

## Minister's Musings - Easter 2020

Dear Friends,

Now that The Queen has broadcast a message and The Prime Minister has sent a letter I thought a few words from me might not come amiss!

First and most important a very peace and hope-filled Easter to you all. Thirty- eight years ago on Easter Sunday I was in Jerusalem and visited The Garden Tomb, one of the two sites from which it is believed Jesus rose from the dead. Inside is the engraving of an anchor from the first century which is one of the symbols used by the first Christians to express their faith. Why an anchor? Well the writer to The Hebrews reminds us that our hope in The Resurrection is an anchor for the soul firm and secure (at which point some of you will be humming "Will your anchor hold!). An anchor of course doesn't prevent a boat from rocking amidst the wind and waves nor its passengers from being sea-sick but it does give the assurance that it will not be overturned. In the same way the Easter hope is not that trials and tribulations won't come our way - the tragic events of these past few weeks remind us that that is a false and futile hope. Rather it is hope in the final victory of life over death, goodness over evil and new beginnings when all seems lost that is the Easter message. In that sure and certain hope may the Risen Christ bring you moments of unexpected joy this Easter-tide.

Today as you know would have been my final services in The Stamford Circuit before my sabbatical begins leading into retirement (for want of a better word!). Clearly things have changed somewhat since I last wrote to you so I thought an up-date might be helpful. First to say that I'm sorry but you won't be getting rid of me quite yet! I shall still be on sabbatical but will be staying at the manse certainly until the end of May and see how things are looking then. During that time I shall continue to produce and in some cases deliver a worship service each week and be available for urgent pastoral needs both within The Circuit and more locally. You may first want to contact Angela Saunders (Oakham) Margaret Stacey (Uppingham) or Eileen Ray (Empingham) but if you want a conversation with me then please don't hesitate to ring. And although I know many of you have already got help in place I am thankful that I am not-self isolating (at present!) so if I can collect prescriptions, bring food or support you in any other way do ask - it would be a privilege to help. Otherwise I hope to spend my time catching up on much-neglected reading, watching DVD box sets which have been awaiting my attention for years, clearing out stuff which I've never used and don't need and getting the study ready for Bekkie's arrival. And I hope to sleep more and pray more and walk each day and have quality time with Charlotte which will be a special gift. So please don't feel sorry for me. I shall be quite content and fulfilled! Even if we could move or knew where we were moving to I really wouldn't want to be away at this very difficult time and being here at present means I can perhaps be a sign of that hope of which I wrote earlier.

So I continue to hold you in my heart and in my prayers thankful to know that we are held in yours.

With love in Christ, Leo.

