



A letter from Rev Paul

14th September 2020

This week sees the annual national event of Heritage Open Days – a time when museums, heritage sites, churches across the country throw open their doors for free and put on special events to welcome visitors onto their sites. This year has been very different. Ashby Wesley, like many other places, has had to go online with their event '*Hatch, Match ... christenings & weddings through the years*' an event that had been planned since last year. If you visit ashbywesleychurch.org you will see some familiar faces looking a little younger!

Our planned service of celebration to launch our exhibition was of necessity different but I took as the reading St Paul's hymn to love, 1 Corinthians 13, which is often used at weddings because of its statement: '*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*'

I would say though that all three – faith, hope and love, need to be had in equal measure. Love, or charity as the authorised text puts it, is much needed in the time we find ourselves in, although the realist in me notes that some of the love, charity and thankfulness which we saw earlier on in the year is waning. Jesus command in John 15: 12 & 13 '*Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends*' could not be clearer and many other scriptures have a similar message.

Hope – the hope that we have that all will be well despite the current situation is probably best summed up in words from Romans 5: 1-5 which reminds us that the hope we have is in the glory of God revealed to us through the Holy Spirit within us. Faith brings to mind the words of Hebrews 11 – that great list of men and women who put their faith in God no matter what situation they found themselves in. Check out these readings for yourself.

Many years ago I read a book, the title or author of which I can't now remember, but what has stuck with me is this line from the book. **Faith is spelt R.I.S.K.** Just at the moment there seems to be so much negativity around, so much focus on what we can't do – and yes we are in difficult times. But we have been offered Faith, Hope and Love through God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and that should make a difference to our lives.

Part of 1 Corinthians 13:13 in The Message translation reads like this:

Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly.

And remember, as Mr Wesley said: ***Best of all is, God is with us.***

Rev Paul