EMMANUEL DAILY DEVOTION – MONDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2020

Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

John 4: 21-26 'The Kingdom Here and Now'

He said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither
on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we
know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true
worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to
worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' 25 The
woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he
will proclaim all things to us.' 26 Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

I don't understand the US political system for electing its Presidents. Not fully, anyway. The fifty States (or most of them so far at the time of writing) appear to have elected Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States of America. However, we have to wait for legalities, the Electoral College to meet, and an inauguration ceremony before he really *is* the next US President. In the meantime, it feels from across the Atlantic, as if the US political landscape is one of limbo. President Trump can still make all sorts of decisions, yet President-Elect Biden is already speaking with world leaders, making noise about the US remaining in the Paris Accord and that it will support the WHO. Limbo indeed. Maybe I shouldn't be so bemused: the Methodist system for stationing ministers often means a minister knowing they are moving best part of a year in advance; the URC system of 'calling' usually reduces this significantly and enables churches and ministers to plan accordingly.

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus uses the phrase '…the hour is coming, and is now here…' a number of times which gives a slightly confusing sense of time. If something is coming – the hour, God's kingdom, Jesus' crucifixion, eternal life – then how can it be coming and in the future tense, but also present here and now? Oddly in the English language we have two, nearly identical words for these two states. If something is **imminent**, it's coming soon; however the word **immanent**, describes God present and with us here and now. So which is it?

When Jesus meets the woman at the well, we get a clue to how to begin to understand this peculiar perspective on time. Jesus is saying that God's kingdom is indeed coming and that something momentous is going to happen with a significance for all creation. However, he is very keen to stress that this is not something to be sat around and waited for, because in Jesus Christ, God is acting in his creation like never before. Because of Jesus, things are different here and now. So he tells the woman that the Kingdom of God is, in a sense, standing right in front of her. Thankfully for us God's Kingdom is never in a state of limbo – whatever may come in the future in God's great designs, God's Kingdom has already broken through into our lives.

A Prayer of Praise: *(StF 255 by Bryn Rees (1911-1983))*

God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun, in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call,
and all things cry glory to God all in all!

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