

Dear Friends

Easter is always a special moment in the life of the Church. After the quiet reflections of Lent and the solemn stripping of the altar on Maundy Thursday, through the agony and isolation of Good Friday, we find ourselves in the joyful and life-changing moment of the resurrection, as we celebrate the fact that Jesus is Risen! Risen indeed.

For me, Easter is a reminder that all of God's story is about love and hope. From the very beginning to the final chapter, we hear of God constantly reaching out to call us his own. The good news of the resurrection is that even when things seem uncertain, painful or beyond repair, God is still there at work, bringing about new life. The stone was rolled away and what seemed like a hopeless messy end became a joyous hopeful new beginning.

At this time of year, we see that promise reflected all around us, the days are growing longer, full of light, the gardens begin to bloom and the world feels like it is waking up again after the long cold darkness of winter. I have often wondered about the symbolism we would use if we were in the southern hemisphere where Easter falls in autumn. Death and decay are a given but we would have to work much harder to imagine new life around us.

It is always a privilege to share in this journey of faith. This year we have used symbols of the cross to prepare us and mark the Lenten journey. We have watched a film together and made links in our lent groups. We have spent a morning exploring silence and prayer, and we have joined our local community to make music. Whether you come to St John's every week or only time to time, you are part of our community and you are warmly welcome to come, just as you are.

My prayer this Easter time is that each of us might know something of the peace, joy and renewed hope that the risen Christ Jesus brings.

May the light of Easter fill your hearts and your homes, and may the promise of New Life stay with you in the months ahead.

With love and prayers,

Andrew