

# **Standing in the footsteps of giants: Hebrews 11.32-40**

Our Methodist daily lectionary is, at the moment, taking us through the letter to the Hebrews. Today we reach the final verses of Chapter 11, one of the highlights of the New Testament for me.

I wonder what the vision was of those who planted your church. It's a question that I have often asked of churches; 'What was the founding vision?'"

## **Here is what Alderley Edge Methodist Church says on its website:**

The church was built at the site on Chapel Road in 1863, its clock-face being the only public one in the village at the time. It is a Grade II listed building and an established landmark in the village. The interior of the building was extensively transformed in the mid-nineties enabling more flexibility and diversity of use. It continues to host a vibrant worshipping community, and is used for a variety of other local events and activities.

## **But what was the vision of those who planted the Church, besides providing the village with a beautiful chapel?**

And what of the other churches in and around Alderley Edge? What was the vision then, how has that changed and what is the vision now?

## **The Giants' Causeway**

What I usually find when I delve into the story of a church is that the founders were people of real vision – risk takers, innovators. Likewise at those points in our story when there has been change, it has been driven by people of vision and innovators. But behind all of those visionaries has been a whole group of people who have been inspired, have caught the vision and done the work. We often hear about the visionaries, but very little about the workers.

The eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews is one of my favourite chapters in the whole of the Bible. It tells something of the stories of people that we know a bit about from the Old Testament, like Cain and Abel, Moses etc., but it also hints at a whole load of people who we know little about. And yet all of them are commended as people of faith, as Saints of God, if you like.

What does it mean for us to stand in the footsteps of the giants of faith? What does it mean for us to stand in the footsteps of the people who were inspired by the vision and got on with the work, the ordinary people? All of these are the Saints of God, in the Biblical sense. So, what would it look like if we were to be faithful to the Saints of God?

I'm absolutely certain that it would look different to how it looked in the nineteenth or twentieth century – indeed, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century pre-Covid 19. But 'what does it look like now?', is a profound and significant questions for all of us to ask.

We stand in the footsteps of the giants of faith who have gone before us.

<sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received

what had been promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (Hebrews 11. 39 – 40)

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