



Welcome to Café Explore – January 2021

When you were a child did you; like me, enjoy picking up natural objects to take home, shells, pebbles and fossils from the beach or acorns, conkers, and big sticks from countryside walks? Filling a bucket for a willing adult to carry or popping a precious, colourful stone into your coat pocket all added to the memory of a lovely day out. I wonder how many of us still like to spot some of these (and perhaps pick them up) on our daily permitted walks maybe to Raincliffe woods or on the beach at low tide.

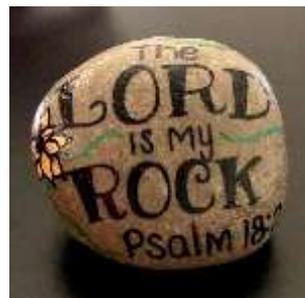
Holding a natural object such as a smooth, shiny stone we realise what comfort there is in the sense of touch and how that comfort has been denied us over the last few months when we haven't been able to greet each other with a hug or handshake or even be in the presence of a loved one except on a screen.

Perhaps you will remember the painted stones children placed on the steps leading up to church with comforting words such as JOY, PEACE AND LOVE painted on them, or others made by Newby school children with red poppies painted on them placed in remembrance on the war memorial.

Stones have often been used to leave messages or to guide the way as cairns on a walk.



If you have the resources to do so find a smooth stone and paint a pattern or scene on it may be adding a word of comfort, or a heart for Share the Love, this could be placed somewhere where you see it each day and then a small cairn of them could be made in the churchyard when we are back together again.



A question to ponder

Where would we be without Jesus – our rock in troubled times?

Scripture

Read the passages as if for the first time, noting any key verses, phrases or words that strike you.

Deuteronomy 27:2-3, 6-7

² When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. ³ Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

Build the altar of the LORD your God with stones from the field and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. ⁷ Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God.

Matthew 21:42

⁴² Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes"?'

1 Peter 2:4-6

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

'See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.'

As you read the passages for a second time consider the following-

1. How are these passages one from the Old Testament, one from the Gospels and one from a letter to the early Christians, linked?
2. Do the readings help you consider the value of a church building?
3. How can you be 'a living stone'?
4. If we made a cairn from stones representing the blessings we have received from God, how big would it be?

We pray

We focus our prayers using **Psalm 18:1-3, 31**

Think how we can always rely on His strength in times of trouble.

¹ I love you, Lord, my strength.

***31 For who is God besides the Lord?
And who is the Rock except our God?***

²The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

***31 For who is God besides the Lord?
And who is the Rock except our God?***

³I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

***31 For who is God besides the Lord?
And who is the Rock except our God?***

***Heavenly Father, we pray for all people who need you for whatever reason, that they may
be filled with your love, peace and strength.***

Amen

I give thanks to the authors of many books and articles that help me in planning Café
Explore each month, this time it was a passage from BRF New Daylight from 2017 written
by Sally Welch that was a great help!

Take care everyone and stay safe,
Marie x