

In the past few weeks the wildlife visiting my garden has increased. A family of hedgehogs and 2 woodpeckers have joined us. These new visitors have scared the resident sparrows and our neighbours cat who disappear quickly out of sight whenever either one appears!

Watching this activity made me consider how do we react when we are faced with something new that scares us? Some people find it easier to run away, while others stand their ground and confront whatever frightens them. Fight or flight which would you choose?

Presently all our fears are increased. Consider a shopping trip and the realisation that everyone around you is ignoring the government rules of social distancing. Or when emails arrive describing return to work rituals in finer detail test our capabilities. Fear and uncertainty is growing. Yet at the same time hope is growing too. Since the pandemic started, I have maintained weekly contact with members of our Church family. Nearly every conversation has ended with them saying 'Hope to see you soon' or 'Hope we can get back to normality soon'.

In the language of the New Testament, the meaning of hope suggests a much more and confident expectation than a fleeting expression as this. Hope in the Bible is a rock solid confidence that God is as good as his word and we can be comforted by this. It is with this meaning of hope that Christians equip themselves and journey on in the knowledge that God cares for us in all our changing circumstances as he cares for all the gifts of his creating. Matthew 10:24-39 The poet Emily Dickinson puts it well "Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all."

God Bless,

Jacqueline

Prayer

Blessed are you Lord our God, for you call us to know you and to love you. Father you created this world out of your goodness and pour your love upon it. All things are precious in your sight and all are valued.

Sovereign God we cannot always make sense of life. We feel frustrated when things don't work out as we hope, we become frightened when the way we thought you were leading us no longer feels right. Our hearts are troubled when doors that once had beckoned suddenly seem closed firmly in our face. We cannot be sure whether such moments are meant to happen or whether they run counter to your purpose, but what we know for certain is that where one door closes you are able to open another.

Loving God in these unprecedented times, help us as your Church to be ready to serve the needs of our community and the world. Help us to trust in you to guide us as we journey on looking forward in hope to what is to come and to be ready to grasp the future, responding to each opportunity you give us as it comes. In the name of Christ we ask it.
Amen