

*Love is in the air!*

Well, in the Savernake Team, at least! We have a good number of weddings taking place across the Team over the spring and summer months. It's always a joy to share in the celebrations of two families as they are brought together through the love of the wedding couple.

In the wider world, however, love seems to be a distant emotion. Hatred, anger, distrust, narcissism and the misuse of power is prevalent at the moment, making life very uncertain right now. The news is full daily of the shenanigans of Trump and his administration. I watch the news in disbelief every evening – it makes me laugh and fills me with fear in equal measure. There is no sign of love for others, or even just America, in his actions! I guess that's narcissism in a nutshell!

Love is the reason for the season! It's almost Easter – a time of mixed emotions in the church; the triumph of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, followed by the shock of his arrest, the incredible sadness and grief of his crucifixion, the emptiness of Holy Saturday, followed by the joy of the Resurrection on Easter Day! All this happened because of love.

That sounds a bit back-to-front, doesn't it? How can the painful and humiliating death of Jesus on a Roman cross remind us of love? The Bible tells us '*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*' It's the ultimate sacrifice as God shows his deep love for us. This season is even more important than Christmas! It's central to the Christian faith. For us, without Christ's death, there can be no life!

For the time being, though, it's still Lent as I write this. A time of sacrifice and abstinence, of fasting and prayer, as we think of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. But as we move closer to Easter, there are services that help us engage with the roller coaster ride of emotions of the Easter story, beginning with Palm Sunday, moving through to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and our celebrations of the resurrection on Easter Day. Throughout this story runs the theme of love. It's what makes the world go round!

May you have a holy Lent and an Easter full of love (and chocolate!).

Rev Jo Reid