



RBC Newsletter: February 2019

Dear Church Family,

Many people dislike the winter months – for the cold weather; the need to don extra clothing and turn up the heating; the short and dark days, which particularly dog those who suffer from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder); not to mention the numerous coughs and colds and bugs that seem to be affecting everyone this year. We long for the spring – for warmer weather and the seasonal signs of new life.

But this winter for me, as I have looked out on the landscape – it has seemed particularly beautiful – barren and bleak sometimes, admittedly, but the bare shapes of the trees silhouetted against frosty fields have a beauty of their own, and through those bare branches one has a different view of the countryside to what one sees in other seasons of the year. One day this week, Ian and I were driving along a local road – one we have travelled many times before, and both of us, glancing out at the frost covered fields, noticed, and commented on seeing, a windmill on the horizon – one neither of us had noticed before! In the bareness of the branches and the whiteness of the frost the scenery looked magical and starkly beautiful, and highlighted aspects we had never seen before.

It struck me, thinking about this, that our spiritual life goes in seasons too. There are spring times, when lots of aspects of life and faith are exciting and new and there are all sorts of possibilities ahead; and summer times, when all is flourishing and going well – when we are growing and blossoming – when we are so conscious of the warmth of God's love, guidance and provision. Then there are autumn times - when the winds of life blow; when we are conscious of the season's transitioning– of things coming to an end, or changing, like the autumn leaves. Then there are the winter times – the cold, bleak, barren times- when there seems to be no life; no hope, when perhaps God seems very distant, and His life, love and peace seem far away. Like the Holy Saturday of Easter – when Jesus had died, and there was no indication that anything extraordinary was about to happen...

We need winter times in our lives though, just as nature needs that time to rest, and to prepare for the new life and growth of springtime. God is at work in winter time, behind the scenes in nature, just as He was on Holy Saturday, preparing for Jesus' resurrection. And He is at work in our lives too, during the spiritual winter seasons, when all seems bleak, barren and lacking in hope. Often it is at those times that God reveals things to us, special things that we couldn't have seen or understood at other seasons of our lives – like when Ian and I had that glimpse of a windmill, sometimes God gives us special glimpses or insights - maybe into an attitude or tendency in ourselves, or into an aspect of God's love for us, or His provision for our needs that we hadn't appreciated or understood before. So if you are struggling through bleak and barren times, keep your spiritual eyes open, and ask God what he wants you to see, or to learn in this season. And remember that, just as Holy Saturday gives way to the glory of Easter Sunday, so spring is coming, when God will have a new season of new life for you just round the corner - a season I pray will be filled with His hope and joy and love. Praying for God's richest blessings on you all as you continue to serve Him,

Your pastor and sister in Christ, **Fiona**

Conquest Hospital Service

The next Churches Together led service at the hospital will take place at **3pm on Sun 17th February**. As usual it will be recorded for hospital radio. Please do come along - It is helpful to have a congregation there - to support the Rye clergy; to swell the sound of the hymn singing, and, if you would like, you could also lead a prayer or announce a hymn or reading.

"ENCOUNTERING GOD"

This month's '**Encountering God' evening** will take place in church on **Wed 13th February at 7.30pm**. All welcome

Engage

The next Engage (men's fellowship) meeting will take place at **The Bell at Iden, on Thursday 21st February at 7.30pm**. All (men) welcome. Please let Ian Gill know that you will be coming.

Flower Rota

We all appreciate the beautiful flower displays in church each week, and for these to continue we really need some more volunteers, either to provide and arrange flowers, or to donate money towards flowers on any desired week. If you can help, please speak to Mary A, or add your name to the flower rota on the upstairs noticeboard. Thank you for your help in this.

Gathering at "The Well"

"The Well" (our Ladies fellowship group) will be meeting on **Monday February 11th** from 2-4pm in RBC downstairs hall. Tea, cake and chat – an opportunity to make new friends. All (ladies) welcome.

Additional Help needed for Foodbank and Street Pastors

If you have a calling to prayer or to serve the community in some new way, Food bank needs more volunteer helpers, and Street Pastors are in need of some new Street and Prayer Pastors. Please speak to Fiona or one of the Foodbank/ Street Pastors teams if you would like to find out more.

Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast

Saturday 16th February - 8am

Please join us to pray for blessing on our community, and for an openness to the Gospel. All welcome! Breakfast at 8am and prayer at prayer stations for half an hour. This month to be led by Canon David Frost.

Prayer Corner

Although, due to GDPR legislation, we will no longer be listing specific people's names for prayer on this newsletter, please do continue to pray for your church family and their families, especially where you are aware of particular needs. Every prayer counts and makes a difference, and all are much appreciated by those prayed for.

Please help Foodbank by donating:

Cereal Soup Pasta / Rice
Pasta Sauce Beans Tinned Fruit
Tinned vegetables/Meat / Fish
Tea /Coffee Sugar UHT Milk
Toiletries Nappies
Gluten- Free Foods
Household cleaning materials
Pet food

NB. All items to have at least 3 months till use-by date, and tins to be in good condition (no dents!) please!