

Dear friends,

The Old Testament reading for last Sunday (10th January) was Genesis 1:1-5. In verse 2, it talks about darkness and (depending on your translation) chaos (another word for which is cosmos). As we travel together through another national lockdown and increasing cases of COVID-19 with a more virulent strain, we may feel things are indeed dark and chaotic.

Yet, Genesis describes (again depending on your translation) the breath, spirit or (feminine) wisdom of God brooding in the dark and over the chaos. Again then, the good news is: Immanuel - God with us – in the darkness and the chaos.

We may feel there is further good news God saying, 'Let there be light' and calling it good (v. 3). As Reverend Dr. Inderjit Bhogal O.B.E. said at Conference and the Sheffield District Synod last year, there is a danger that elements of dualism within our church history means we can slip into darkness being 'bad' and light 'good'. This can have a harmful, if unintended, impact as it can get close to talking about black and white and the way we talk or perceive people of different ethnicities. Perhaps this is something we need to reflect on as part of our responses to Black Lives Matter? After all, Psalm 139 reminds us that darkness is as light with God and Galatians 3:28 states there is no Greek or Jew, no slave or master, no male or female (no black or white?) in Christ.

I would like to invite us to reflect on this reading through the days ahead, particularly about a God who is with us in the darkness and chaos. How does this impact our perspective on things during this lockdown and how does our perspective affect the way we live and speak in our communities?

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Morley', with a horizontal line underneath.

Reverend James Morley

Co Superintendent