

Dear Friends,

This is the last time I will write a letter in the Parish Magazine as on the 26<sup>th</sup> April, I will be travelling to a new home in Norfolk. Leaving this lovely Parish has been a hard decision but with the Pandemic and the very strange year that we've all shared, I came to the realisation that some 'quality' retirement time would be desirable and that perhaps now was the right time to embrace a future without the demands and trappings of running a Parish. Norfolk will be my new home and will be very different but I'm greatly looking forward to it and will welcome the opportunities that it may offer. I hope to get involved with a local Church... but no PCC, no Deanery Synod, no Clergy Chapter, no Architects to deal with and no Magazine letter!!

I have enjoyed my time here although it has been tinged with the difficulties of the pandemic which has made life so very difficult for us all. It is so good to be back in Church on Sundays and we are seeing a healthy rise in our numbers. Easter Morning was a fantastic response to the power of the Resurrection and as we lit the New Fire of Easter and took the Pascal flame into Church, there was a real sense of Easter joy. The Easter eggs given out were an added bonus!

Now you face an interregnum – the literal translation is, 'between reigns!' Whilst we are so grateful to those members of the Clergy who will 'cover' Services for us, nevertheless, it's not the same as having your own person 'in the pulpit'. I sincerely hope the Interregnum won't be too long and that everyone will help our two Churchwardens in their task of gently steering the Parish. I ask you all to pray that a good and worthy appointment will be made in the not too distant future.

In the last book of the Bible, the Revelation to St John, the Divine or sometimes called the Apocalypse, we hear God speaking to John, saying, 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev 21.v5) and that is the creative power of God. He renews everything in its time; nothing stands still. At the beginning of John's gospel, we read that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The 'Word' was the fullness of God, in Greek, the 'Logos' and the translation used so often is 'weak' as he did not dwell among us.... rather he 'pitched his tent' among us! A tent is a moveable structure reminding us that God is constantly of the move... he is constantly moving and renewing his people. I ask that you all look forward to being 'renewed' in the months ahead and not to be frightened by change but rather be challenged and invigorated by it.

I often quote hymns in my letters because I think they can encapsulate so much of our theology. My own favourite hymn is the great Wesleyan classic, 'And can it be?- to the rousing tune, Sagina. It's a hymn full of Christian triumph.... No condemnation now I dread; Died he for me, who caused his pain... the hymn is littered with wonderful statements of faith; however, I am going to end this letter with a rather 'tongue in cheek' reference to the third verse of the hymn:

*My Chains fell of, my heart was free...I rose, went forth and followed Thee!*

Good bye and God bless. You're all wonderful and I'll miss you.

Fr Keith

