

## Resurrection

As I write this, I am mindful that it is almost two years to the day since the English Government announced the Covid Lockdown. It has been a difficult time for many organisations. Some, among which are several churches, have closed down altogether. Individuals have been affected by social isolation and anxiety that they might contract Covid. This has been reinforced by illness of loved ones and neighbours. Many of us have lost family members and dear friends. Often, our distress has been aggravated by the lack of opportunity to go through the traditional mourning customs. Several in the fellowship of Christ Church have died during this time and we have not had the comfort of saying goodbye in the usual way to our friends. This has led to a serious weakening of the fellowship in making us feel deprived of the mutual support so important at such times.

Also, the North West Synod of the United Reformed Church has struggled to give the leadership and support from which the individual churches would have benefited. The new Missional Partnership had not yet bedded in and there has been a shortage of ordained ministers and administrative officers available to ease the burden on elderships and congregations of the individual churches in the partnership. Despair looms, BUT ...

We are approaching the most important festival in the Christian calendar, the one which highlights the core message of our faith. In our Bible readings over the next few weeks, we will relive the experiences of the closest followers of Jesus in their darkest hour.

I am especially affected by the story in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Two days after the death and the burial of Jesus, his disciples discovered that his body had disappeared from the tomb. They were distraught. Luke relates that two disciples, Cleopas and an unnamed companion, left Jerusalem after this discovery and set off for Emmaus, about two hours walk from Jerusalem. They were joined on the walk by a man they did not recognise and they spoke to him about their distress at the death of Jesus and how their hopes had been shattered. Their new companion explained that they had got it wrong and that God's plan was being fulfilled.

When Cleopas and his companion reached their destination, they pressed their fellow traveller to stay with them for the night. As they sat for supper, their visitor "took bread, gave thanks and broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him". They knew the presence of Jesus, knew that all was going to be well with his support.

So let us rejoice and give thanks, look for signs of God's plan for Christ Church and work for its accomplishment.

**Robert Lock**