

 Rev Michael McHugh

Savernake Team Rector

Burbage, Buttermere, Chute, Collingbourne Ducis, Collingbourne Kingston, East Grafton, Great Bedwyn, Ham, Little Bedwyn, Saint Katharine’s, Shalbourne, Tidcombe

**Happy New Year to You All**

Dear Readers,

I can’t know what sort of Christmas you have had at the time of writing this letter.

I know you will have faced more of the same sort of challenge as 2020. You will be looking back at my today, when new restrictions have been implemented.

This Sunday has a wonderful reading from Philippians in the services, which sums up the enduring spirit that we need to have as we move into the future.

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.  Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.  Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.  And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

We need to be joyful. Not because many in the world are worse off than we are, but because no matter what our situation is, last year will have bought graces and the year we are starting will bring fresh graces.

How we are remembered is so important. Bullies, misogynists, big heads, gloaters are only remembered with pain, pity or resentment. Kindness and generosity are remembered with joy and change people’s lives for the good and forever. The little acts of random kindness that make a dark moment light.

At a funeral years ago, we played the song, ‘Don’t worry, be happy.’ Worrying prevents happiness. Recently I have been graced by a number of people who spoke about their worries. Graced because I could see the first steps on the return to happiness. With the return to happiness comes also the return to peace.

I hope and pray for you all that this year will see a return of the peace and joy that we had learnt to take for granted.

Every Blessing in the New Year,

Michael