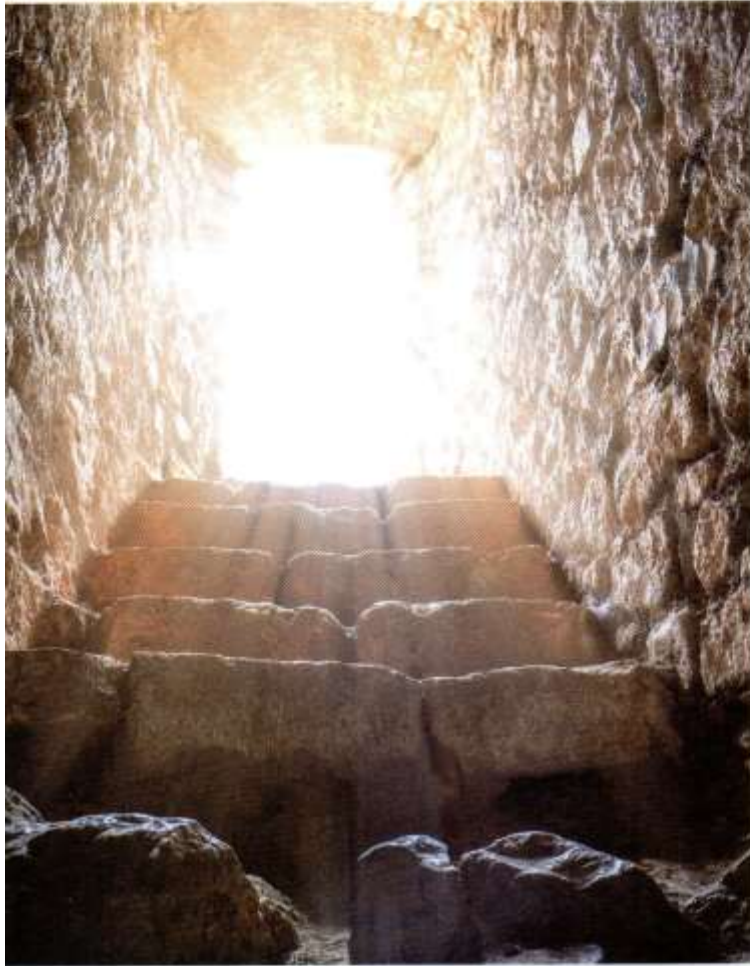


Connecting faith and daily life



A door bursts open

Heather Smith *reflects on* 1 Samuel 16:1-13

We may have a clear vision of what God wants for us, planted in our hearts and minds by God, but sometimes it takes so long to become reality that we wonder if we have understood correctly and we feel frustration at everything that stands in our way. Worse, we may not have thought any of it was a good idea anyway.

What must the young shepherd David have made of Samuel's actions? They were completely unexpected and must have seemed completely inappropriate. Surely, even as a respected prophet of God, you can't go around anointing someone king when there is already a king on the throne? And to choose an unknown, unremarkable boy must have seemed perverse.

Perhaps Samuel had lost his connection to God, or lost his mind? Samuel himself clearly felt something similar. None of this was what he expected, either.

Having anointed David, Samuel left, and nothing much happened except that a little later David was asked to play the lyre for Saul. He may have moved into the palace, but it wasn't in the way he could have expected as an anointed king.

When we believe God is calling us to do something it is very tempting to try to force it to happen. But all we need to do is tentatively push at every door we encounter, just to check, until suddenly, at the right time, one of them bursts open. 🙏

Lord, make us wise to discern your will, perseverant in seeking to carry it out, and patient as we wait for it to come to fruition. Amen.

Leap into Lent

Ricarda Witcombe continues her Lenten series.

Today Lent collides with Mothering Sunday. It is a day of mixture – difficult for some, lovely for others. Mothering Sunday encourages us to ponder with gratitude those who have cared for us, whoever they are, and who have helped us find the foundation to our lives.

Lent encourages us to continue to ponder with searing honesty

the way our lives have grown. What is it that gives us stability? And where are we heading? Like a tree, we need to grow down and up at the same time, attending to both our inner and our outer life.

The poet John O'Donohue described how a tree "reaches for the sky and it reaches for the source, all in one seamless kind of movement". This week, take some time to observe the trees in your neighbourhood or garden, and imagine them as a symbol of your own life. What will you notice? 🌳

“May your prayer of listening deepen enough to hear in the depths the laughter of God.

John O'Donohue (1956-2008), Irish poet, author, priest and philosopher

World Water Day

by Christine Clark

Today is World Water Day. We take the provision of fresh, clean water for granted. Even when our supply is metered many of us don't think twice about running the tap, taking a shower or using the garden hose in dry weather. Yet around the world many people have to walk miles to fetch water which may be dirty or contaminated.

The right to safe and hygienic sanitation goes hand in hand with being able to access fresh water, yet this is something sorely neglected in many countries.

World Water Day highlights the need for clean water and safe sanitation. It also campaigns to raise money for water projects. Each year a theme is chosen, which this year is climate change and its impact on the provision of water for humans, animals and vegetation. Rising sea levels, changes in rainfall and temperature, are just some of the impending issues we need to address. 🌍