**The Revd Alison M Bailie**

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16th September 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Over my last couple of letters I have shared with you some reflection on ‘Refreshing Prayer’ by Matthew Greene from LICC. This is the last in the series and I hope you find it helpful.

**Access All Areas**

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings.* Hebrews 10:19–22

‘God makes it possible for us to commune with him in prayer. We see that in him [taking the initiative](https://licc.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2d890204e49f49d788e3a0b12&id=9d4b0a3e0a&e=3d415c6594) in stirring in us a desire to be with him. We see it in the [kind of relationship](https://licc.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2d890204e49f49d788e3a0b12&id=8a26a91960&e=3d415c6594) he brings about – father to daughter, father to son, not taskmaster to slave.  
  
The writer to the Hebrews confirms just how close God desires our relationship to be. God welcomes us into ‘the Most Holy Place’ – the place which speaks of full presence, of complete access.  
  
On what basis? Our ‘confidence’ comes not through our godly lifestyle, church attendance, or social action, but rests on ‘the blood of Jesus’, our ‘great priest’, the one who has opened up ‘a new and living way’.  
  
Perhaps an analogy will be helpful. There’s an [iconic photo](https://licc.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2d890204e49f49d788e3a0b12&id=764e433835&e=3d415c6594) of President John F. Kennedy’s son playing in the Oval Office under his father’s desk. This was the desk where, in the Cold War, major decisions that steered the fate of nations were taken. Access to that room was tightly guarded, severely limited. It’s been described as the biggest home-turf advantage in politics, with even high-profile leaders rendered speechless on entering.  
  
But little boy Kennedy is not nervous. He has free access. Who else gets to play under the President’s desk? And all this without having done anything to get there. He has none of the political status, accomplishments, or roles that would qualify him for access. Yet here he is, at the centre of it all.  
  
As are we. We’ve sinned and deserve to be cast out from God’s presence. Instead, we’re brought into the very centre of it – ‘the Most Holy Place’ – because he has arranged for us to be there. If you belong to him, you have access, and can come as close you like.  
  
We can take this confidence with us into our daily lives, onto our frontlines. The special access we experience in times of prayer is available for those snatched moments before, during, and after that difficult meeting, that unexpected conversation, the coffee break with that hurting colleague. The ‘full assurance that faith brings’ is available for those moments, too.  
  
Whatever God gives us to do this week, let’s play under the desk – not because we lack respect or reverence, but because we belong there, intimately and securely as his redeemed children.’  
  
May we know ourselves as God’s beloved children, fully accepted, forgiven and redeemed, this week.

With my love in Christ and my prayers

Alison

**Sunday 19th September 10.30**

St John’s 10.30 am All Age/Service of the Word

St Leonard’s 10.30 am All Age Communion

Zoom 6.30pm Service of the Word

**Wednesdays 10.00-12 noon -** St Leonards open for private prayer