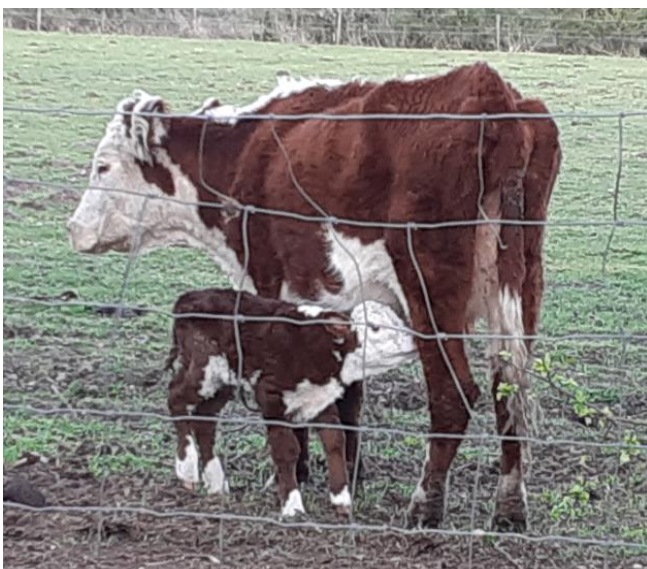


Reflection for Friday 24 April 2020 by Kay Wilcox

As I pondered what to write for this reflection, the first thing which struck me was how important the little things have become since this pandemic started – life is so much more precious. The perspective of all humanity is being affected which is obviously very scary but is also drawing us all together across the nations of the world. This has completely changed our perspective – the individual's needs are no longer a priority in society - we are so inter-linked that we have to think of each other if we are to get through this. On our daily exercise although we keep our social distance, complete strangers are drawn to greet one another, acknowledging that we are 'all in this together'.

I have been reading Bishop Graham Usher's book 'Places of Enchantment' in which he discusses how different landscapes can inspire/affect our faith. When it comes to deserts, on the one hand they are scary, resourceless places but on the other they show us that when everything else has been paired back to the bare bones, God is still there. Maybe it is only when we are at this point that we really connect with our Lord and maker. There is a deep sense that in spite of all that is happening around us, God is right there in the thick of it – he won't let us go, no matter what happens. (Romans 8:31-39 – see below)

And also, the slower pace of life that some of us are experiencing in this lockdown may have given us time to truly observe God's creation and worship in a completely different way. For example, Mervyn and I have experienced some treasured moments on our daily walks – a suckling calf, so new the umbilical cord was still attached, lambs sheltering with their mums in the shade of a tree,



a myriad of wild flowers and blossom, a hare chasing down a farm track, many different beautiful butterflies, a swan building a nest by a lake – amazing moments we would have been unlikely to notice on our normal ‘brisk’ walks for health.



Chance encounters with people have also been very uplifting – a dog walker with seven bounding dogs, our previous choir mistress biking by, a lady who obviously regularly picks the litter from round the Loch, the lovely lady in Boots who takes the time to greet you and smile even behind the PPE! And on one of our walks it suddenly struck me that if through this pandemic people started to consider and really care for each other worldwide what an amazing place the world could become – maybe heaven on earth, a place where people really do put each other’s needs before their own. Amazing!

And one final thought, we covered the story of Noah earlier this year in ADventure, our parallel family church. How significant has the rainbow become! Whether of faith or none, people understand that we need hope and love and, as Noah and his family came through their lockdown in the ark, I am sure that, fixing our eyes on God’s promise, we too will come out the other side. (Genesis 9:12-17 – see below)

Romans 8:31-39

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”[a]

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[b] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Genesis 9:12-17

12 And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

17 So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”