

29th June 2022

Swallows

**“Do you know why swallows build in the eaves of houses?
It is to listen to the stories.”**

J M Barrie, *Peter Pan* (1904)

The name of our home intrigues some people, so it's worth sharing the background to it. We call our house "Swallows' Nest". (There's some debate about where the apostrophe should be or whether there should be one at all, but that's another story ...) Having been in a "tied house" (a Church of Scotland Manse) during my years as a parish minister, when we bought a little flat of our own in a Borders town, we called it "Swallows' Nest", and that name has come with us to our present home.

The name comes from Psalm 84, where the Psalmist writes:

How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

This was for us, and remains still, a beautiful concept. As the sparrow has a home, and as the swallow builds her nest, so we, in our home, seek to create a place where God's love is to be found, and where those who live have many blessings. I hope we have succeeded.

But there is even more to it than that. While such blessings are evident in our "Swallows' Nest", those blessings can still be found even when we are not physically present in such a place. When we recently celebrated our "big birthday", for example, far from our home, we seemed able to carry the "Swallows' Nest" idea with us, so that all those who were present, both family and friends, found many blessings by being together.

God's blessings are real when we are at home. That's clear enough. "Swallows' Nest" is a special place for us. But blessings are not to be confined to a place or structure, to human constructs and enterprises. God's blessings are continually present wherever we are, if we are open to the acknowledgement and enhancing of His presence. So if J M Barrie's swallow was to build in the eaves of a house which carries its name, what would it find? Many stories of the blessings of God, of that I am quite sure.

A prayer for today

Come swallows! Build your nests in our eaves. May there be many stories of blessings to hear.