

## A Letter from the Rectory

November 2023

A visiting friend recently commented on how friendly this community is. It can be nice to be reminded of that, particularly when we are so used to living in a place. An outsider, or visitor certainly notices things like that. In fact, it's what drew me to apply for this role here (that and the gorgeous scenery!). I was eager for community, and this job certainly ticked the box!



Living in a community is certainly not always easy, as anyone with a family knows. Anyone who has lived in some sort of community, even monks and nuns can find it hard. We all rub each other up the wrong way sometimes, but the whole point of a community which works is that it finds a way through that friction.

The word community comes from /com/ (with) /unity/ (togetherness, joining as one), and it is something we can strive for, especially when we disagree with or are irritated with those around us. It's for this reason that in October I ran a Unity Course in Charlton Horethorne ([www.theunitycourse.co.uk](http://www.theunitycourse.co.uk)). It was an opportunity for us to think through the difficult issues of how we can disagree, but still live in unity, creating a community.

Another word which I was interested in recently is the word Religion. Religion has certainly got a bad name, so it's extraordinary to remember that the word comes from '*re-ligio*' – to reassemble, regather, reconnect. How far we have moved from that meaning! (And I am referring to all religions rooted in all nationalities). We could all do with being reminded of that original purpose of the word Religion.

This month let's be encouraged to be aware of the positive impact which community can have on our lives, and that's BOTH giving and receiving. In today's world there is a temptation to hide behind anonymity – whether through emails, letters, or social media. Not giving or even receiving, but dropping our views like little bombs, then running away. Whatever our views on things, there's no life in that, and no building up of community. So, if you have a view, share it gently and openly, and together we can '*re-ligio*', or reconnect as a community, enjoying and flourishing through that life giving unity which we all need.

*With love, Rev Rona*

### **PRAYER FOR THE HOLY LAND AT THIS TIME OF CONFLICT**

**(Written by Rev Dr Sam Wells, St Martin in the Fields, London)**

God of judgement and mercy, compassion, and steadfast love,  
look tenderly on your children at war in your holy land.

Still the souls bent on vengeance and destruction.

Change the hearts plotting death and devastation.

Raise up leaders within the warring parties and in the international community, who can turn violence into reasoned argument, and listen to the pain until a way forward emerges.

Make us see what we have in common so much more than what divides us.

And let all who trace their past back to Abraham find their common future in you.

Through Christ your Son our crucified companion forever. Amen.