

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN!

17th January 2021



Love God and Love our Neighbour

REMEMBER THAT GOD HAS REMEMBERED US IN HIS SON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. BY LOOKING AT THE ARK OF THE COVENANT WE CAN SEE AGAIN THAT IN JESUS, GOD REMEMBERS US AND MAKES US GOOD SO THAT WE MAY BELONG TO HIM

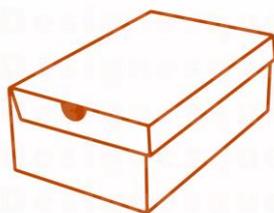
READINGS:

ROMANS CH3 V9-20

NO-ONE IS RIGHTEOUS

EXODUS CH37 V1-9

THE ARK



PRAYERS

Father, creator and sustainer of life, we thank and praise you for your mighty promises that are there for us in Christ. Help us to honour you with our lives and to truly love each other for your sake.

Pardon us when our offerings of service are meagre or begrudging, forgive and cleanse us we ask, we are sorry for our sins and for when we live as if we have forgotten you. Help us to hear your words of power and comfort: 'I will be your God, and you will be my people'

Take a moment to pray for all those affected by coronavirus in whatever way, the NHS and frontline workers, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John ch1 v29

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

A Box for God

Find an old shoe box and design a box for God! That's what the Israelites did. God instructed them to make the Ark of the Covenant, how it's your turn to design a 'box for God!' While decorating your box, think about what it might have been like for the Israelites to build their ark. **What do you think the Israelites were thinking about when they were building it?** *It cost a lot of money, so it must be very special. How heavy might the ark have been if it was made of gold? Very! How might the people feel who had to carry it around? Important- Special- Tired!*

When your box is finished, think about: **Why do you think God wanted Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant?** To remind

the Israelites of God's presence, so people wouldn't forget God. **What are ways we are reminded of God's presence today?** We learn about God at church, when we read the Bible, we remember God and we can talk to God when we pray. ● After making your box go to your room and find three things that remind you of God. Maybe your Bible, or a picture from KidZone, something from nature or whatever. Explain how these items remind you of God and then put them in the box. In the same way the Israelites put manna, Aaron's staff, and the Ten Commandments in the Ark and were reminded of what God had done for them, hopefully your box and items will do that for you too!

Pray: *Take a moment to thank God for who he is and what he has done. Ask him to help you with the hard things in life. Pray that he will always remind you that he is with you and that he hears you when you pray....*

DEVOTIONAL

Raiders of the Lost Ark!



When the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the Ark of the Covenant disappeared, until then it was divinely-designed to symbolise the Lord's royal and holy Presence, first in the Tabernacle and later in the Jerusalem Temple. God stated **"I want the children of Israel to build me a sacred residence where I can live among them"** and was therefore expressing his desire to make his Presence known among his people. The transcendent God, who

created and upholds the universe, who dwells in glory, removed from sin and separate from sinners, desires to be known intimately and to assure his people by his Presence and of his love and concern for them. This is a truth that should continue to humble and inspire us today.

Despite the Lord's desire for intimacy with his people, there was to be no thought of casualness on their part. He was among them, but he was holy. The ark was to be placed in the Most Holy Place, where only the High Priest was allowed to enter, and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, in a stipulated and appropriate manner. This included the sprinkling of the blood of an innocent sacrifice intended to wash away the sins of the people. The lid of the Ark, which incorporated two hammered gold cherubim, was known as the **"Atonement Cover"** or **"Mercy Seat"**, signified the place of divine enthronement, where God promised, **"I will meet with you there"**. Under the lid were the stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, the sole basis upon which people could meet with God.

Sinful people, like us, cannot enter the divine Presence on our own terms, whenever and however we wish. We can only approach God on the terms outlined by his holy will. From the ark we learn that a holy God desires intimacy with his sinful people, but only because he chose to reach out to them and only when they respond by confessing their sin and seeking his forgiveness on the basis of a sacrifice. The ark may be lost, but its symbolism and significance should never be lost on us, for Christ as the ultimate sacrifice at Calvary, is the substance of which the ark was the shadow.

This is so important for us to remember because the covenant that the Ark points to, the Mosaic Covenant, was a conditional covenant. It contained the little word 'if.' God said to His people – **"If you will obey Me, then I will exalt you above all the peoples of the earth."** In response the people promised that they would do everything God commanded. Yet they didn't, even while Moses was meeting with God, the people were sinning, think of the sad affair of the Golden Calf.

The problem is that the world tells us that if we can develop enough rules and regulations, we can make ourselves holy, acceptable and good. Yet even when God wrote his law in stone and enshrined it in gold and highlighted it with elaborate rituals of worship, no one has been able, not one person has ever made themselves holy, acceptable and good. Not even the High Priest was considered holy by his own merits for as Paul would later write, **"There is none righteous, no not one... All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."**

We must realise our need of God but also the great blessing of a God who would do for us an even greater work than what he did for the Israelites, he would send something greater than the Law, so that – **"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son..."** Jesus lived that perfect life and died as that innocent sacrifice so that those who come in his name are graciously received and welcomed as holy and are assured that they do, and forevermore will, belong to God. Is that truth not such a blessing to us in these uncertain days?

So, when we come to the Ark for a look may we see the wonder of a God who comes to us in pursuit of intimacy, may we be reminded that we can't make ourselves good but by the grace of God we don't need to, may we therefore repent and place our faith afresh, in that Jesus, that great sacrifice, **'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'**.

**Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat,
where Jesus answers prayer;
and humbly fall before His feet
for none can perish there.**

**Amazing love, to bleed and die,
to bear the cross and shame,
that guilty sinners such as I might plead
Your gracious name!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN!

An update, like this one, will be emailed out each Friday and delivered to folk who don't have internet connection or an easy way of accessing it.

'PREACHING TO THE CHOIR'

Each Thursday evening at 6:30pm, while we are closed for services, we will upload a recording of a little midweek- '*Preaching to the Choir*'. This will include a few musical items, prayer, reading and devotion- looking at bits of 2 Corinthians ch1 & 2. This is not a replacement of our Sunday service, yet is accessed the same way via the website or YouTube, but an additional opportunity to share in for the next while.

OPEN CHURCH

The church building is open for private prayer on Fridays 10am-12noon. There is also the facility to drop off offering envelopes.

PRAYER LINK

While Morning Watch cannot meet at the moment the Prayer Link will still be circulated, if you have any prayer requests please pass them along and if you would like a copy of the Prayer Link emailed or delivered please ask

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

The Zoom Bible study continues each Monday evening at 7pm, this season we are exploring the Gospel of Luke together, everyone is very welcome!

BIBLE CLASS

Bible Class will continue on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 11:30am, all p7s and up are welcome- if there is anyone who hasn't joined in yet it would be great to have you, please get in touch.

SPRING COMMUNICANT'S CLASSES

I would hope to get organised to start the Spring Communicant's Classes shortly. Any members of the congregation, young or not so young, who may be thinking about becoming a communicant member of the church, or would like to join in as a bit of a 'refresher' please speak to me as soon as possible.

NOTE FOR THE TREASURER

As was indicated previously in the newsheet, page 32 of the Annual Report contained a misprint at Note 11. Please see the correction made on the following page.

GET IN TOUCH

Please do not hesitate to get in touch

9. DEBTORS

	2019	2018
Gift Aid Recoverable	8,840	9,110
VAT Recoverable	309	23,588
Other	939	
	10,088	32,698

10. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	2019	2018
Current account	289,641	251,471
Cash in hand		1,097
	289,641	252,568

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2019	2018
Building Retention	39,149	144,442
Bank Loan	34,509	35,448
Other Creditors	3,485	4,548
	77,143	184,438

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	2019	2018
Bank loan	181,864	175,982
	181,864	175,982