**Devotional of hope – the water of life**

**Readings: John chapter 4
Numbers 20 vs 2-13**

On Sunday 15th March, the service at Central was led by Helen Cameron, the Chair of District. She preached on Jesus at the well in Samaria, asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water and then promising her the water of life (John chapter 4). Then we shared in Holy Communion together.

It sounds so very ordinary and only those who were either present then or at other services that day will know how strange this all felt; how even then we wondered if we *should* be meeting together, and how we were not able to touch one another, not even to share the Peace. Afterwards, Helen Cameron reflected that she thought this would have to be the last Communion service for a while. As it turned out, it was the last church service to be held at all, and for how long we don’t yet know.

And yet, it isn’t the end of things. We know that. For just as Moses struck water from the rock – the water that the Israelites didn’t know was there until Moses broke through the surface and it poured out – so Jesus is always there for us, whether we appreciate that or not. The water of life is always present. All we have to do is to seek it out.

During that communion service on 15th March, a Taizé chant came to my mind. It’s a fairly new one. You can hear it if you go to this link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=HdFeKkuiuCU>) or just read the words below.

Let all who are thirsty, come
Let all who wish, receive
the water of life, freely.
Amen! Come Lord Jesus.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

In this strange time of dislocation and disconnection from our regular community gatherings, our meetings, our services, let us remember that Jesus, the Water of Life is always available for us.

For many of us, this might be a period of enforced solitude as we are encouraged not to go out, or even a period of enforced rest as some jobs are set down for a while and regular meetings are cancelled. Let us use this time, this space, to strengthen our relationship with God. To make time for daily prayer and Bible reading or to seek God’s word though other avenues, in books or podcasts, on TV services or streamed media, or simply in meditation and reflection as we enjoy the glorious and beautiful Spring with its sunshine and birdsong and flowers.

Let us remember that Jesus has promised that he will be with us *always* (Matthew 28 vs 20)and that nothing we can do can ever come between us and the love of God (Romans 8 vs 38-39).

*Jesus, help us to remember that you are always there for us, though whatever comes, in our wilderness experiences as well as in our good times, in our solitude as well as in community. Let us strike though the flinty rock that surrounds our hearts or our minds so that we can truly experience you, the living water, flowing from us to refresh both our lives and the lives of others.*

*Amen. Come Lord Jesus.*