

The Power of Living Water  
Revelation Ch 22 v 1-5

David Nash has built up an international reputation as a great sculptor in a career spanning fifty years. Having spent many childhood family holidays at Blaenau Ffestiniog in North Wales, his love of the Welsh woodlands and valleys has remained with him and he has developed a passion for working with wood. This is his story of the **Wooden Boulder**.

The oak tree from which the wooden boulder was carved began life around 1750 and grew for over 200 years on the hillside above the Ffestiniog Valley. The tree lost a major limb in 1978, became unstable and had to be felled. A rough sphere was carved from the base of the tree and rolled into the nearby stream. For 25 years David Nash followed its interaction with streams, rivers, with gravity, the surrounding environment and with the changing seasons. Its weathering surface made it look more like stone than wood. Sometimes the boulder danced merrily down stream, cascading through waterfalls and the fast flowing waters of the Dwyryd River. Other times it rolled more gently along where the meanders of the river were wide and the water deep. As the boulder was tossed about more and more, the rough edges became smooth and less jagged and it diminished slightly in size. In 2002 a high Spring tide forced it up a creek in the river estuary and into the salt marshes. It became submerged and eventually disappeared from sight. It was assumed that the boulder had been washed out to sea but in 2013 excited reports announced that it had been sighted once more. For the next two years it remained motionless, living with the tides, sometimes completely in view and other times when only a glimpse of the top was visible until it disappeared once more and hasn't been seen since.

This story speaks to me of two things. Firstly it reminds me of the *Word of God*, that *living water* that we have followed through the Bible over the last twelve months. We started in the Garden of Eden. It then passed from prophet to prophet, often in a dramatic way but sometimes with quiet calm determination. In passing from the Old to the New Testament the *word of God* becomes personal, close up and intimate, between friends and between Jesus and his disciples. Although being knocked about, the word remains solid and constant in its presence still today.

Now in Revelation, the last book in the Bible, God's word remains in one place. It is not a solid thing that can be seen but it lives through his people in the eternal city. There may be another beautiful garden like the Garden of Eden but there is only one river that flows directly from God's throne; the source of all purity. Whereas in the Garden of Eden man was prohibited from eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, here in the eternal city full access is given to all. The river and the tree symbolise abundant life. In Isaiah Ch 65 v 17 onwards God promises his people 'a new heaven and a new earth' and here it is, described in Rev Ch 22 V 1-5.

There is much in Revelation that is difficult to understand but, I am sure, the eternal city is a place to aim for. It is a place where everyone is satisfied – a city built, not of buildings, but of people. There are no more curses or death, no tears or pain, no need for day or night but a place where there is free, abundant *living water* for all.

## For Discussion

1. The story of the wooden boulder also speaks to me of life. I see it as a metaphor for life - life in general and our own lives. Discuss!
2. You may like to end your meetings based on *The Power of Living Water* by singing the following hymn that sings of water and thirst. It was chosen to be sung at the Irish Retreat by Sr Jane Dixon who so wonderfully led our time together at Drumalis at the beginning of May.

Diane Thornton

## In the questions without answers

Tune What a friend we have in Jesus

In the questions without answers,  
in the truth we seek to find,  
God is calling us to journey,  
leaving certainty behind.  
In the thirst for peace and justice,  
in the struggle to be free,  
God is offering living water,  
freshly poured for you and me.

In the energy of living,  
breaking bounds of church and place,  
God is naming all things holy  
making earth a sacred place.  
In the shaping and the sharing  
in the finding common ground  
God is offering living water,  
flowing out to all around.

In the cross of loving mystery,  
in the mix of tears and joy,  
God embraces and enfolds us,  
with a hope death can't destroy.  
In the silence and the waiting,  
in the anger and the prayer,  
God is in the living water,  
depth of life for all to share.

Jan Berry 2011

