

14 Challenger Quay

Falmouth

Cornwall

TR1 1 3YL

andrew.mumford@methodist.org.uk

07557 569520

Wednesday, 28 October 2020

Dear friends

Falmouth & Gwennap Circuit - Pastoral Letter November 2020

Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. John 16:20

This week, there is a palpable sense of great sadness around our Circuit, with the news that our dear friend and Superintendent Minister, Robbie Bowen, has been 'called home' (in his own words). Although we knew that this would happen, there is still a sense of numbness, and of unreality, as the news sinks in. Many tears have been shed in the last few days, and doubtless more will be in the time to come.

Robbie was, perhaps, alone in being positive about dying. For him, his Lord was calling him, and this was the fulfilment of his lifetime of discipleship. He was looking forward to rejoicing in the presence of God, and living eternally with him.

After all, this is what we offer to people. When we conduct funerals, we speak of the 'sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life'. It's a positive thing. It's something to be celebrated. It's something to give thanks for.

So is it wrong that, at the moment, we find little room for celebration or rejoicing? That all we feel is a deep sadness at the loss of Robbie? Of course it isn't! While we know that Robbie had immense confidence in God's faithfulness and in the promises that we know so well, at this time we feel the pain of parting. Indeed, it is a measure of the love and respect that so many people had for Robbie that we feel his loss so greatly. Few people in this life have no-one who dislikes them, but I venture to suggest that this was the position in Robbie's case. A look at the comments on the various Facebook postings that shared the news demonstrates how loved he was.

Robbie's was a life of faithful discipleship. He lived out what he preached. His desire to be the presence of Christ in the lives of those to whom he ministered led to him being totally committed. Robbie was a minister, through and through, and nothing, not even a terminal diagnosis, was going to change that. We have been privileged to be served by Robbie, to worship alongside him, and to be counted as his friends. We will miss him, with all his idiosyncrasies, like cycling in all weathers, and wearing shorts when everyone else was shivering. But we will miss him most of all because of his passion for the Gospel and for those he served.

It's no wonder then that we are filled with sadness. It is a measure of all that Robbie meant that he leaves such a huge hole in our lives.

But we remember that Robbie was not just a minister. He was also a man for whom his family meant the world. For Robbie, Ruth was the perfect match. The love for their children, Hannah and Dan, was matched only by their pride in them. The wider family were very important to Robbie, as he was to them. As we mourn, we hold before God his family whose grief is more than we can ever know. May they know his loving arms surrounding them.

At this time, be sad. Feel the pain of parting. Allow the tears to fall. They speak of the one we have lost. In time, we will find ourselves smiling when we remember things that Robbie said and did. We will laugh at some of the memories we have. But now, we simply say thank you to God for the privilege of knowing Robbie Bowen.

We will share with you news of the arrangements for Robbie's funeral when we have it. However, you will be all too aware that the restrictions we currently live under mean that very few people will be able to be present. We have arranged, though, for the service to be live-streamed, so you, along with people all over the world, will be able to participate.

You will experience and show your grief in your own ways. For some, it will be an intensely private matter, for others it will be evident to those around them. Whatever is right for you is okay. However, if you need someone to talk to, someone to share with, please don't hesitate to contact your minister. We are here for you at this time.

May God's blessing, comfort and peace be with you.

Love

Andrew

Rev Andrew Mumford

Superintendent Minister, Falmouth and Gwennap Methodist Circuit

A prayer:

Loving Lord, we have been blessed by the ministry of Robbie in our Circuit. We have been inspired by his confidence in your promise of eternal life, and we have seen how his faith shone out in all that he did. Thank you for his presence with us.

In our sadness, may we rejoice that we had the privilege of knowing Robbie. Be with all who are mourning his loss, especially Ruth, Hannah and Dan and their family. Amen

Contacts:

Rev Andrew	07557 569520	andrew.mumford@methodist.org.uk
Rev Liz	01209 820077	elizabeth.harris@methodist.org.uk
Deacon Jane	01326 211361	itsjanemills@gmail.com
Rev Celia	01872 863686	celiaphil@tiscali.co.uk
Pastor Jenny	01209 213657	jenny.lockwood@btinternet.com