

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 27th December – First Sunday of Christmas

After the beautiful but different 'Festival of Nine Lessons' last Sunday, I reflected on the many other changes that have been necessary to the routines of our lives during 2020.

The world-wide effects of Covid-19 have impacted our lives and it has been necessary to change old routines in order to 'live through' this current pandemic. At times it has felt as if as soon as we settle into a routine, the situation changes - the sand literally shifts underneath us, and new behaviours are required of us for our own and our 'neighbour's' protection.

The 'Nine Lessons' service was without the much-loved Carols (which for me set the mood for Christmas) is one such 'necessary change'. At different times during the year, we have accepted frequent washing of hands, carrying around sanitizer gels, wearing face masks in public including at places of Worship, social distancing, forming 'bubbles', no visiting friends indoors, to name but a few.

In these last few days of this year we might call to mind the tremendous sadness at the loss of life, the physical suffering as many are treated for and recover from the pandemic, the worries and sense of helplessness as people were not able to comfort and closely encourage loved ones as they fought off Covid-19, the mental consequences of enforced isolation, the economic effects due to loss of earnings, the country's increasing borrowing to mitigate the changed demands - and which have yet to be fully calculated.... The sense of helplessness and of loss of control is not surprising.

But as we celebrate the birth of Christ, and perhaps our thoughts turn to the many blessings of the past year: family and neighbours who have supported us, professionals who have worked hard to heal and find a vaccine, the government as they work through the complexities of the Covid challenge, and as each one of us holds on to the 'habits' and 'routines' which have grounded us, and given many of us a sense of calmness; we are strengthened to go into 2021 with hope.

Through the birth of Christ, we have hope of a 'different' future. In the words of a favourite Hymn Christ is the solid rock - for with Him we experience no changes, no shifts, but constant love, forgiveness and support.



So I will sing loudly the Hymn '**My Hope is Built on Nothing Less**' – the first verse of the Hymn below:

My Hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness
no merit of my own I claim
but wholly trust in Jesus' name
*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand –
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Let's welcome 2021 in the secure knowledge that Our God will make a way, and everything will be right in His time.

Wishing us all a Blessed, Joyous and Peaceful 2021.

Esther Burke

