

Dear Friends,

I write this as I have returned from the Circuit Retreat Day which was held at Mersea. It was a good time to meet with others and to have some intentional time and space with God. The day provided an opportunity to step outside the 'normal' things of life for a few hours, pray and reflect.

The period of Lent encourages us to do this and to deliberately set aside some time to be with God, to spend time with Jesus and to allow the Holy Spirit to move within and between us. We see Jesus doing this on a number of occasions in the Bible to spend with God.

I also write this as I am about to go on sabbatical through the months of April, May and June. To take a sabbatical is an expectation of all ministers and it is a time to step outside Circuit life for a period and to consider ministry from a different perspective. During this time I will be considering the areas of leadership and discipleship and music in worship. It will also be a period to spend some time with God in different ways. I really hope it will be a positive time for everyone in the Circuit as well in whatever form this takes.

Each of these examples is an invitation to see things from a different viewpoint, God's perspective. As we reflect on our life of faith and how we bring it together with our daily life, we can always ask how this might appear from God's perspective. As we approach the Easter season in April, and then Pentecost in early June, both are a radical expression of God's grace and transforming love. They encourage us to see things from God's point of view and to acknowledge the ways in which the world irrevocably changed with the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

The hope we celebrate on Easter day is seeing the transforming love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who died on the cross on Good Friday and rose again on Easter Day so we may have the opportunity of new life in Christ. This is a life of wholeness, peace and joy. It is a love which is freely offered and to which we are invited to respond to the salvation we have received from God and serve God by sharing that love with others.

However we may do it, I hope we can take time over the next few months to find the opportunity to ask how things might seem from Jesus' perspective. How is the Holy Spirit moving to show us what this might look like? We may find it in the natural world, spending time with friends and family, through our studies and reflection or whatever it might be. We do know that however we do it, we will be met with the love and grace of God, who will always be with us, guiding us and shaping us as we allow him to do.

I wish you a peace-filled and joy-full time.
Easter blessings to you all,
Chris