

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH GRAFHAM

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

19th May 2021



There is a lot of green about at the moment! Perhaps like me you've been enjoying watching the trees come into leaf. There is something special about seeing first the green haze in the hedgerows and then the bright freshness that follows. In the garden new shoots have been breaking through the soil and unfurling. Seeds are germinating in the greenhouse. At last we can see things growing. There's a sense of hope and of promise in the air.

Perhaps there's been the occasional touch of anxiety too. Each day for a couple of weeks Stuart peered anxiously at our vine - what a relief when the first new shoots were spotted!

This year more than ever I wonder whether what is happening in nature is mirrored in our own lives. It feels as if it has been a long winter psychologically and emotionally, as well as physically. Yet in winter, gardeners reflect on the past season and look forward to the next. It is the time to assess what has worked well and what not quite so well, to think about the changes that might be made, to consider new things to try. Perhaps lockdown has given us the chance to do something similar with our lives. So now as the lockdown restrictions are gradually relaxed possibly we are beginning to uncurl and to come out of our enforced hibernation. There are things to which to look forward, we might want to make changes and do things differently. Maybe there is a hint of anxiety still there - the fear of a metaphorical late frost which advises us to be cautious. Nevertheless you may be able to identify with the feelings of which I'm conscious. I want to stretch, to breathe in the fresh air, to lift my face up to the sunshine - to grow again.

Over the next few weeks those tender seedlings become better anchored as they put down roots. As they become accustomed to their new surroundings they will bloom and flourish. Plants which are already more established will fill out and spread. Fruit will begin to form. However they'll need nutrients to help them and they may need a bit of tying in and training so that they grow tall and strong and are able to weather any summer storms which come along.

I think that is quite a good model for our spiritual lives too. Our faith needs to go on being nurtured so that it can grow and mature. There are many different ways in which that can happen: through prayer, through reading the Bible and different spiritual writings; through talking to other people. You might like to think what nutrients you need personally. Although I'm taking a break from 'Thought for the Week', I'm still very much around and happy to help in any way I can. So do get in touch if you'd like to. For the Church as a whole the weeks ahead are a time when we are encouraged to think more deeply about what it means to follow Jesus. Our Gospel readings each Sunday will focus on Jesus' earthly ministry, his teaching and his example; the green of our altar frontal reminds us that it is a season for growth. It is a time when we can grow in our faith and so become more rooted in God. As we grow in our knowledge of God's goodness and love we may find ourselves becoming more open to God

like a flower opening in the warmth of the sun. In that openness we may be more open to others, more able to receive and nurture them in our turn. Our own blossoming becomes part of a much bigger picture - I leave you to imagine what it might look like.

Last week I shared Ann Lewin's poem 'Wait for the Spirit'. It seems appropriate to conclude this week and this series of 'Thoughts' with her 'Jeu d'esprit'.

Flame-dancing Spirit, come,
Sweep us off our feet and
Dance us through our days.
Surprise us with your rhythms,
Dare us to try new steps, explore
New patterns and new partnerships.
Release us from old routines,
To swing in abandoned joy
And fearful adventure.
And in the intervals,
Rest us,
In your still centre.

(from 'Watching for the Kingfisher')

With my love and prayers

Camilla

Many previous 'Thoughts for the Week' are available on our website
www.standrewsgrafham.org.uk