

The benefit of hindsight

Heather Smith *reflects on* Proverbs 8:1-4. 22-31

It is easy to be wise after the event. “We should have checked,” goes the cry when things go wrong.

In engineering there is a “lessons-learned review” at the end of a project. Everyone involved writes down what went well – so we can do the same next time – and what that went badly – so we don’t repeat mistakes. Unfortunately, such reviews often get filed away and never looked at again, so the next team is destined to repeat old mistakes, and probably add a few new ones.

By contrast, God brought in Wisdom at the beginning. In *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes wrote, “It is really only God alone who has Perfect Wisdom... who

has a complete knowledge of the truth of all things.” Today’s reading tells us that God’s first act was to create Wisdom and then to work with her to create the world.

Wisdom has a Greek name, Sophia, and mystics such as Thomas Merton and Hildegard of Bingen meditated upon her. In Constantinople the famous Eastern Orthodox church, Hagia (Holy) Sophia, was dedicated to her.

Sister Joyce Rupp wrote: “We need to look for Sophia. By her very nature she is relational, present in the world, interacting among people and ordinary human lives. By desiring to know her, by opening our minds and hearts, her radiance will permeate our lives.” If we do as Sister Joyce suggests, perhaps we can learn to be wise before the event. ☺

Lord God, from whom all wisdom comes. We look for Sophia, present in the world, among us in our day-to-day lives. We desire to know her, to open our hearts and minds, and to allow her radiance to permeate our lives. Amen.

Walking with Poppy

Side by side

by Gillian Cooper

Poppy is not really very keen on walks. She likes sniffing and playing, but doesn’t quite see the point of just walking. Unless, that is, she is walking with her friend Bella. They trot along happily, sometimes side by side, sometimes taking it in turns to

lead, looking across at each other and exchanging the occasional nudge. Walking in company is obviously okay.

The Bible tells the story of how God walks alongside humanity, from our first steps out of Eden and into the wide world, through all our disasters and failures as well as our joys and achievements, all the way to our entry into the city where we can finally rest. Sometimes we are following, and sometimes going off ahead on our own initiative, but we can be sure that God is there. God the Holy Trinity is ahead of us, alongside us, and within us on the way. ☺

Summer

by Ricarda Witcombe

Summer is here and the garden needs my attention. The grass needs to be mown, weeds need to be extracted, and the biggest job of all – it needs water. All this takes time, but the tasks have their rewards, especially if I notice what is happening. With the water, the leaves of the thirsty plants seem to dance in relief. Almost before my very

eyes, wilted stems and leaves become alive again.

Gardens can be such good mirrors of our souls. As I water, I ponder what it is that makes me come alive again when I am weary and thirsty of heart. As I pull up the weeds, I wonder what are the things that overcrowd my life. As I notice the flowers, I rejoice that such beauty is growing in my midst, and pray for the grace to notice beauty in my own life and in those around me. ☺

“In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer.

Albert Camus (1913-1960), French philosopher and author

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORPHIRANDSTENNESS

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice 851139

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 or coffee.

Intimations

Tuesday 8 pm: Choir

Thursday 10am – 12noon: Community Café in kirk hall.

Sunday 30th June: The annual joint service with Flotta and Hoy and Walls will take place in Flotta. Details to follow.

Reading: Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31
Psalm 8
Romans 5:1–5

Hymns: 110 Glory be to God the Father
4 How excellent in all the earth
135 O laughing light
559 There is a Redeemer
546 Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
JP42 Father I place into your hands

Doxology: (786)

May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place;
May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.