Sermon: “**The water that I will give will provide life-giving water and give eternal life**” (John 4.14, parts)

I hate long-haul flights – they seem to go on forever, I cannot sleep, I cannot watch a film, it is too noisy, there are elbows everywhere! For me it is a vision of hell.
What do I need? For it to stop, but refreshment can help. Hot flannels – refresh before a meal is served.

Life for many might seem like this all the time. Where is the refreshment then? TEXT.

In Jesus’ day water fetched early morning before it got too hot. Woman at the well went at *noon*. Why?

She must have been some sort of outcast, shunned and thus needing to go at a time when others not there.

Her life might have felt like a long-haul flight!

She was looking for refreshment, in the shape of water.

But she got more than she bargained. Jesus offered living water, a never ending refreshment. TEXT.

Affordables Shop has just closed after over 20 years. Its main purpose was to provide affordable goods, and folk would come for the re-freshment of the goods we offered. Not too different from the woman at the well.

Customers got more: got to talk, some became workers. In the process many were themselves refreshed.

Parish too got so much more: money for Parish, meaningful employment [paid and voluntary], a means to get rid of unwanted stuff, focus for parish life. It refreshed so much more. TEXT.

Is it not true that we often search for one thing in life but find something better?

Coming to Church – there might be all manner of reasons – out of duty, a habit, ‘a need to’, to sing.

But often we have found something better – friendship, deeper faith, ways to cope, peace from guilt. TEXT.

So I wonder, where does the Parish go now? Affordables may have finished, but its great purpose of providing refreshment remains. Woman was searching for one thing, but receiving something different.

We may be searching for another Affordables, but God has something different for the Parish, just as God has something different for each one of us – let us together find out what this is and embrace it. TEXT.