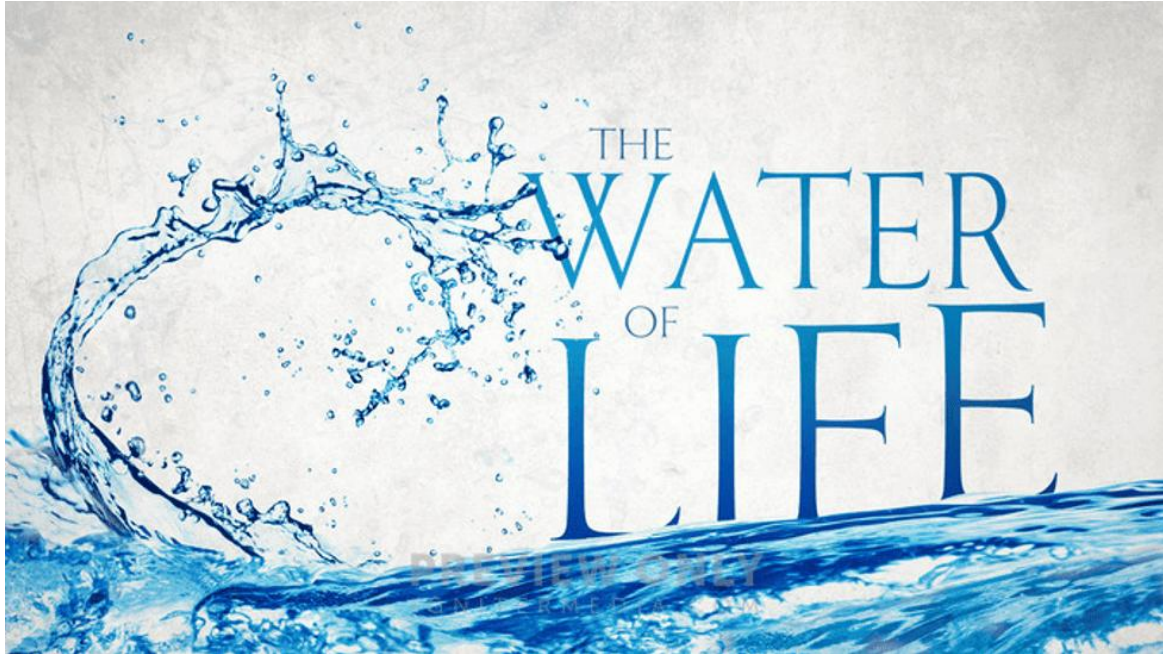


Have you seen the raindrops?

By Revd Philip Smith



I don't really have sea legs, I'm not really into fishing and would happily sit by the side of the river with a fishing rod with no hook reading a book. But there's one aspect of water that Lucy and I have really enjoyed on many occasions, and that's a canal. Sometimes just walking along the towpath, occasionally cycling because it's really flat, but more especially on a narrowboat toddling along at 2 miles an hour enjoying the locks, swing bridges, wildlife and the tunnels. On many a canal trip I have found complete rest and notice my heart simply beating to the rhythm of the engine and usually going slower than the people walking by.

This Sunday in Creationtide has been designated as *River Sunday*. Now as those of a certain age know, that '*When the weather is nice, there's nothing so nice as messing about on the river.*'

Canals have been constructed and built by very clever engineers and navvies, whilst rivers have been created by God. Rivers have a source, they have a journey, and they have an end. It is said that we never see the same river as it is constantly changes as it flows by.

A few years ago, we had a baptism at the Hambleden Valley Wild Church led by Sue Moreton. We all stood by the river as Sue scooped up some water into a bowl to baptise a teenager. That water was incredibly Holy being set apart for a very special purpose. I

remember thinking how through the water cycle those drops had evaporated from the sea risen in the sky and fallen as rain onto the river to be at that very moment to baptise. A river starts somewhere and ends somewhere, like our own lives. It can meander, be calm and at times a raging torrent. It can be scary, invigorating and life giving.

Creationtide helps us be mindful as to how we treat our waterways especially as they are the source of the clean water we enjoy and denied to so many around the world.

Being political for a moment, and this is a personal view, I believe that water should be held collectively and not organised for the benefit of shareholders. For we are all stakeholders and responsible for keeping pollution at bay even often in the simplest ways such as not littering or disposing the wrong things into it. Our water companies must serve the common good.

'Let justice flow like rivers and righteousness like a never failing stream' Amos 5:24

Rivers have been the inspiration for much poetry and hymns and one that comes to mind begins: *When peace like a river, attendeth my way. When sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

If you have a spare 17 minutes then watch this, probably with a box of tissues.

https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv%3DReApJymYSiw&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwj6_zmo4KXAxU09QIHHTv7MJ04ChDPjQV6BAgTEAo&usg=AOvVaw2eAtVfolA_NrDhEr2p6Jl

As I write my mind goes back to a hymn we sang at my home church to the tune of *Blessed Assurance* titled *Floods of revival*. It has the refrain.

Spirit divine O quicken us now. Whilst in your presence humbly we bow. Let all our hearts ablaze with your love. Teach us the secret of life from above.

May our lives flow out to one and all, with the refreshing love, joy and peace of Christ, giving thanks daily for our water supply and for the one who gives us the water of life.

Oh, and why not come to Harvest Carols this Sunday 27th September 5pm at St. Peter & St. Paul, Stokenchurch.

Keep the faith, but never ever to ourselves.

Love Philip x