

## **Blog page - Mission Enabler**

### **Blog 4 - Harvest - 05.10.23 - Sue Aspden**

I have been leading harvest services recently and I have shared with the congregations a narrative sermon written by Gill Dascome on an alternative take of the parable of the sower (Mark 4:2-9). She paints a picture of the sower scattering seeds, in what appears to be quite a reckless way. Taking handfuls and just throwing them in the air regardless of where they fall.

The seed is the word of God - the word became flesh & lived among us (John 1:14) Jesus is that Word. She suggests in the sermon that we should take a risk when we disperse the seed - when we share the word of God. Not being choosy about where we scatter it.



When I was out walking the other day, I came across this patch of barley on the side of the track. The seed had obviously fallen off the trailer after last year's harvest, taken root and grown. Not in the intended place for the seeds I should imagine but growing none the less.

I don't know about you but I'm sure that the seed of God's word, which each of us receives, doesn't always fall into a ground that is perfectly prepared and ready for cultivation. Some of us may not be ready to accept the seed of God's word, but like seeds in a woodland, it may lay dormant until the right conditions materialise and then germinate, take root and flourish.

So if God has taken a risk with us, should we not be willing to take a risk and sow the seeds of the word of God and His love with those we meet - even when we may feel the ground might not always be receptive.

As it says in Isaiah 55:10-11 says "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

What are we waiting for?

**Gill Dascombe** – Hinde Street Church Sermon Source: Local Preacher and Worship Leader Training resources - 6.3 Focus on preaching - Living Faith

### **Blog 3 - Something Ordinary - 14.08.23 Sue Aspden**

Since my contribution last month, I have eaten lunch with new friends, thoroughly enjoyed a fish and chip tea; I have indulged in a cream scone, enjoyed homemade

cakes and munched on scrumptious biscuits (and yes I am still trying to have just 'one a day' but it doesn't always work!)

The generosity and hospitality of people, as I have started to build relationships and get to know them has been brilliant. People have been giving generously and this has been an act of fellowship, often sharing something simple but in doing so has provided an opportunity for conversation, to make links, opening a channel for God to work through.

In the story of the feeding of the 5,000 in Matt 14:13-21. He asked the disciples to feed the masses of people who had been listening to Jesus' teaching. But they were out of their depth - coming up with only five loaves and two fish from a boy who was willing to share. Jesus used something ordinary, a gift of fish and bread and did something extraordinary with it. Having blessed the food, there was one big picnic on the hillside, where everyone had sufficient to eat and there was some to spare.



I am sure the little boy didn't think for a moment that the sharing of his lunch would result in an event that we are still talking about today.

As we go through life, we shouldn't be of the opinion that we have nothing to give, it's not enough, that things are too costly, we're not bright enough, we're too old, we haven't got anything posh or fancy to offer (and I don't just mean food and refreshments). Jesus is wanting us to bring the ordinary and to allow him to do something extraordinary with it.

Most people are probably not thinking about Christmas carols in August but the carol by Christina Rossetti, 'In the bleak midwinter' springs to mind with the words

"What can I give him, poor as I am,  
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man I would do my part;  
Yet, what I can, I give him,  
Give my heart."

What is it that you can give?

## **Blog 2 - Food! 06/07/23 Sue Aspden**

Well it's 5 weeks now into my Mission Enabler role and I have made a conscious effort to be a 'one a day' person. That is one cake, biscuit or treat a day, otherwise I could increase my waist size considerably!



Seriously, one thing I have noticed is that many activities revolve around food and drink (mainly tea & coffee) and I don't think this is a coincidence.

Isn't that what Jesus did, sharing the lives of his friends and followers? If you know or remember your bible passages, there was Zaccheaus who Jesus asked to go to his home for tea (Luke 9:1-10); Eating a meal at Matthew's house (Matt 4: 10-13); eating a prestigious meal at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7: 36) ; attending a wedding (John 2: 1-12); relaxing at Bethany (Luke 10: 38-42) ; feeding the crowds with fish & bread on a hillside (marr 14:15-21) and with the disciples on the beach (John 21: 1-19).

There are many more examples I could mention. But in each situation Jesus acts with love, insight, integrity and lives out his life for the purpose of the Kingdom of God. So it is not surprising then, that we follow his example and include refreshments in our activities, as part of our fellowship with others.

When the disciples were sent out on their commission (Matt 10), they were told not to take food or drink with them but to rely on the hospitality of those they were going to go amongst. In many cultures offering hospitality to others, allowing them to share a meal, and offering a drink is an act of acceptance, of welcome, to share with strangers and friends.

I hope that over the coming months I will be able to enjoy fellowship, build relationships and share with you, as we sit and have a coffee (and maybe a slice of cake or biscuit!) or sit down to a meal. And as we share together we can invite others to join us, to welcome new faces, encourage friends and family members, those we meet when we are out and about, to develop new relationships outside of our current boundaries and have the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

### **Blog 1 - Come Follow Me! Reflection on new role as Mission enabler 10/06/23 - Sue Aspden**

Come Follow me - it's easy to say yes, when Jesus says 'follow me', especially when you are not called to change much about your life. But it is much more difficult to carry out when things need to change!.

When I was recently to 'Follow' and become a Mission Enabler, I debated with God about how I could still serve him doing what I was already doing not needing to

- Change my job completely and change direction
- Do something completely different (that I felt I had no experience for)
- Take a pay cut

But God had other plans and he gave me the following verse:

" For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". Jeremiah 29:11

I really felt that this was an opportunity he was giving me and I needed to take it. It was still my choice though, whether to accept it or not. But how could I have

promised to follow and then say no? So here I am, just over 1 week into my role as Mission Enabler with Lindisfarne Methodist Church.

I'm writing this whilst watching my husband take to the skies above the Glen Valley (Milfield) in a glider. The glider follows the "tug" plane to reach its height and then it is released. As I watched the tug and glider separate, I thought about Isaiah 40:31



"but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles;"

I know it is early days yet in my new role, but I already feel a sense of freedom, that I can spread my wings and soar like an eagle, trusting that God knows his plans

for me. I will follow where he leads as "it is the Lord who goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deut 31:8

I'll keep you posted.