



Praying Together



Times and Seasons
January 2021

Dear Friends,

I have a book on my shelf called *Times and Seasons* and it made me think of all those things in our lives which are bound by times, seasons, patterns, cycles, phases, circles, rhythm, which provide a framework to the world and society in which we live. The particular book I am talking about is the *Times and Seasons of the Church year*. Our church year begins with Advent, and takes us all the way through Christmas, Epiphany, which we are in now, to Lent, Easter, All Saints and round to Advent again. At the moment we are on the road towards Lent, so to speak, and then, before we know it, it will be Easter again! Will we be in church this Easter Sunday I ask myself...who knows!

Many of us, have had more time to notice the changing of each season over this last year and the way nature changes over these times. I love watching how quickly the phases of the moon change each night and our ancestors were fascinated by the procession of the stars and movement of the suns rising and setting on the horizon. We had the pleasure of visiting the Isle of Orkney a couple of years ago and we visited Maes Howe, an ancient neolithic tomb, where, on the dawn of the winter solstice, the rising sun shines through the entrance and its rays hit a stone placed in just the right spot to receive the rays from that first dawn at the turning of the year. From darkness towards light. Stars have been used to navigate by for centuries, and, as we know from our Christmas story, the Magi were guided by a bright star towards the place where Jesus was born.

Through this time of uncertainty in which we have had very little control, these times and seasons have provided a stable framework on which we can fix, at least some small part of our lives, to generate a sense of security and stability. A sense of reassurance is found in the constancy of the changing seasons. Those eggs in a nest turning to fledglings, flowers blossoming and fading, shoots sprouting and then falling in those wonderful autumn colours. Despite the trouble and strife we are enduring the world, the seasons, the rhythms of our lives keeps turning and we realise that we are all part of a much bigger picture.

In these dark days of January let us take some time to dwell on the light, in the birth of Jesus, overcoming the darkness as we move, with the season, towards the lighter days and springtime.

From the Bible:

Psalm 104: verse 19

“The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down.”

Ecclesiastes 3: verse 1

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.”

Let us Pray:

(Prayer based on Isaiah 43: 1-7)

The God who breathed this world alive
And sustains it day by day
Whose hands flung stars into space
And controls our destiny
Says, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

The God who filled the ocean depths
And set tides on their way
Who caused mountains to be raised up
And rainbows to display
Says, “I have called you by name, you are mine.”

The God who made the fertile earth
And seed within to sow
Whose artistry creates butterflies
And the early morning dew
Says, “You are precious in my sight.”

Amen

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid, or in isolation
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A Blessing:

*Go with confidence into the days ahead, trusting in God’s unfailing love and faithfulness.
God will not abandon you, for you are the work of His hands – His own creation – and His
love endures forever...*

Ali, on behalf of St Michael's Church, Marbury