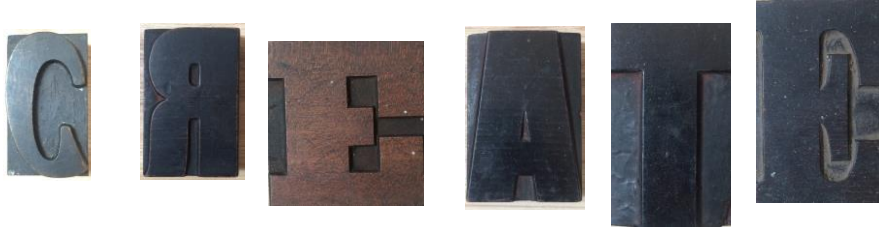


## Sermon – Hannah Fytche

Created: 28 June 2020

On the opening slide of this service were some pictures of printing blocks, spelling the word create. Here they are again:



These, and other, printing blocks were given to me by my grandparents, who used to run a printing business. They had huge printing presses in which they'd line up the blocks, before rolling ink onto them and pressing paper down on top, to get an imprint of the picture.

This was their craft – and now it is my craft, in a way. I use these letter blocks to print words and poetry onto pictures I paint and draw, like the one of the Cambridge geese behind me, printed with words from Mary Oliver's poem 'Wild Geese'. This is a craft that I enjoy, and it is a craft which has come to remind me of creation – God's creation of us.



In the chapter before our New Testament reading from Ephesians, Paul uses the image of a seal, a kind of stamp. He writes that when we believe in God, God marks us with the seal of the Holy Spirit, imprinting into our hearts and lives a mark of God's presence with us and his creation of us. It is a mark of how we belong to God and are each made alive by and in him.

It is a little like the imprint left on paper by one of these printing blocks: the paper is marked by the image of the stamp. We are marked with the image of God our Creator; his fingerprints are on our hearts and lives.

In other words, we are gifted with his likeness, as it says in Genesis' creation story. And one of the ways in which we have God's likeness and image is in the gift of creativity: as God is creative, so we are creative.

This is what we have seen again and again this morning – in the examples from our Old Testament reading; and in the examples that we've seen so far of the creativity and craftsmanship of people we know in our church family.

Back at the end of our New Testament reading, we heard these words:

'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which were prepared in advance for us to do.'

That word 'handiwork' is translated from the Greek *poiēma*, which can also be translated 'masterpiece' – and from which our English words 'poem' and 'poetry' come. We are each God's poetry, his brilliant, communicative creations. We each, by being ourselves as made by God, are unique in our creative abilities: abilities which allow us to know and to share something of God's love with the world, as a good poem communicates something of reality through its precise form and words.

And so today let us celebrate this gift of creativity with each other. Let's encourage each other in our creative abilities – whether those are artistic or crafting skills as we've seen, or other gifts of creation: the gift of creating new policies, for example, or of creating safe and good spaces for people to live, or of creating and enacting systems and procedures which enable us to live our lives well and fairly.

Whatever your gift of creativity is, be encouraged to use it. For you are God's handiwork, his masterpiece, his poetry, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which were prepared in advance for you to do.