

26th July 2020

Kitchens

**“The Town small-talk flows from lip to lip;
Intrigues half gathered, conversation scraps,
Kitchen-cabals, and Nursery mishaps.”**

George Crabbe, The Borough, Letter 3, ‘The Vicar’

I wonder what George Crabbe considered to be a “kitchen-cabal”. Perhaps it’s what happened in the kitchen of my childhood home. My bedroom was above the kitchen, and I could hear all kinds of things going on down there – with my ear to the floorboards! But any intrigue or conversation scraps I gained from *that* kitchen small-talk has to stay private, I’m afraid.

But suffice to say that, as with many of us even now, the kitchen was the centre of our house. We ate in the kitchen. I was washed in the kitchen sink as a boy. (Baths were for Sundays ...) I did homework in the kitchen. My father would climb in the kitchen window if my mother had locked him out because he’d been in the pub too long! The kitchen was everything.

As I write this, we’re in the middle of having a new kitchen fitted in our house. But it’ll serve the same purpose as the old one – a place of hospitality and welcome; conversation and planning; rest and renewal.

For two Sundays, I’ve been invited by Robin Allison, my minister, to deliver our church’s Podcast, our weekly recorded worship for our congregation. Robin’s been delivering Podcasts every Sunday since the Covid-19 pandemic hit us. So, for two weeks, he’s having a break. And I *know* that many folk will be tuning in to our podcast – and other acts of worship – sitting in their kitchen. I just *love* that thought: having a sip of coffee instead of a mint-sweetie from your handbag; your colourful spice-rack becoming your stained-glass window; the smell of the roast cooking in your oven being your incense – if you’re used to that kind of thing!

If that is you today, your kitchen is your church and your kitchen chair your pew. Right now, your kitchen is the centre, not only of your home, but of God’s world, because it’s your place of worship. Goodness me, I think you and your God have created George Crabbe’s kitchen-cabal!

A prayer for today

In work and worship, God is with us. In kitchen and cathedral, God is here. Amen.

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