



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Sunday, 22 May 2022 – 6th Sunday after Easter
Readings: Acts 16: 9-15 and St John 14: 23-29
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Best laid plans and all that!

How often in life have we found that our best laid plans have gone awry? Over the last two years, doubtless much we had hoped to enjoy has been delayed or, cancelled. For instance, two years ago, David and I had planned to go on a cruise but how providential it did not take place for, had we sailed, we would have found ourselves close to the epicentre of Covid at a port in China!

A radical change of direction

Some earlier verses of Acts, before we picked up the account this morning, inform that Paul had fully intended to continue his mission to the north-west of what is now Turkey. Poised to travel the next day, in the night he received a vision that instead, he was being directed to go cross the Bosphorus. Whereas cruise ships take such a journey in their stride, I imagine in Paul's day the sailing would have been much more arduous and not as inviting, as his vision. Paul, recognising it as a vision from God, is obedient. Who knows, what he may have encountered had he ignored the vision, perhaps an earlier form of epidemic, or other kinds of hindrances to propagating the gospel. Instead, he takes a leap of faith, crosses to a new continent to the hub of transport, commerce and, crucially, communication. From this location in Philippi the gospel was poised to go global.

The best help for the journey of life

When our plans are changed beyond our control, we feel vulnerable. Paul, very likely, had this experience multiple times over the course of his ministry. What underpinned his faith was the absolute belief that God, through Christ, had called him to serve and that he was supported in this ministry. That support, we heard Jesus describe in John's Gospel, as "... the Advocate, the Holy Spirit." Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit is to teach us everything and to remind us of everything that he himself had said. For, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them'. In a constantly changing world our journey through life might have many disruptions, the good news is, though there may be many detours, through Christ, we will reach our final destination finding that life has been far richer, far fuller and more transforming than anything we could have planned. To close, in the affirmation of our faith, how often do we remind ourselves of Christ's words and act upon them?

Amen.