

**All Saints' Church
Cottenham with Rampton**



Pastoral Letter #80

March 2023

Dear Church Family,

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.' John 14

These are words that many of us know well and they are words often read at funerals. But they're great words for Lent and Easter. I wonder what you are hoping for.

Hope, in general terms, is the joyful anticipation of a good thing that *might* happen – a long meal with a good friend, a holiday in the sun, your dog bounding towards you in exuberant welcome, an end to war in Ukraine.

Hope in the Bible is the joyful anticipation of a perfect thing that *will* happen: the wedding banquet with Jesus; eternal relationship basking in the light of his face; his warm welcome; 'Well done good and faithful servant'; and an end to all war, hunger, and pain.

Here, as our Lenten journey brings us to the night before Jesus' self-giving death, the Saviour's focus is on the hope of continuing relationship with him. The disciples have finally come to accept that he is going to be killed, that they are to be separated. Jesus reassures them that they will spend eternity with him in his Father's house. But he also promises them that he will not leave them alone now. He will send the Holy Spirit to guide, strengthen, and accompany them – his Spirit in them day by day, moment by moment (John 14:14–16, 26).

Hope for today, hope for whatever tomorrow brings, and hope for eternity are all guaranteed and fuelled by the abiding presence of the Spirit in our lives. And they all work together. Our eternal hope puts today and tomorrow in perspective, and today's reassurance reminds us of the joy to come.

Yes, today may bring hard choices, painful sacrifices, and confusion: the decision to admit a costly mistake, to obey God's word with acidic cultural winds blasting in our face, to trust God's will when his will is agony to us. All these become possible not only because of the joy set before us by Christ, but because of the work of the Spirit of Christ in us now.

In this, Christ's journey to the cross shows us the way. Empowered and guided by the Spirit, strengthened by the joy that was set before him (Hebrews 12:2) to do the Father's will rather than his own, he gave his life in our service – as we are to give ours in service of him, and those we meet day by day.

Things to pray for in March include:

- The family, staff, parents and children of Cottenham Primary as they continue to process the sad loss of a much-loved wife, mother and teacher, Katy Hancock
- Those who continue to be affected by natural disasters - the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the Mississippi tornado
- Those working under extreme pressure in the NHS, including our local GP surgeries
- Wisdom for the government during the current cost of living crisis
- Those whom we long to come to know the life-transforming love of Jesus, and the five people that many of us have decided to pray for as part of 'Pray for Five'
- The ongoing war in Ukraine, for an end to fighting
- Those who are unwell: Susan, Yvonne, Deirdre, Hazel, and Janet
- The families of those who have died, including: Tim Oakes and Ron Marson
- The services taking place during Holy Week and over Easter.

Do pick up a flyer advertising the services taking place during Holy Week and over Easter – there's something for everyone. There's also a new Quarterly Date Card to collect from the Church Table covering the period April-June.

If you are receiving this letter and cannot get to church, do remember that we are very happy to bring church to you. If you'd like to receive a visit, have someone pray with you, or receive home communion, do let me know. It would be our pleasure.

Best wishes,

Revd Lynda Davies

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