

## Pastoral Letter June 2022. Revd Sue Cooper writes:

Dear Friends,

As I sit writing this letter the view from the Rectory window is glorious. The garden has exploded into a riot of colour and the flowers and shrubs look wonderful. There is constant birdsong, and the peace and tranquillity has the ability to calm the mind after busy times. There is a poem that says we are closer to God in the garden than anywhere else on earth, and I think that is a good assessment. June is such a wonderful month. We have traditional events like the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament, and we have the longest day on June 21<sup>st</sup>, better known as the Summer solstice and the Church will be celebrating Pentecost, which is considered to be “the birthday” of the Church. Everything seems better in the summer, and this year many of the events and festivals that have not taken place over the last two Covid years are now back. Live music is back. Life is back. Hooray!!

This June is exceptional as we are celebrating 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign. This really is a glorious event. Our Queen has served faithfully, under God, for longer than any other monarch in our history, and it truly has been a blessing to us that we have had her for so long. Our Queen has a very strong faith, and she has never been afraid to bear witness to God's sovereignty over her rule and reign, as well as over her personal life. We cannot begin to comprehend the challenges and sacrifices she has made over the years in order to fulfil her duty, but it's still easy to forget that she is only human like the rest of us. She has the same hopes and fears for her own family as we do, and like us, she has the same desire and concern to see communities across the land living in peaceful harmony, where children and elderly folk are safe and nurtured. She has the same need to be loved and valued as the rest of us, and none of us will forget the sad images of our Queen sitting alone in St George's chapel in Windsor Castle due to Covid restrictions, as she said farewell to her beloved husband Prince Phillip at his funeral last year. She is only human and she suffered like the rest of us during that awful time.

None of us choose the family into which we are born. But all of us are special to God and he desires that we all live lives of purpose and meaning. We are not all born with equal advantage or opportunities in life, but God can certainly open doors and avenues to us that we are not able to access ourselves. Queen Elizabeth is very aware of God's hand on her life, and the grace that she has received from him to do the work she has been destined to do, and God's grace is upon all of us who faithfully seek to live our lives under his sovereignty. Our Queen is 96 years old, and she may have slowed down in recent months but she is still making a difference to the world by her contribution. And like her, no matter how young or how old we are, as long as we have life and breath in us we can all contribute in some way to the betterment of society, and to this world.

I do hope you enjoy celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee; it is a once in a lifetime event that we have been truly blessed with.

God bless you all, and God save the Queen.

With love, Rev Sue

***Psalm 71:17-18 “Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds. Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.” Amen.***