**Simple Mother’s day sermon**

Parents have spent time being teachers during lockdown, so it’s time to give mums a day off!

We all celebrate it our own way. Tania or Rev Lorraine may have had breakfast in bed this morning!

A history lesson Mothering Sunday or Mother’s Day. Are they the same?

16th century mothering Sunday wasn’t anything to do with mum’s, but in fact the Church.

The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church". 4th Sunday in Lent people would return to their mother church for a special service.

"going a-mothering" domestic servants given the day off /families/ mother church.

20thC Constance Penswick-Smith, a vicar’s daughter tried to revive it again.

She wrote a Book: The Revival of Mothering Sunday/Society for the Observance of Mothering Sunday. All her hard work paid off but with more of a focus on motherhood.

Why? There was an American influence... Anna Jarvis in 1908, who honoured her own mother and who had been an inspirational peace activist. In 1914 US President Woodrow Wilson officially signed Mother's Day into existence!

History lesson done, sermon done….or is it?

What about the bits we can’t learn through history books?

When we take apart what it means to be a mother… its not just about giving birth, there are many people who were unable to have children but are still able to mother.

To mother is to nurture, to give enough to grow. And we grow by being fed and watered, by learning to walk and talk … and then we learn about the real power of life….

What is it? It’s love, being a mother is about loving unconditionally, seeing something in a child that no one else can see. They make us what we are.

I was born as the youngest of seven. My mother always said she had 1 boy, 5 girls and a Valerie!

When she was dying I asked her what she meant, she just said, ‘you are different’ at that moment the carers came in and raised her hospital bed, during which time I sang at the top of my lungs the song You raise me up and my mother explained, that’s what I mean about you being different!

God is a bit like this he sees the potential in us that no one else can, and he keeps loving us no matter what… even when we are naughty, he teaches us the importance of repentance or being sorry.

Long time ago I work with a priest from Africa –

She used to go around explaining God’s forgiveness by drawing a love heart on a bit of paper and then stabbing it with a pencil and then rolling it up and chucking it away, God has such patience. She also taught me to look at God in a more human form.

With that image we can imagine reaching up with our arms around his neck. Just like a mother he is with us when we are afraid and frightened, and when it’s time to go home he comes and gets us too. God the father who loves to mother.

“My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it” - Mark Twain. -

I remember as a child losing my tooth just before Mother’s Day. When it came to finding a present for her, dad wouldn’t let me pick the flowers he had planted, and I had not time to go to the shops, so I gave her my tooth and said put that under your pillow and go get yourself some sweets from the money the tooth fairy will leave!

To conclude our history lesson … we turn to the bible we have so many wonderful examples of motherhood:

Eve – the mother of all

Jochebed – the mother of Moses.

Mary – mother of God

Elizabeth – old age

These incredible women all mothered in trust, trust in God.

God the father who likes to mother – Watching from afar.

It reminds me of the very first time we lose sight of our mummy’s, it’s the worst fear in the world and then when they find us it’s the best feeling in the world!

On this mothering Sunday - Mother’s Day we acknowledge and celebrate mothers everywhere

When I first met Rev Lorraine she taught me: How much does Jesus love you? (Stretching arms out) This much.

We give thanks that we have our mother church, which is always waiting to welcome us back with outstretched arms of love. Amen