

Julia McGuinness

reflects on Psalm 124

It's often only when a crisis is over that we can begin to process what's happened. We may feel reluctant to look back on difficult times, but in this psalm David leads God's people in reviewing all they've come through. This is not to relive or romanticise their experience, but to recognise both God's presence in the very thick of things, and God's faithful deliverance from trouble.

King David faced the threat of the Philistine army. Our enemies may be different – from bullies or false friends to crushing circumstances of health or livelihood. Like the psalmist the strength of our emotional reaction may lead us to describe our crisis in vivid images – the monster capable of swallowing us whole and eating us alive, or the merciless force of a flash flood that threatens to wash us away. Our sense of powerlessness

Lord, help us to trust that you are with us even in the midst of our troubles. As your power protects us and your love restores us, give us discerning eyes, grateful hearts and voices willing sing your praise. Amen.

Chaplain's blog –
 “Why are we doing this, sir?”

by Marcus Bull

All schools have a legal duty to provide a daily act of collective worship. My most visible role is preparing and leading these. But it's a challenge to get it right, especially when the vast majority of our students have no religious faith or background at all.

I always begin by displaying a list of aims and objectives. It's not like a church service. Instead, collective worship reminds us of our school's Christian ethos and values; it helps us to understand Christian seasons and festivals, beliefs and principles; it encourages us to think about our own beliefs and behaviour; and it provides opportunity for quiet reflection. We're not trying to convert the children, but to help them to think for themselves.

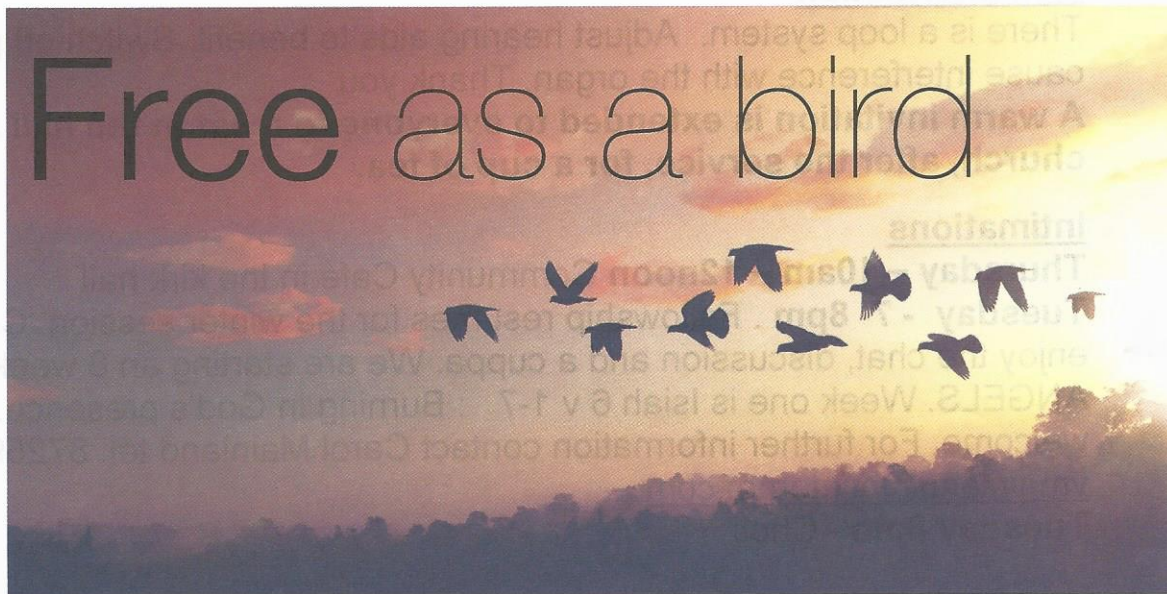
I sometimes wonder if we should display a list of aims and objectives in our church services, too. Do we know what we are gathered together for? Why are we doing this? 🙏

can leave us feeling as vulnerable as a bird in a snare.

Yet this psalm is a reality check. However sharp the teeth, fierce the torrent or ensnaring the traps we face, God's redeeming power is greater. As we look back in the spiritual wisdom of hindsight, we start to look up in

praise at what God has done. Then we can look forward again with renewed confidence that the one who sees even a sparrow fall not only

brings us through tough times, but strengthens our faith in the process. 🙏



Free as a bird

Prison chaplaincy

part I

by Heather Smith

Heather Smith looks at different aspects of faith “inside” and in the wider criminal justice system.

Prisons have always existed. Think of Joseph in prison in Egypt, or Peter, rescued from prison by an angel in Acts 12. In the West, until around two hundred years ago, prison was seen as the waiting room for trial. If someone were convicted of a capital offence, they would be held until execution; debtors were

imprisoned until they paid what they owed.

Before World War II prisons were filthy, disease-ridden places, and people were often imprisoned for crimes that would not now attract a custodial sentence. It wasn't uncommon for prisoners to be forced to exercise wearing hoods, or for the stalls in the prison chapel to allow the worshipper to see only the preacher.

Over time, thanks to campaigners like the chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, William Morrison, in the 1890s, the current model of the prison system developed, until eventually the purpose of prison came to be seen as both deterrence and reform, and conditions were improved. 🙏

“If you wish to possess finally all that is yours, give yourself entirely to God.”

Hadewijch of Brabant, thirteenth-century Belgian mystic

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

Kirk Information

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit. Switch off phones. They cause interference with the organ. Thank you

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Thursday – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

Tuesday - 7- 8pm . Fellowship resumes for the winter session. Come along and enjoy the chat, discussion and a cuppa. We are starting an 8 week study on ANGELS. Week one is Isiah 6 v 1-7 : Burning in God's presence. Everyone welcome. For further information contact Carol Mainland tel. 872596 or email

vmainland@btinternet.com

Tuesday 8pm - Choir

Sunday 7th October– 2.30pm St Peter's

Thursday 18th October – 7.30pm Session Meeting in the kirk hall

Readings:

Ezekiel 33 30 - 33

Mark 10 17-31

Hymns:

461 The King of love my shepherd is

655 For your generous providing

641 Seek ye first the kingdom of God

721 We lay our broken world

JP99 I have seen the golden sunshine

Doxology

May God's blessing surround you each day,

As you trust him and walk in his way

May his blessing within guard and keep you from sin,

Go in peace, go in joy, go in love