



**St Mark's Church, Reigate**

November 2019

**Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton**

Dear Friends,

Think of the life of a tortoise. As it wakes from a deep sleep in springtime, it eats the best of fresh new salads and vegetables, warms up in the sunshine and filled with renewed vigour, charges around like a mad thing. Then after expending all that energy, our tortoise slows up and relaxes in the sun. Slowly, as the world around it cools and the sun is lower in the sky, dampness sets in and frosts tell of the winter approaching, our tortoise stops eating, and slows to such a rate, it becomes almost comatose as it denies itself any life or exertion during those cold months.

I am not suggesting that we are in any way like tortoises, but there is a similarity in life pattern, with our renewed springtime energies, slightly more relaxed summer periods and then the wrapping up warm in winter. During this period, we stay at home more, perhaps watch more television or enjoy more of a particular hobby, but we also have a lot more thinking time. We look back over the year, we look forward to Christmas festivities, make plans and lists and get used to the combination of cold and, hopefully, central heating.

In November the Church is very busy not only engaging with this, but helping us all to join in as we enter Remembrance-tide. We remember those we have loved and lost at the All Souls' Commemoration of the Departed service on November 3rd at 6.00pm. Similarly, we remember those we have loved and lost through war on Remembrance Sunday 10th November. Two weeks later we remember and celebrate that Christ is the King and the following week we enter the time of Advent. We move from quiet sadness and grief mixed with gratitude for the lives of others, into a time when we remember that we DO have hope – not just for Christmas coming, but for the assurance of eternal life in heaven. Because Jesus came to live among us, became our King and assured us of his personal love, forgiveness and creating a place in heaven for each of us.

So, as we get used to the winter nights, remembering and grieving for those lost to us, let's not stop the journey there. We AREN'T tortoises! The world about us may be darker with less daylight hours, but the journey of the Christian year continues with us remembering that whatever has gone on before, whatever pains and sadness we have had and the lessons we have learnt from those experiences, we have hope. Christ is King and we do indeed look for his promised return. In the meantime we come together as part of his Kingdom in the "here and now" and work, pray and live together to make it a better place.

With every blessing.