United Benefice
of Rostherne with Bollington
St John High Legh & St Paul Over Tabley

Parish Magazine
November 2020

Vicar:
The Revd Philip Robinson - 01565 830595
The Vicarage, Rostherne Lane, Rostherne Village,
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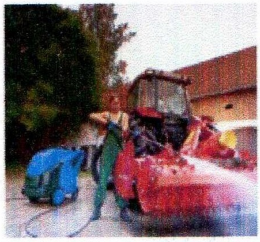

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Table of Sunday and Daily Readings for November 2020

November	W/c 01 Nov	W/c 08 Nov	W/c 15 Nov	W/c 22 Nov
Sunday	All Saints' Day Psalm 34: 1- 10 1 John 3: 1-3 Matthew 5: 1-12	Remembrance Sunday Psalm 70 1 Thess. 4: 13 - end Matthew 25: 1 - 13	2nd Before Advent Psalm 90: 1 - 12 1 Thess. 5: 1-11 Matthew 25: 14-30	Christ The King Psalm 95: 1 - 7 Ephesians 1: 15 – end Matthew 25: 31 - end
Monday	All Souls' Day Psalm 2 Daniel Chapter 1 Revelation Chapter 1	Psalm 20 Daniel 4: 19 -end Revelation Chapter 5	Psalm 47 Daniel 8: 1-14 Revelation Chapter 10	Psalm 96 Isaiah 40: 1 - 11 Revelation 14: 1 - 13
Tuesday	Psalm 5 Daniel 2: 1-24 Revelation 2: 1-11	Psalm 21 Daniel 5: 1 - 12 Revelation Chapter 6	Psalm 52 Daniel 8: 15 - end Revelation 11: 1 - 14	Psalm 97 Isaiah 40: 12 - 26 Revelation 14:14–15:end
Wednes-day	Psalm 9 Daniel 2: 25 -end Revelation 2: 12-end	Psalm 23 Daniel 5: 13 - end Revelation 7:1-4,9- end	Psalm 56 Daniel 9: 1 - 19 Revelation 11: 15 - end	Psalm 112 Isaiah 40: 27 – 41:7 Revelation 16: 1 - 11
Thursday	Psalm 15 Daniel 3: 1 -18 Revelation 3: 1 -13	Psalm 26 Daniel Chapter 6 Revelation Chapter 8	Psalm 62 Daniel 9: 20 -end Revelation Chapter 12	Psalm 125 Isaiah 41: 8 - 20 Revelation 16: 12 - end
Friday	Psalm 16 Daniel 3: 19- end Revelation 3: 14 -end	Psalm 32 Daniel 7: 1 - 14 Revelation 9: 1 - 12	Psalm 63 Daniel 10: 1 – 11: 1 Revelation 13: 1 - 10	Psalm 139 Isaiah 41: 21 – 42: 9 Revelation Chapter 17
Saturday	Psalm 18: 31 - end Daniel 4: 1 -18 Revelation Chapter 4	Psalm 33 Daniel 7: 15 - end Revelation 9: 13 - end	Psalm 78: 1 - 39 Daniel Chapter 12 Revelation 13: 11 - end	Psalm 145 Isaiah 42: 10 - 17 Revelation Chapter 18

CONTACTS

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St Mary, Rostherne

Wardens	Mr C Tetlow	0161 928 2137
	Mr E Wakefield	01565 830127
Organist	Mr A Bailey	01606 834330
Tower Captain	Mr C Teltlow	0161 928 2137

Holy Trinity, Little Bollington

Wardens	Mr F M Cookson	01925 753506
	Mrs H Girardier	01925 754717
PCC Treasurer	Mr C Tetlow	0161 928 2137
PCC Secretary/Deanery Rep/Electoral Roll Officer	Mr R Lambert	07584 241969
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Parish Magazine Email Address - **parishmagrwlb@gmail.com**

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angela@frankshome.co.uk

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Website: www.stpaulsovertabley.co.uk

Other Useful Contact Numbers

Little Bollington CE Controlled Primary School

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High Legh Primary School

Headteacher	Mrs Louise Tottle	01925 753713

Parish Councils

Agden - Clerk	Alex Lenihan	07775 766176
High Legh - Clerk	Mrs Doreen Walker	01925 754818
Little Bollington - Clerk	Mr M Reed	07766 083765
Mere - Clerk	Miss K Whitlow	
Millington Clerk	Ms Sharon Booth	07388 917 569
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	Ms Kate Parkinson (H.L.)	07565158 989
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Children's Adventure Farm Trust	Ms Helen Crowther	01565 830447
Egerton Hall Bookings	Jo Fenton	07584 854 822
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Natural England (Nature Reserve)	Mr Rupert Randall	07880 743804
Rostherne Art Group	Mrs Joan Gate	01565 830134
Tabley House Nursing Home		01565 650888
Tatton Estate Office	Fisher German	01565 757970
W.I. High Legh	Mrs Jean Evans	01925 755979
W.I. Little Bollington	Mrs P Winward	01565 830467

December Magazine

We would love to hear from any reader with contributions of interest.

Please send any items to your usual Editor (see opposite) or to parishmagrwlb@gmail.com by the end of the day on

Friday 13th November 2020.

We will continue to have the pdf version of the magazine for the time being. As things are at the moment we cannot ask our volunteers to deliver magazines. You can ask for one to be sent to you or pick one up from Abbey Leys Farm Shop, Fenton's Farm Foods or the BP Filling

2020 Clergy Letter From Revd Trish

"Time and tide waits for no man" – so the saying goes. It means that whatever else is happening, individually or globally, the seasons of the earth and the tides of the oceans will come and go with predictability and regularity. In uncertain times they are "certain".

The proverb tells us that whatever our lives bring – and this year has definitely brought some very different experiences that were totally unexpected – the seasons and the tides continue to turn as usual; and day has followed night as it always does. In fact, nature seems to have experienced something of a bonus due to the reduction in much of what we do to disturb it especially travel, manufacturing and leisure. Moreover, many of us have had the bonus of spare time to enjoy its increase.

We are now entering winter – a time of long dark days, of wet and windy weather and bleak landscapes. The turning of the seasons, that wait for no man, has brought us to the threshold of the season that many find gloomy and dismal. This year with a significant decrease in our freedom to socialise many may feel that it is rather like entering a long dark tunnel – and we can't see even a pinpoint of light at the end of it.

We may not like the turning of the seasons when it brings winter or tides that are ebbing out leaving desolate sands or the light dwindling and darkness falling. But remember that seasons and tides bring change not an ending. The onset of winter with its hibernation and dormancy for animals and plants prepares the way for new life springing forth in a few months. Likewise, without an ebbing tide on our shore, there can be no incoming tide filled with rich life on another further shore. As the evening light fades from our land, it appears as the dawn on another continent.

Within the ebb and flow of tides, the altering seasons and the richness of life we discover that nothing is lost, only changed. As the tide ebbs on one shore, it flows in on another. As one area decreases another increases but the sea is not diminished.

The skies experience the change from darkness to daylight. The revolving earth experiences the transformation of the seasons. The oceans experience the ebb and flow of tides. And we too experience the flow and fluctuations of life bringing change which is often welcome but occasionally adverse – both are part of a rich life. Within each day we have the ebb and flow of emotions, energy and events. Within each year there is an ebb and flow as life progresses. Within each life as one new stage begins another dies – as one dies another begins.

The moon will continue to wax and wane, the tide to ebb and flow, the seasons to change inexorably. If at times, all about us seems uncertain and changing let us place our confidence in the God who is unfaltering in his love for each one of us. Whilst we live amongst the uncertainties of the restrictions of the response to Covid 19, let us hold on to the inevitability that beyond the darkness we will find light. The seasons of the church year mean that at the end of November will be the start of Advent which begins in darkness but moves inexorably towards the light of Christmas when we celebrate the birth of the Light of the World.

"His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it." John 1:5 The Living Bible translation.

Words from David Adam:

Whatever the tide, the Lord at my side;
In storm or in calm, to keep me from harm;
In good or in ill, he is with me still.

© David Adam 1989; Tides and Seasons

The Good Samaritans Are Still With us in 2020

I have always enjoyed my Sunday morning walk to Church - it was a fine day. and in a euphoric moment. I decided that I would try a longer walk! after all I had my sturdy walking trolley to hold on to, and a very good friend gave me a lift to the Garden Centre, from where I would then walk home. "Is that a good idea?" I was cautioned, but full of spirit and (I told myself) God's blessing for making extra effort, I enjoyed pottering round the Centre, and managed to track down the exact item I was looking for, it being my granddaughter's birthday the following week. I knew Alexandra, who is at Liverpool University, had admired my Lap Tray and felt it could be very useful, both for eating meals and holding her Laptop as she worked. Feeling pleased with locating the gift, I set off to walk home, little realising what a journey I had set myself!!

The pavement, for obvious reasons of drainage, had a camber towards the edge on the roadside, and very soon I realised that I had set myself a bigger task than I was obviously not quite ready for - keeping my walker on a sloping pavement was far more difficult than I had imagined!!

I was suddenly hailed by two Motor cyclists who had seen me struggling to keep on the pavement and had parked their Bikes and came to offer me help, which I very gladly accepted. They carried my bag so that I could sit on the trolley. It was a very welcome rest!!! Amazingly, lower down the road, a Motorist and, his wife, had seen the cyclists helping me, and stopped to offer me (and my walker!) a lift to my door. I was SO very thankful to both sets of Good Samaritans and thought - the Bible Stories we hear often from childhood are still very relevant in today's hectic world. I thanked them all fervently and knew that I had been helped by Our Lord working in a modern-day Samaritan situation. Thank you.

Naureen Wassell 6th October 2020.

Remembering Services by Invitation
16.00 on Sunday 1st November

We will be holding two Remembering Services - at **Holy Trinity Little Bollington** and at **St John High Legh**.

These services are a chance to remember those we have loved and who are no longer here.
An invitation will be sent to those known to us who are recently bereaved. Anyone else wishing to attend one of the services should let us know their names and contact details as numbers will be limited because of the need to maintain social distancing.

However, people can join us in different ways:

- During the week before you might like to come to the church garden at St John's and place a stone on our cross of remembering and spend a moment of quiet there.
- You may prefer to watch our online Service of Remembering and wish to have a candle to light at home and a prayer card to use at the same time as the service will be held – we can supply these if you let us know.
- You may wish your loved ones to be named during the service; if so please let us know their name beforehand.

To participate or for further information please contact:

For St John's: Rev'd Trish: 01925 754787; 07703 470101;
trishcope2012@btinternet.com

For Holy Trinity: Rev'd Patricia: 01565 830 595; 07854 418 488;
pmrobinson51@gmail.com

Coffee and Chat

We meet virtually via Zoom at 11.00 every Wednesday.

The link for November is:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83275839861?
pwd=NlpjampXNXVpT1REaGlUS0NobWRxdz09

If you require the ID and Passcode please let Patricia know.

Remembrance Sunday Services –

Sunday 8 November 2020

There will be a **Remembrance Service** in all four Churches as usual.

However, **you** will **need** to **reserve your place** whichever Church you attend.

This is essential to comply with current Covid 19 guidance and regulations

The service times and booking details are as follows:-

St John High Legh at 10.00
Please contact: Rev'd Trish Cope on 01925 754787; 07703 470101 or trishcope2012@btinternet.com

St Mary Rostherne at 10.30
Please contact: Rev'd Patricia: 01565 830 595; 07854 418488; pmrobinson51@gmail.com

St Paul Over Tabley at 10.30
Please contact Rev'd Patricia as above.

Holy Trinity Little Bollington at 10.45
Please contact Rev'd Patricia as above.

There will also be an online Remembrance Service that day.

Prayer for the Month

We praise and thank you, Holy Spirit of God, for the men and women you have called to be saints; from your first fallible, frightened friends who followed you to Jerusalem, through the centuries of discovery and growth, people of every class and temperament down to the present day. Help us to be Christ's body to heal and reconcile; help us to share Christ's life with everyone. Amen.

From *A New Zealand Prayer Book*

Services During November

Please note: The wearing of a face covering is mandatory.
All services are subject to current Covid-19 rules.

Some services from St Mary Rostherne will be live streamed.

Sunday 1st November: All Saints' Day
10.00 Holy Communion at St John High Legh
10.30 Holy Communion at St Mary Rostherne
16.00 Remembering Service at Holy Trinity Little Bollington**
16.00 Remembering Service at St John High Legh **
** Please note these services are by invitation and pre-booking see page 14.

Sunday 8th November: Remembrance Sunday (Booking Essential)
10.00 Remembrance Day Holy Communion
10.30 Service of Remembrance at St Mary Rostherne
10.35 Service of Remembrance at St Paul Over Tabley
10.45 Service of Remembrance at Hoy Trinity Little Bollington

Sunday 15 November: 2nd Sunday Before Advent
10.00 Holy Communion at St John High Legh
10.30 Holy Communion at St Mary Rostherne

Sunday 22 November: Christ The King
10.00 Holy Communion St John High Legh
11.00 Holy Communion Holy Trinity Little Bollington

Sunday 29 November: 1st Sunday of Advent
10.00: Holy Communion St John High Legh
10.30 Holy Communion St Mary Rostherne
16.00 Christingle Service at St Mary Rostherne **(Booking Essential - see opposite.)**

Wednesday Mornings
09.00 Celtic Morning Prayer at St John High Legh

We stream a service each Sunday which is often recorded at St Paul's.

It is important that no one feels they must come to services if they are reluctant to.

The Weekly News and Prayer Update

This is sent out each Saturday by Mail Chimp. You just need to let Patricia (pmrobinson51@gmail.com) have your email address and it will be sent to you each week. It includes the link for the Service, a copy of the hymns, the reflection and readings, prayer ideas, notices with links to online meetings.

Christingle Service 16.00 on 29th November 2020
at St Mary Rostherne

Option 1: Attend in person. Please reserve your place as soon as possible as numbers are limited as we must comply with current Covid 19 guidance and regulations.

Option 2: An online Christingle Service will be available for those who prefer not to attend in person and we will supply the kit(s) you need to make up your own Christingles for this.

Please book as soon as possible for either option as we will need to distribute collecting candles/envelopes as well as the Christingle kits for those joining the online service.

Contact: Rev'd Patricia: 01565 830 595; 07854 418 488; pmrobinson51@gmail.com

The closing date for reservations for either service is Wednesday 25 November.

Other Christingle Services in the United Benefice:-

Sunday 20 December at St John High Legh

Sunday 24 January at St Paul Over Tabley.

Full details to follow. The online service will also be available and booking will probably be necessary for these services.

Harvest Festivals Around the United Benefice

Thank you to everybody who contributed goods and cash to our harvest collections.

This picture is from St John's High Legh where goods were packed into boxes and bags the day after the harvest service and on a very wet Monday evening taken along to Lymm Baptist Church where Andrew, Angela and Rachel were ready to transfer it into their cars to take to the foodbanks at Warrington the next day.

Lymm Baptist Church have coordinated the Covid 19 response for Churches Together in Lymm & District. This has focused on those who are in the immediate vicinity, neighbouring areas and across the developing world. Everyone can be sure that they have helped to bring some relief to families and individuals in need in areas in Warrington.

A similar collection was taken to the Knutsford Food Bank with gifts from St Mary's, Holy Trinity, and St Paul's. A total of £300.00 was also collected from all four churches for the work of the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy to support their work among the local farming community.

Every charity has suffered a significant drop in income during the last six months and almost certainly for at least the next six months so everything that we can do to share what we have been so richly and freely given will be appreciated by your favourite charity.

As the hymn written by Carol Owens says:
He said 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe others will know that I live.'

Rev'd Trish

Alterations at St Paul Over Tabley

It was a pleasure to welcome all those who came on Monday 21st September to view the changes at St Paul's Church. The visits were staggered, everyone wore face coverings and had their names entered on the register for Track and Trace. For some it was the first time they had entered the building since March.

The accessible toilet and kitchenette have now been completed. The range of cupboards by the main door are finished, although only half of the doors are fitted. Work is continuing on stripping back the perished paint and plaster on the back wall, a substantial job that has necessitated bringing back the scaffolding. One of the congregation at St Mary's, a retired roofer, has pointed the coping on the north side of the west wall which should prevent further ingress of rain and allow that wall to gradually dry out. When the wall has been stripped back to the original lime plaster we plan to varnish the panelling and then plumb in the new cast iron radiators.

Our intention is then to clear out all tools, machinery and unused materials and give the church a good clean before re-opening for our Remembrance Sunday Service on the 8th November. It will be almost 12 months since work commenced; in the circumstances a remarkable achievement. When we began clearing the back of the church, we could never have envisaged the situation that this country would soon find itself in with the virus. Neither would we have imagined that along with every other church in the country, St Paul's would be closed for such a long period.

There is insufficient space in this brief update to list the names of all those who have contributed to the project, either by donating materials, lending plant or wiring, digging, lifting and carrying. However, without them we would have not been able to achieve so much in such a short time. They deserve our deepest thanks.

Revd Philip

Riesling – a neighbourly affair.

And so to Deutschland and the great river Rhine, the beautiful Mosel and, as importantly, the scintillating Riesling wines of both Germany and neighbouring French Alsace (we cannot visit one without the other). In a recent Financial Times article, Jancis Robinson MW, the doyenne of British wine experts and renowned authority on wine worldwide, said…. *"kindly indulge me while I remind you why Germany's signature grape, Riesling (pronounced reece-ling), is the greatest white wine grape in the world."*

Two great rivers dominate German wine production and lend their names to the vineyards. The Rhine, the Rheinhessen, the Rheinpfalz and the Rheingau and on the steep banks of the Mosel the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer vineyards rise steeply on the sloping sides of the twisting turning Mosel river where Riesling, as in the Rheingau, dominates.

The wines of Germany have changed enormously in recent years and for the better. Climate change may be a significant factor in creating warmer, wetter weather thus transforming viticulture; the wines are drier than they used to be and consequently may prove to have wider appeal. Vintners no longer have to disguise under-ripe grapes by adding sugar although wine producers are facing the fresh challenges created by unremitting sunshine. History has shown good wine makers are up to this challenge.

Jancis is not alone in her passion for Riesling - I hosted a splendidly memorable dinner in December 1995 at The Waterside in Bray. My table that night boasted three Masters of Wine including Jancis and the venerable Bill Gunn MW of Pol Roger. The conversation that evening was not the Chateau Latour or the Corton Charlemagne we were served but the seemingly more humble Riesling that, at the time, was definitely unfashionable. I quickly established that all three MW's shared a passion for good Riesling wine. It opened my eyes and then as now, Riesling is my desert island wine. 1995 was to prove a particularly good year in the annals of my life-long love affair with wine. This was the year I got to taste the newly released 1988 vintage of Pol Roger with Christian de Billy, the

President of Champagne Pol Roger and the most wonderful and generous man. It was special also because I discovered the 1983 Trimbach cuvee Frederic Emile, one of the greatest Rieslings of recent times.

If my modest articles in the Rostherne Parish Newsletter achieve one thing this year and that is to persuade you to try Riesling (from Alsace or Germany), I will consider it a job well done.

Confusing wine labels can prove a challenge to students of German wine so to get you started I have created a simple list of categories to help you navigate through the maze. In ascending order of grape ripeness/sweetness - look for Deutsherwein, Landwein, QbA, Kabinett, Spatlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese and, the rare, late-picked botrytis Eiswein. I think that's enough for you to work your way through for now!

But whilst we are in this neck of the woods, I would like you to join me as we slip into the neighbouring vineyards of Alsace or Alsace Lorraine as it used to be known, characterised by its pretty villages clustered together in the lee of the Voges mountains. Strasbourg, its capital, is fascinating to visit, apart from being one of the governance centres of the EEC, it is a gastronomic treasure and an under-appreciated destination for wine lovers. For much of its history Alsace was Elsass and was part of Germany. The bottle shape reflects this along with the dominance of Riesling and the elegant fragrance of its wine. In Alsace you will find some of the finest food in the French pantry. Yes, it nods to Germany with its smoked sausages, cheese and choucroute but also the most divinely delicate dishes that reflect the wines of this picturesque region. Coq au Riesling is a wonderful play on Burgundy's Coq au Vin. Alsace seems completely comfortable in its French/German skin, both countries contribute enormously to its character and culture of great food with wine. If you visit this region make a beeline for the Weinstaube or tavern for great beer, wine and food in an informal setting. Here is a little guide to the important wines of Alsace that take their names from their grape varieties. Unlike Germany the wine-making practice of fermenting out all the grape sugar into alcohol produces dry, full-bodied wines. Riesling may be king in Alsace but there are many notable varietal offerings –

Gewurztraminer (the spicy one) Rose petal and lychee and perfect with Chinese food.

Pinot Gris or Tokay Great with strongly flavoured dishes. Tokay Tardive is perfect with foie gras.

Muscat or Muscat d'Alsace makes a wonderful aperitif.

Pinot Blanc the workhorse of Alsace wines and a great bargain price wise.

Sylvaner all too often underwhelming but in the right hands (to quote JR), quite distinguished.

Edelzwicker translated "noble mixture" of Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc and sometimes Chasselas.

Pinot Noir not the greatest of Alsace wines – light and delicate, all too often overpriced.

Cremant d'Alsace, the regions sparkling wine, at its best, a delicious alternative to Champagne.

A couple of other descriptions to note:

Grand Cru (no guarantee of anything other than its AOC status).

Vendange Tardive meaning late harvest but can vary from quite dry to quite sweet.

Next month I will suggest some wine and food combinations that will transform your Christmas into a seasonally magical escape from the depressing times we live in.

Peter Williams.

Rostherne Art Group 2021 Calendar

Each year members of the Rostherne Art Group produce a calendar from their work over the year. This year, despite their not be able to meet as usual for most of the year, they have still managed to produce the calendar and these will be available to purchase in early December at a price of approximately £7.00. These make lovely gifts especially for friends or relatives who live further away or in other countries.

Ordering now helps the group with production. Please contact Joan Gate on 01565 830 595 to reserve your calendar(s).

Light Up Rostherne

After the gloomy 2020 so far let's cheer ourselves and everyone passing up by lighting up the village.

Decorate your house for Christmas with outside lights.

Fenton's Farm Foods will be offering a breakfast box for your Christmas breakfast along side Knutsford Covid Support Group offering a £50 voucher to be spent in the shops in Knutsford, for the best decorated house. If you want your house to be entered send an email

to fentonsfarmfood@yahoo.co.uk

Look forward to seeing Rostherne shine bright.

Dom and Jo Fenton

Fenton's Farm Foods

We are taking orders for Turkeys and other Christmas provisions.

Trees wreaths etc will be on sale from the 1st December.

There will be a Santa's post box in the yard for your little one to post their letter to Santa.

Lots of yummy cakes and mulled wine to enjoy by all.

Toilet facilities now available.

Tony the Fish Man at Fenton Farm Foods

Fortnightly on Thursdays - 5th and 19th November
3rd December

13.30 - 16.00 but come early. Order can be placed in advance

by contact Jo at the farm on 07730583886

Service for Shut-ins"

This is an extract from a magazine distributed around 1920. It is a service for the housebound and sent in by Ed and Sue Wakefield from Rostherne.

PRAYER
Our gracious Father, we thank Thee that Thy mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.
We thank Thee that Thine angels of light are round about us here on earth. may they minister to us every unselfish act, in every good impulse, and may we recognise Thee in all that is pure and true!
Oh! let no earth-born cloud arise to hid Thee from Thy servants' eyes! Disperse all mists of despair and faithlessness. Make us happy in constant service for Thee. Bless us with Thy forgiveness. For Christ's sake. Amen.

HYMN (To be found in most good hymn books)
Children Of the Heavenly King, As ye journey, sweetly sing,
Sing our Saviour's worthy praise, glorious in his works and ways.

SERMON Text: "The windows of heaven were opened." Genesis 7: 11

A doctor was once called into a house where someone was nearly always ailing. Instead of going upstairs at once to see the patient, he surprised the people of the house by slipping across to the window of the living-room, which seemed to him to be hot and stuffy. He tried to open the window, but it was stuck fast and would not yield.

"What's the matter with this window?" he asked.
"Oh," came the reply, "we never bother to open it. We don't like draughts, and so it has go stuck."
"You can't expect to be well if you never open your windows," said the doctor, "for you are starving yourselves of fresh air."
And until he had opened that disused window he would not go upstairs to his patient.

This little incident was brought to my mind by a remark which was made in my hearing the other day. Someone spoke of the "windows of the soul." Have you ever thought that your soul has windows, and that they are made to open? If they are kept shut, you are missing something that is as important to your spiritual life as fresh air is to the body.

Let us just try to see if we can find out what a few of those windows that ought to be opened are.

A girl friend of mine once said that she did not go to a place of worship because she could be as good a Christian outside a church as in it.

So she closed that window, and the gracious ministry of the good people she might have met was lost to her. She lost the strength which comes to us when we associate with God's people in worship.

Attending that church was a poor old woman who very much needed the help of a cheering word or visit to her lonely cottage. That girl friend of mine would have gone had she known about it, but she did not.

Continued/...

And so another window was closed - the window of kindly impulse which could have admitted sympathy and love into her own heart.

I am sure you see what I am driving at. Every time that we neglect to do a loving service, or fail to carry out a noble ideal that may have been born in our hearts, we are keeping the windows of our soul shut. The good, clear, pure air cannot enter, and the bad air cannot get out.

Some people overlook the fact that the catch of the window is always on the inside. They must open it themselves.

Our Master has given to each of us a free-will. He will never force us to open our windows to Him. He pleads with us. He asks us to open them, but we must do it. The act must be ours but he will help us do it.

It matters not how long our windows have been kept shut. We can fling them wide open through his grace, and the life-giving breath heaven will enter and banish all doubt and despair.

I once heard the story of a man who was trying to do an impossible thing. outside the sun was shining brilliantly, but he was in a closely shuttered room.
"Why don't you open the windows and let the sunshine i?2 asked a friend. "No, no!" came the reply. "I must first put out the darkness."

We smile a such folly, yet are we never guilty of it? Do we never say, "I am so weak and so wicked; I can never do any better"?

Take Christ into your heart. Open every window that can let Him in, and He will soon banish the darkness of doubt and fear.

I have left the consideration of our text until the last. "The windows of heaven were opened." So the light, the atmosphere, the songs of heaven, can come down here to us on earth. Heaven is not a closely shuttered abode from which we on earth are rigidly excluded. Its many windows are thrown open, and through them streams the light and the blessings of "our Father which art in heaven."

To me there is a deep and abiding comfort in that thought, for it means that we can have a sweet foretaste of the heavenly music of those who worship around the Throne.

This may have been written 100 years ago and the language and style of writing is quite different from the way we communicate today. However, the message still holds true.

(Incidentally, we couldn't find any trace of the hymn mentioned in the article.)

If you are lonely or finding life difficult and would like to talk to someone please telephone one of the ministry team whose contact details are on page 10. All conversations are in strict confidence and we are happy to meet you at the vicarage, one of the churches or somewhere outside and, if you wish in another locality.

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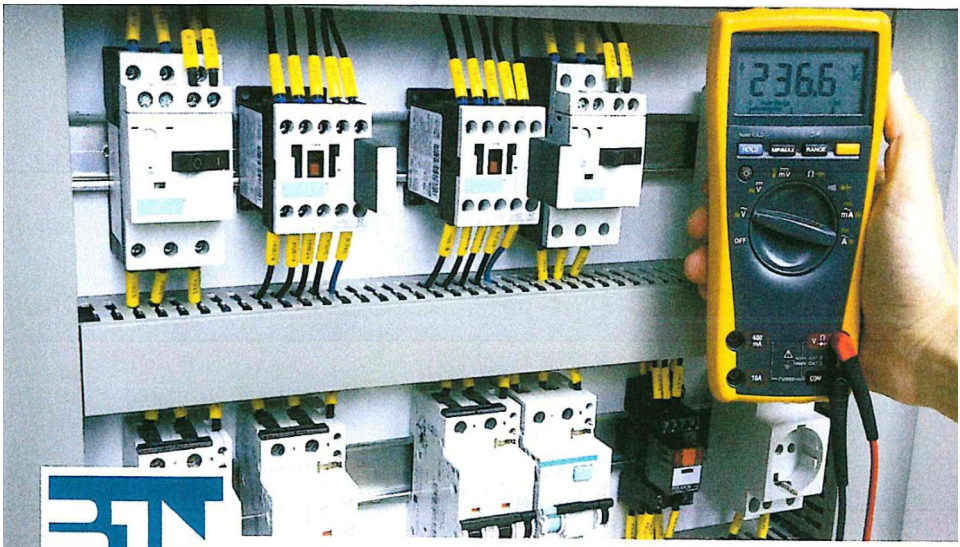

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