

Pastoral Letter #2 | 2nd April 2020

“Be still, and know that I am God!” Psalm 46:10

Dear

As I stood on the shoreline this week, having taken our *one period of exercise per day* as a stroll down to the beach with the girls, it was striking that there were few people on the beach and promenade. Where people were, they were sat distant from one another, almost to the extent that people were sat between every other groin that juts out towards the sea. There was a distinct lack of traffic – that hum of engines I often hear was much less prevalent than normal.

But what I noticed most of all, was not what had changed, but what had stayed the same. As I stood on the shoreline, despite the distance among people, reduced traffic, changed diary, limitations on activity and travel; the sea was still there, level and calm, constant as one by one the waves gently rolled in onto the shoreline.

In that moment, I felt God’s presence, God’s constancy, God’s stillness, as God reminded me of the familiar words of Psalm 46 *“Be still, and know that I am God.”*

For many of us, most of what we class as ‘normal’ in our lives and routines has changed, for some of us that will have meant we’ve done more, but done differently. For others it will have meant we’ve done less, been at home more, perhaps caught up with some jobs we’ve been too busy to do for weeks or months (or even years), or we’ve found ourselves waking up not really sure what to do with ourselves today.

However you fit into those characterisations (and depending on which day I reflect on, I think I can fit into all of them!), **God is still God.** The same God we worshipped yesterday, we worship today and will worship tomorrow. God who was with us yesterday is with us again today, and will be tomorrow. **God is God,** and despite all the change around us, just as the sea continues to roll on the shoreline, **God continues to be God.**

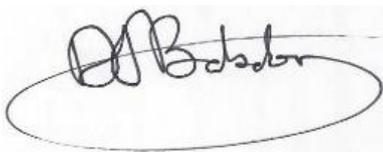
As we approach Holy Week and Easter, we will be marking it in our homes in ones and twos, very differently to how we planned or have done so before. But I'm struck as I look ahead to Easter, by how isolated Jesus must have felt in those final days, as those around him didn't understand, people accused him, and they murdered him.

And so I wonder, as we approach Easter 2020 in isolation from each other, if this will offer us new insights to Jesus' last days as we approach Easter very differently. Understanding in new ways the loneliness and isolation Jesus felt as he journeyed those final days.

Enclosed, please find some additional worship resources that go alongside the previous pack I sent out. There are resources for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Sunday 19th April. I'm grateful to those local preachers who have contributed the material within them. I encourage you to use them alongside what we previously sent out in whatever way works best for you. I've given some suggestions, but please do adapt them if you feel it would work better for you.

I pray as you use these or other resources, you know the constancy of God's presence and stillness with you day by day.

In peace & hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dan Balsdon", enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Rev Dan Balsdon

Image: Bognor Beach April 1st 2020

