

THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 38:3rd Dec 2020

Dear Friends,

'Hope' is a little word that we use often, but what does it mean to have hope amid difficult times? Hope is more than a feeling; it isn't simply being perpetually optimistic or having a "hopeful" attitude. The Bible offers us an understanding of hope that is much more robust. Christian hope has weight, endurance, and purpose - and God is its source.

God, "in his great mercy ... has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). And it is our "God of hope" who enables us to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). This reality isn't true only in good times; in fact, it is in dark and difficult times when hope truly shows its mettle. Real Christian hope doesn't ignore fear, anxiety, and doubt; it confronts them. It holds steady, clinging to peace in the midst of chaos. Through life's many treacherous storms Christian hope is buoyed by something greater that has happened and something greater that is going to happen again.

We hope for a vaccine and an end to the pandemic, but this is not our greatest hope. Deep down, we will still feel a longing for something greater, a longing for unending happiness, a longing for joy, peace and love. In a word, we long for our rescue. We long for a Saviour. We long for God. Without him, we have no ultimate hope and will not find deep joy and peace. Without him, we go through life as a journey toward death. With him, we go through life as a journey toward the fullness of life.

The season of Advent focuses on this great hope. It is a time of waiting for and expecting the coming of God among us. Our God is the God-who-comes. He is the God who became one of us, who sent his Son that we might have life, life in abundance. He is **Love** and therefore, he comes to rescue us.

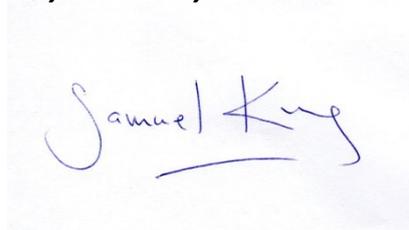
As we await and hope for the end of the corona virus pandemic, let us even more importantly await the return of Christ and place our hope in him. In this season of Advent, let us turn our gaze and our hearts to him who is our Saviour, our hope, our peace.

Nativity Scenes: It would be really lovely if as many people as possible (any age) would create a nativity scene this year. The scene could be as simple or elaborate as you like. It might include drawing, painting, modelling or even dressing up. We are looking for the most original ideas. See the one I did with pebbles and drift wood the other day. It took me about 5mins. Please take a photo of your nativity scene and send it to Stan either via email or Whatsapp (07979 652783) by 18th December so we can show them on our weekly worship broadcast 20th December. Thank You!

N.B: 6th Dec is the first Sunday of the month so we will be sharing communion together in our worship broadcast, so please have your bread and wine to hand when you watch.



May God bless you this Advent!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Samuel King". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a white rectangular background.