

Hopes and Expectations

In true British form, I'm going to begin with a comment on the weather! Wasn't the weather glorious during Easter week? I hope you all enjoyed time out with family, or just pottering in the garden! Having said that, it's actually pouring with rain as I write! Oh well! The Lord gives and the Lord takes away!

I love this time of year! As we look with awe at the colour that is exploding into our gardens and hedgerows, hear the birds sing, and see them busily feeding their young, it fills us with a sense of hope and lifts our spirits. After what has felt like a long Lent and an even longer wet and dreary winter, a warm and sunny Easter was just what the doctor ordered!

Our spirits are lifted in Church, too, as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, and the renewed hope it offers our faith. Our churches are filled with flowers once more and our hymns are upbeat and full of hope.

One of my favourite Easter stories is that of the two disciples who are travelling from Jerusalem to Emmaus on foot - about seven miles. They're feeling pretty down; all their hopes for the end to the Roman oppression had disappeared when their leader was crucified. Their hopes and expectations had come to a cruel and heartbreaking end! As they walk, they discuss all they had seen and heard over the past couple of days. A stranger catches up with them and asks them what they're talking about, and they are stunned that this man hasn't heard! After all, everyone's talking about it! When they arrive home, they invite the stranger to stay for a meal. The stranger accepts their kind invitation and as they sit, he takes bread, blesses it and breaks it and gives it to them. The familiarity of his actions opens their eyes, and they realise who he is and at that moment, he disappears from their sight. So excited are they, that they rush back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that they had seen Jesus and that he had indeed risen!

What I like about this story is that it reminds me that Jesus is alongside me even when it doesn't feel like it; when I'm feeling tired, under the weather, or just.... full of doubt. The disciples didn't recognise the stranger as Jesus because they weren't expecting to see him. So just because I can't see Jesus or feel him near me, it doesn't mean he isn't there and doesn't care. I guess I just need to look more closely around me!

It isn't always easy to have faith in something, or someone, you can't see or physically touch. But then, as I look at Creation springing into life, I can see God at work all around me, and I'm filled with hope!

In the words of Leo Tolstoy – In the name of God, stop a moment, cease your work, look around you!

Happy Easter!

Rev Jo Reid