

Thoughts for the third week in Advent

This year we have seen an outpouring of community spirit, a coming together in adversity. The last time Britain really experienced this was probably during the second world war and it was called the Blitz Spirit. This year we have not been able to 'meet' together physically as church, but we have still been church working in the community, phoning friends, doing shopping for neighbours, collecting prescriptions, standing together to support the NHS and key workers. We have put rainbows, candles, and poppies in our windows, and I hope some of us are decorating a window for Christmas, we have witnessed to what we believe.



Richard Rohr comments that if you do not do it then you do not believe it. I have often said that faith is acting out what you believe, and from a quantum perspective if we believe something deeply enough then that will be the reality we live. What you truly believe will be demonstrated in the way you live, in your actions and that is a sobering thought. Words are simply words, a creed is simply words, belief is action. Jesus did, he told lots of stories to help people think about what they believed, and he asked lots of questions of people, often in answer to questions, but he is remembered for what he did, for miracles and challenging behaviour.

Many people are happy to refer to Jesus as 'the son of God' and believe that this makes Jesus special but just like you and me I believe Jesus was a part of creation, part of the source of all being (shorthand – God) but it was how he lived that made him special to others, in God we are all special, but we have to find our own way of demonstrating how we are special. God is a part of each one of us, and God is in all we do because God is everywhere and in everything, the Spirit we speak of is the aspect of God which binds us together and we were made to be together. When we build relationships, we are living out the essence of what it is to be children in God. It is however a journey and there will be fruitful days and less fruitful days as we are all still learning. The more we



connect the more we discover that connects us. The scripture stories of the birth of Jesus speak of Bethlehem as David's town; the prophets speak of a child to be born of the stump of Jesse, that is from the family tree of Jesse and Jesse was David's father; David was a King, a ruler and he was human and not everything he did was good, but he has this special place in the story of Jesus.

This line of David speaks to us of the humanity of Jesus. David's history did not exclude him from God's love or from being important to the bigger picture, and nor does our history. When we look at others and observe the contradictions in their lives, we should remember David.



Traditionally, many people have come to church at Christmas who do not attend at other times of the year. What are they looking for? When we seek God what we find is determined by what we look for and how we look. How we celebrate Christmas is important not only for us but for those who connect with the story for this moment alone, what picture of God do we portray, what will they find of God in that visit to church? What picture of God do we find in what we do? Our actions in worship reveal something of what we believe, do we think deeply enough about what we do?



Building relationships is sharing together, it is talking together, it is doing something together. This Christmas we will be restricted in how we do things together, but it will give us an opportunity to think about why we do what we do and perhaps next year we will demonstrate a different belief.