

NORTHGATE

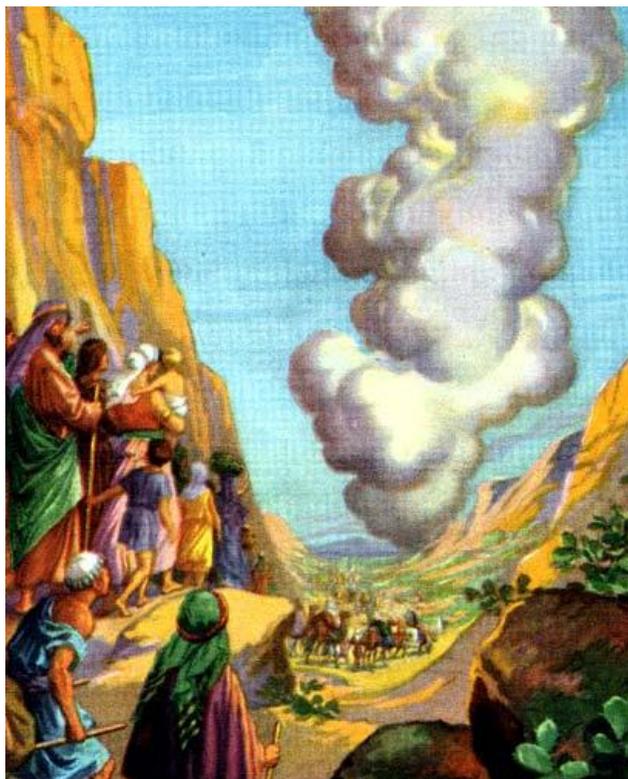
The weekly notices of
OAKHAM METHODIST CHURCH

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Sunday 13th September 2020



The Pillar of Cloud September 13th

Opening Hymn

Moses I know you're the man	No matter what you may do
the Lord said	the Lord said
you're going to work out my plan	I shall be faithful and true
the Lord said	the Lord said
'Lead all the Israelites out of slavery	My love will strengthen you as
you go along	
and I shall make them a wandering race for you're my traveling,	
wandering race	
called the People of God	you're the People of
God	God

Opening Prayer

Father God, we praise you for the blessings of this last week, for those times when we have caught a glimpse of your nature in the beauty of a flower and in the goodness of a neighbour. We are sorry for the thoughtless words that have escaped our lips and the kindnesses left undone. Forgive us for Jesus' sake and help us to become more like him. May we come close to you as we think about your word and through your Holy Spirit may we rediscover your love. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

Read Exodus 14 v 19 – 15 v 6.

Today's passage is about the miracle of deliverance when the Children of Israel were able to escape Pharaoh's army which was chasing after them by crossing the Dead Sea on dry land, but when they looked back all they could see was a scene of desperation as the Egyptian forces were drowned by the returning waters.

Germans have a habit of joining two words together to make a new word. A good example is the word 'Schadenfreude' – formed from schaden which means damage and freude which means beaming with delight.

The word Schadenfreude therefore means 'delight at someone else's misfortune' or malicious joy. This is just what the Israelites did when they saw the waters of the Red Sea cover and then drown all of Pharaoh's chariots and his army.

But the Rabbis were supposed to have taught that when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea safely, a cheer broke out in heaven and when the sea crashed down on the pursuing Egyptian army another cheer went up in heaven. But God turned to the angels and asked 'Why do you rejoice when my children have drowned in the sea'.

You and I are neither God nor one of his angels, so perhaps we should not attempt to answer this question, though many of the tragedies of the last few months would make us want an answer, direct or indirect. But what is really important from this Old Testament passage for us to remember is that in difficult times and in good times, God is with us.

When the Children of Israel arrived at the Red Sea, they were desperate – all they could see behind them was the huge Egyptian army! But God went before them as He did in the pillar of cloud which led them down to the Red Sea, and then behind them as the pillar of cloud encouraged them across the dry land path that took them to the other side.

When there seems to be no hope, God is our hope. And God continues to be our hope, the hope that we live out as we move forward, even when lying down and giving up seems like the only sensible thing to do! Verse 22 says that there were walls of water either side of the Children of Israel. It must have been really scary – but they went on, not thinking of what might go wrong but keeping their eyes on the hope that lay before them.

All the time we should remember that, like the Children of Israel, we are in the wilderness – even after crossing the Red Sea, they had only just begun their journey to the promised land. We may be a bit further on in our journeys, but we are still wandering – searching how we might fulfil our calling to be faithful and committed disciples of our Lord Jesus.

Prayers of dedication and intercession

Oh Lord our God, be our hope when we have no hope, be our guide when we are lost, be our strength when we have run out of energy. And Jesus Christ our Saviour, we acknowledge that we are wandering around looking for the way you would have us fulfil our calling to serve our fellow men and so to serve you. Show us your way and enable us to bear your cross so that we become more like you every day.

We now pray for those who need our prayers – for those whom we love but live far away; for those who are ill either in body or in spirit; for those who have caught Covid-19 and are fighting for their lives; for our government and all those who serve us.

Closing Hymn

God moves in a mysterious way
Come ye saints, fresh courage take
His wonders to perform the clouds you so much dread
He plants his footsteps in the sea are big with mercy, and shall
break
And rides upon the storm. in blessings on your head.

Thanks to Chris & Joy Sworn for this week's service

Eds Note:

Happy birthday to Julie Christie on the 13th

Pastoral note 13th September

I have seen some lovely sunflowers around lately – we even had some growing in our garden! Then again I saw some tiny woodland violets growing in a slightly ‘wilder’ corner. They do seem to remind me that whether life is bringing joy, or we have been thrown into the darkest times, God is there. He promises to be with us always. In our church family we have friends experiencing both those places.

With great sadness we have to tell you of the death of Pauline Collett’s husband Barry following an overwhelming health issue that was sudden and unexpected. Please hold Pauline in your prayers, but refrain from calling just at the moment.

Then happily we report that Joyce Hearn’s grandson Ned has finally had his surgery and is doing well.

We pray for them, and for all who are travelling a difficult road at the moment, a very real sense of God’s presence, His strength and His enfolding peace.

Remember too our leadership team as they work out how and when our church building may reopen, ensuring the safety of all who may attend. If you feel able to give practical help, do contact any of the stewards. We continue to have you in our thoughts and prayers,

May God’s healing love surround her and all who have need at this time, Angela

Angela.