



St Mark's Church, Reigate

September 2019

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

September is seen by many people as a month of new beginnings. As the new school and college year starts, tens of thousands of people will be going to school or college for the first time. Many more will be starting in new classes or year groups, and for the teaching and lecturing staff they will face a new year of targets and all the challenges which they bring. Each new school year brings new opportunities for many people as well as new obstacles to overcome, and so it is a time of looking forward with anticipation and hope as well as some trepidation.

But it's not only for people connected with the education sector that this sense of newness and looking forward is relevant. In our lives we all have times when there is a very clear sense of things changing and moving on.

At the centre of the Christian faith is the message that God is not only the unchanging God that we sometimes refer to in some of our older hymns, but is also a God who is forever demonstrating new ways of entering into relationship. Our God is a God of change as well as a God of constancy. The Bible testifies to a gradual awakening of an understanding amongst God's people of how God works. Time and again the people of the Bible are surprised at where God can be found and how God can be seen to work, and in my ministry that is something to which I would testify.

We should expect to see God working in what we might consider unlikely places and also we should expect God to work through unlikely people. It is, we believe, God's world that we live in, so it should not surprise us if we are sometimes taken aback at where we find signs of that presence.

As we go into the future we should never travel in fear that God is not going to journey with us to the same degree as he journeyed with us in the past. Instead we should look forward with a sense of anticipation that we will discover God in the most unlikely of places and that we will continue to be surprised that he travels with us in our newest of experiences. We should be reminded of Jesus' promise to his disciples as recorded at the end of the gospel of Matthew: 'I am with you always, to the end of time.' Let us live in that hope.

With every blessing.