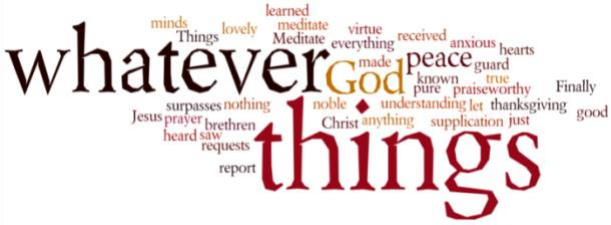


THINK ON THESE THINGS….. (our contributor this morning is Tony Wilson)

**Reading:** Isaiah 40:3 - 5

3 A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.[b]
4 Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

**Reflection:**
From Ascension Day through to Trinity Sunday we spend a lot of time thinking about the Holy Spirit and how it can be alive and at work in our lives. Although those few weeks have now passed by, I always find my mind is still focussed on the Holy Spirit for the first few weeks of the "Sundays after Trinity" season.

Some years ago the theologian Dr. Elizabeth Stuart wrote: "I think that we are living through a very painful period. The Church always moves forward through crisis. Crises are times when cracks appear in the Church through which the Holy Spirit pours." Although she was writing about a crisis of the past, when I came across her words again recently, I felt they spoke to us with great relevance for the present time. We have already experienced how the Holy Spirit has inspired us all to do Church, Christian action and ministry differently in the quite unexpected situation in which we now find ourselves. It's not just at Emmanuel or in the URC that things have been done differently. Many Churches throughout the country have been inspired by the Spirit to do new and different things. It's as if many others have joined us in following our theme of "Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today".

The reading I've chosen today from Isaiah is a prophecy about the hoped for return to Jerusalem of God's people from exile in Babylon. It imagines great improvements being made to the route the people must walk on their way home. When we walking in any way, our surroundings change throughout our walk. We have to change the y we walk to suit these changing conditions.

Things may well be different when the present crisis is over, although we don't know quite how. However we can all be confident that the Holy Spirit will pour through the cracks in the Church and guide us as we are 'Walking the way' through a new landscape.

**Breath-Prayer for today:**

Lord God, we pray that we may walk in your presence, with your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills, and the dance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit with us always. Amen.