

Pastoral Letter July 2022. Revd Sue Cooper writes:

Dear Friends,

As we launch into the second half of 2022 it's worth reflecting on how quickly things can change for us all.

At the beginning of the year we were in the thick of the newest variant of Coronavirus, the dreaded Omicron variant which threatened to be the most easily transmissible Covid variant so far.

Thankfully, although very transmissible, it did not make people as ill as had been expected and we have continued to learn to live with Covid very well; in fact it rarely even gets a mention on the news these days.

We have changed the way we do a lot of things since Covid.... not least the way many people now work... with more and more people enjoying a mixture of home working as well as going into the workplace.

The biggest change this year so far was in February, when we were all taken by surprise by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This conflict has ravaged their country and displaced its people, and it has changed the way we all thought that peace in Europe was secure, making us question how much has really been learnt from the terrible lessons of World war one and two.

The 1st half of this year has seen a rise in the cost of living that has shocked us by the sheer speed at which it has affected just about everything we spend our money on, and is changing our spending habits. But I think the biggest change has been in the way we think now. For a long time we were all saying we just want things to get back to normal after Covid, but we have learnt that life is never going to be the same as it was just a few short years ago, but that life is still good, and we can still enjoy it in many different ways.

We have just celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and it was a much needed time of joy and celebration, with our Queen thrilling us all with her appearance with Paddington bear, and the revelation of where she keeps her marmalade sandwiches!! But as we enjoyed those images of our Queen and her family on the balcony of Buckingham palace, one could not help but notice that change is coming to our Monarchy, as the Queen is no longer able to do as much as she used to. It is reassuring that Prince Charles and Prince William are ready to step in when necessary.

Everything changes, and as it does we either embrace the change and change with it, or we mourn the past and can become stuck.

For those of you that have not heard, I will be leaving the Astwick Vale benefice at the end of August. Change is coming to our Churches once again. I have very much enjoyed my time here, albeit with many challenges and times of personal loss. You have all made me feel very loved and appreciated and I thank you all for your support during my time here, and I leave with many fond memories and valued friendships that will continue into the future.

In life we all know that everything we do is only ever for a time and a season, and when we serve God in any role or ministry we are aware that we are on God's time schedule and not our own, and for some time I had been feeling that my time as incumbent of the benefice was coming to an end. This means that God has something new, and someone new, in mind for you all here in this Benefice. So as I make plans to leave, I am praying that your next Vicar is feeling the prompting for change in their own life, and hears the call of God to minister in this place. I am here until the end of August, and so hope to see many of you before I leave. God bless you.

With love

Revd Sue

Romans 8: 28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Amen.