**Saturday 8th August**

Isaiah 49: 8-10

This is what the Lord says:

‘In the time of my favour I will answer you,  
    and in the day of salvation I will help you;  
I will keep you and will make you  
    to be a covenant for the people,  
to restore the land  
    and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

to say to the captives, “Come out,”  
    and to those in darkness, “Be free!”

‘They will feed beside the roads  
    and find pasture on every barren hill.  
They will neither hunger nor thirst,  
    nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them.  
He who has compassion on them will guide them  
    and lead them beside springs of water.

Most sports days have been cancelled this year, but in a relay race, the runner must successfully pass the baton on to the next runner and so on, in order that the final runner can complete the race. The race cannot be completed if one runner holds onto the baton and refuses to pass it on! We can only give what we have received. In this passage from Isaiah, we read that we have been rescued in order to become rescuers. The Lord has shown us favour, and bought us salvation, so that we can in turn bring restoration, call the captives out of bondage and the declare freedom to those that are in darkness. What a wonderful calling! Freely we have received, freely we can give (Matthew 10: 8). And then there is a promise that the Lord will provide, even in the most unlikely of places – there will be pasture even on the barren hill. On this, perhaps the hottest day of the year, allow the Lord to lead you beside springs of water!

*Father, thank you for your promise of refreshment and provision. Thank you for all that you have done for us in Jesus – that when we were powerless, dead in sin, He died for us so that we might be set free. As we have received, help us to give. Thank you that the Good News of Jesus, is Good News for everyone! Help us to be confident as we share you. In Jesus name. Amen*

