

## Vicar's Letter – August 2018 'Rescue and Recovery'

### Dear Friends

Now that the schools have broken up for the long summer break, many people will be travelling on the roads or overseas for a well-earned rest and time with family and friends. Some of us will be heading down to Shepton Mallet this weekend for the last time as the New Wine summer conference relocates to Peterborough next year. For those of us whose families have grown up with the annual 'pilgrimage' to New Wine it will be with mixed emotions that we bid a fond farewell to the site we have visited so often over so many years. On a more positive side re locating over to the east side of the country might bring drier and slightly warmer camping experiences for the future.

### Breakdown

When travelling during the holiday season, I am often saddened to see families huddled together beside the motorway, their car having broken down (or caravan overturned) and awaiting the rescue and recovery vehicle to arrive. I think of the disappointment and frustration caused by unexpected mechanical failure just when you have such high hopes of the holiday that awaits. It reminds me of the occasion when our car broke down whilst we were at New Wine one year and we had to forgo our ongoing holiday to Cornwall in order to have the RAC come to rescue our car and caravan and tow us back to our home in Suffolk. Since then I have always believed it is not worth scrimping on the annual cost of breakdown and roadside recovery – it is worth every penny.

### 'A miracle moment'

Of course our hearts have been elated recently by the remarkable rescue and recovery of the boys and their coach trapped in the underground caves in Thailand. What seemed an impossible task due to the geological logistics and seasonal rainfall resulted in a wonderful outcome that some described as 'miraculous'. That Sunday when we gave over our entire prayer focus in the morning service to cry out to the God of heaven and earth to make possible what many feared would not be possible, represented for me a moment of desperation and intensity. We praise God that the outcome through the professionalism and expertise of the rescue and recovery team was everything we hoped for whilst mourning the loss of the diver who sacrificed his life in the process.

### Wrestling in Prayer

Last Sunday evening we gathered together again for some moments of quiet desperation seeking rescue for those in our midst who are in an intense battle for their health. In small groups we wrestled in prayer, we cried out to God, we sang songs of faith and hope and we anointed one another with the oil of healing (and by proxy those who were not able to be with us).

### The place of waiting

We again need the Saviour, 'by whose stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5). We are like those families standing huddled together beside the motorway awaiting the recovery vehicle. The call has gone out (in our prayers and ongoing prayer) and we look out for the arrival of our Saviour bringing the Kingdom of heaven to earth; to make possible what might seem impossible.

As many of us disperse for the holiday season, perhaps we could remember to say a prayer for any we see unfortunate enough to be broken down on the roadside awaiting recovery when we pass them by. Let us also continue to uphold before the Lord those in our church family who need us to stand with them in prayer in the midst of their own struggles and daily bring them before the Lord.

### Justice

When Jesus taught about the importance of persevering in prayer by telling the story of the Persistent Widow and the unjust judge, he concluded:

'And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, **who cry out to him day and night?** Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?' Luke 18:7,8.

There is something about being desperate in prayer, crying out day and night that reveals an earnestness that moves the hand of God.

Whatever you are doing throughout August whether home or away, may you know safety in your travels and the Lord's presence with you whether waiting for recovery and rescue for yourselves or for one another.

For the Kingdom

**Stephen**