, led by Reverend Andrew Pottage.

Woodlands Methodist: Friday 26th April, 7.30 pm, 'Call My Bluff'. Can you guess what is the correct usage of each vintage tool? Further details on poster in hall.

Wimborne Methodist: The concert by Viva Voca at Wimborne on Saturday 8th March was very well received and raised £618.35.

Blandford Foodbank is urgently in need of (updated 26.2.25) – Coffee, Jam/Marmalade, Tinned meat, Toilet roll, Washing up liquid, Tinned curry, Tinned hot dogs, Squash, Cereal, Biscuits, Female deodorant. Any other donations of food or household goods are also welcomed. For those able to support the Foodbank with items, a box has been placed in the Narthex as a collection point.

John Cornish

Prayer: Please can we remember to uphold in prayer those members of our congregation we know are ill or suffering in some way.

If you know of anyone who would like prayer and be mentioned by name in The Link, please let me know (having obtained their permission first to mention them by name).

Minister: Reverend Dr Mark Kimber
Enquiries via Lead Steward, John Cornish, on 07799 516 735

Pastoral Support: Joyce Wild: Tel: 01258 454091