

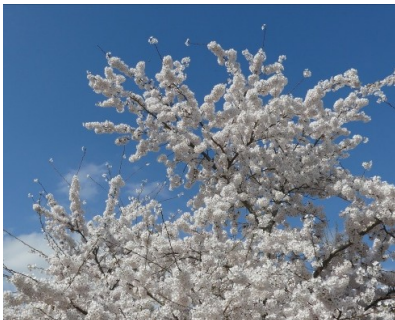
A message from Revd Ben Thompson

By the time you will be reading this, I imagine Easter will have begun to feel like a distant memory. At the time of writing, it is Easter Sunday afternoon, and I am surrounded by excitable children who have been given cake at church, completed an Easter egg hunt at home, have more chocolate than they know what to do with, and are playing with their Easter presents (we don't buy them chocolate, because they will already have a lot, and it helps us resist the urge buy Easter eggs for ourselves).



In the course of writing the paragraph proceeding this, their mum has asked them “are you going to say thank you for your lovely treats?” Low and behold, solemn and performative “Thank you”s have been said. Although their awareness of the world is increasing, they don't really understand why they are saying thank you, except that it's part of the rules they are expected to follow; they don't understand what the generosity of others to bring them has cost, both in financial and energy terms.

I don't say this to criticise them: it's part of growing up and learning, and in many ways their ignorance is also a consequence of their innocence, enjoying a stage of life in which things are more likely to be received without the expectation of having to pay someone back.



As I lift my eyes from my screen to the window, and see the cloudless blue sky, golden sunlight, and both flowers and leaves in bud whilst the blossom creates explosions of colour, I realise I'm no better than they are really. I spend the early months of the year waiting for the summer to arrive as if it's my unalienable right, with no consciousness of the mass of molecular activity, chemical reactions, or even the orbit of the earth required to bring about the beauty of summer nature (which I hope we will all be fully enjoying by the time you read this!).

We have begun to work on our gratitude (and not taking things for granted) in our family by each sharing one thing we are thankful for from the day (children AND adults). Perhaps this summer, you might like to try the same or, if you feel too self-conscious for this, you could do what one of my old bands used to do when out on tour, and say or sing these famous harvest words which are also found in the musical Godspell, before eating:



All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above; then thank the Lord, then thank the Lord, for all his Love.