



Good News

February 2021

'The Feast of the Presentation

Dear Friends,

It feels as though I often write to you about the weather and changing seasons in these letters. I suppose this reflects two things: first, the comfort and connectedness I feel with the Creator through creation, and therefore a particular attentiveness to these changes. And second, the great slowing down of things and lack of other distractions that we have come either to love or to be dragged down by over the last 12 months that finds many feeling the only thing we have to comment on, in great British fashion, is the weather- But I hope you'll indulge me in yet more tales from my study window!

As I write this on a rather grey February morning- I have been distracted and entertained by a pair of Blue Tits, a Robin, and the courting Woodpigeons who have taken up residence in my garden- the garden is all of a sudden alive with activity! But what has really caught my attention is the very brave shoots appearing in my pots- the pots that I planted up on a similarly grey day back in October- the shoots which this morning are showing the very first hint of colourful petals in amongst the greenery.

These bulbs have been doing their 'work' growing in the depths of the soil, receiving the nutrients and growing towards the light- all of this almost unnoticed, in the depths of winter- and now they have come into the light, ready to share their glory to the world (or at least to my garden!)

And so, I find myself wondering what 'work' is it that is being done in all of us as we journey through this winter?

We are fast approaching the season of Lent (details of which are also included in this letter) that time when we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Easter- through prayer, fasting, penance and acts of service we are called to shed those things that keep us from God and to offer ourselves afresh- to take up the cross and follow him.

To ready yourselves for this time I encourage you to take stock of the garden that is your life and see where, even in these most difficult of days, the shoots are growing- reaching out for new life- the new life that we have celebrated in our observance of Christmas and Epiphany, which has come to an end today; the same new life we are called to in our celebration of Easter, which is to come.

Yours in Christ
Mthr Lucy

*In the lengthening of days,
Snowdrops emerging,
from winter's frozen ground.*

We see the Creator's hand.

*In the sight of a tiny lamb
joyfully bounding
across hillside farm*

We see the Creator's hand

*Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude,
the spiritual blindness that prevents us
from appreciating the wonder that is this world,
the endless cycle of nature,
of life and death and rebirth.
Forgive us for taking without giving,
reaping without sowing.
Open our eyes to see,
our lips to praise,
our hands to share,
and may our feet tread lightly
on the road that, together, we travel. Amen.*

*John Birch 2016
Faith and Worship.*

Dear Friends,

At the very end of 2020 the PCC and I were very pleased to receive a note from Bishop Martin and the Diocesan Board of Finance that declared 2020 a 'Jubilee Year for Parish Arrears', for all parishes in the diocese.

'To proclaim the favourable year of the Lord'. Isaiah 61.2

Parish share is an offering made by each PCC in the diocese on behalf of their congregations to support mission and ministry throughout the household of faith that is the diocese of Chichester. Normally speaking, when parishes are unable to fulfil their pledge, this is recorded as an arrear, with the hope that the shortfall can be paid off, in whole or in part, in future years.

Like many parishes in the diocese, we found ourselves to be in arrears at the end of 2020- this is despite your incredible generosity and the great diligence of Trudi, as Parish Treasurer- but as a direct result of having lost so much of our income as events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

And so, despite the unprecedented situation that we continue to live in we find ourselves to be starting this year on an even footing following the 'jubilee year': a year in which we read in the book of Leviticus (see ch. 25) that God's generosity, mercy, and the ultimate fulness of his Kingdom is reflected in (amongst other things) the cancellation of past debts. As shortfalls on pledges, both in 2020 and from previous years have been written off so that everybody can now make a fresh start.

In addition to sharing this good news from the diocese with you, I wanted to add my own heartfelt thanks, as well as that of the PCC, for your continued generosity- for the way in which you have and continue to support the parish financially, as well as in time, energy and prayer which all enable the ongoing ministry and mission of the gospel in this place.

Thank you!

We are not yet out the other end and sadly we all know the effects of the pandemic are far reaching, but I hope in sharing this news you will feel encouraged and know that we start this year in a good position- that our prayer has been answered and that we can confidently continue to look towards the future and the ways in which we best serve the local community.

Yours in Christ

Mthr Lucy

We remember those who have died:

Maureen Yates, Joyce Reid, Victor Hatzfeld, Di Willson, Pauline Aylward

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