

Some words from Rev Jacqueline:

November – the weather has certainly announced that Autumn has arrived in all its chilly glory and darkening of days... The clocks have gone back and the nights draw in. Woolly jumpers, hats and scarves will come out and we almost have permission to indulge in the comforting task of snuggling down to the autumnal comfort drinks and fayre – hearty soups and bread – hot chocolate and crumpets and anything that makes it cosy for you...

November in church-life is a rich time of remembering the ebb and flow and fragility of life, and during the All Saints, All Souls and Remembrance services we honour the living and departed and all who have fallen in the name of peace and justice.

And it is especially during this troubled November we can see just how far some parts of humanity have been removed from the natural call to care for and respect each other, and to honour life in all its fullness, seeking peaceable ways to live together, to share differences with grace and to disagree well in a non-violent and tolerant way. These principles stand us in good stead whether it be on a global and international scale or just simply living within our community and family lives – the words of Jesus imploring us to ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (John 13;34), or the words of timeless wisdom pointing us towards ‘Doing to others as you would have done to yourself...’ being our mantra for peace...

As I reflect on the communal life of our parish, I am filled with a sense of gratitude for the various communities of community that we are blessed to hold here – from schools, civic facilities and businesses to clubs and fellowships for all ages and preferred interests. And it is living life as vicar for a parish church community such as Wrecchlesham that brings to mind an article written for the Telegraph by the Church of England’s Secretary General entitled ‘Parishes are at the very heart of the Church of England’s mission.’ Mr Nye was talking about how the closing of churches have declined in recent years, but as I reflected, my parochial interpretation of this statement is that St Peter’s Church is at the heart of our community spiritual life – a gathering place where we can come as we are – with faith or no faith – with doubts, fears or confusion about the bigger story of life and death – and find a way to express how we feel about our day to day journeys of life, and how we join them up to everything else that goes on in the world.

Living out loving principles of living together in courtesy and respect, caring and kindness CAN make a difference and CAN shine a light from our little corner of the world into the darkness that seems to be prevalent everywhere you look, near and afar. We might not be able to do all that we would like – but shining a light into the darkness is something we can all do by the example we set in the way that we live together in love – the best way we can...

I want to add that here, we are all part of St Peter's Church because of our parochial unity – and whether you come along to a Remembering or Remembrance Service – or to the Advent and Christmas festive services that will follow later in the year – or whether you come to none of these but rather enjoy the social and festive gatherings of the Christmas Tree festival and carol singing - wreath making or christingle-making – concert or carol service attendance, please know that being here together and working to help each other along the way, however we do it, and through whatever community we belong to – we can fly the flag together for all that is good about living a gentle and flourishing human life, regardless of difference in colour or creed, social or economic standing. We are living a shared history in a shared moment in time that we have all been called to live out in this place - and in this time.....

Sending blessings and love with you, and I leave you with some hopeful and encouraging words from St Paul, no less inspiring because he was captive in prison when he wrote them to the community of Philippi:

⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.'

Philippians 4:6-9