

Leavening Methodist Church

Thought for Sunday 7th July (Hans-Olav Moerk)

The car ferry Estonia had its bow gate removed by a large breaker. It happened in the Baltic Sea on a stormy September night. When the boat lay floating on its side, some of the passengers managed to climb outside and up on it. Two people who had never seen each other before, sat side by side on the hull, a man and a woman. As the waves were swiping towards them, they gave each other a promise: When this is over, we shall meet in a café in Stockholm. Then they jumped overboard and swam away from the side of the ship through the dark waters. Many passengers died. But it is said that the survived. The next spring, they met in a café in Stockholm.

I had been worried for a long time because of the news about the coronavirus, that took so many lives in China. On Thursday March 12, the Norwegian government held a press conference. Our Prime Minister made a deep impact when she said that this was the most comprehensive crisis in our country since the Second World War. A song came to my mind. "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day". This strong motive meant so much to so many during the war.

Some weeks earlier I had been in a small church in one of the suburbs around Oslo. The church has a large, pitched roof. It is situated on a hill, overlooking the entire district that it serves. This congregation had invited me. They wanted to sing some hymns that I wrote and translated. The February sun was shining. A little choir was practicing. What struck me, was all the faces shining with love for this little church. People came with the expectation of being met and to meet. The day after the press conference churches were closed, services cancelled. People could not meet in the small church anymore.

Easter approached. Maundy Thursday came. The churches were closed, but the story of what once happened on this day, came to life anyhow. We were behind closed doors, without knowing what was to come. In the story of Jesus and his disciples, it was the same. The disciples were in a crisis. Jesus said, 'You shall eat and drink at my table, in my Kingdom' ([Luke 22](#)). In every catastrophe someone is perishing. This time it was Jesus. But before it all happened, he wanted to say one thing - We shall meet when the danger is over.

I have lived these months in fear and hope. Using the time well has become important. People are dying around me. I might lose someone dear to me. I do not know much about my own future. I am scared. I really need faith and hope, but most of all, love. Only one power in the world is stronger than death. It is love. I think that love has a source. It is in Jesus. His love stood the test in three ways: He walked the road. He conquered death. He came back to his friends who failed him. Everyone who loves like that, even if there is anxiety and treason, tells that this love is real. It is the deepest. It is the red cord that runs through the text "We will meet when the danger is over".

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your promises which have sustained us during these troubled times and thank you for love that remains strong despite our failings. We look forward to a time when we can sing your praises once again in church and to that time when we will eat and drink with you in your kingdom. Amen.

Hans-Olav Moerk's full account of the writing of the hymn may be found at <https://iona.org.uk/download/25770/>