

## Letter for February 2019

Dear Friends

Right at the beginning of February (2nd) in our Christian calendar we are greeted with light through the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple or Candlemass as it is also called. The second name reminds us of the image of Light, the celebration of Jesus as the Light of the world. We recall the words of Simeon to Mary and Joseph as he takes the 40 day old child Jesus in his arms and proclaims him as, 'a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the glory of your people Israel'.

After what seems to have been a very long, cold January, arriving in February and starting the month with the reminder of light mirrors the promise of hope of new life, warmth and light as we move nearer to Spring - crocuses and daffodils (some are out already) and we look forward to the journey to Easter through Lent - but that is for next month. Our diocese of Manchester has agreed to become an Eco-Diocese, and it is encouraging all churches to find ways to join in and care more visibly for God's creation in a great variety of ways. We hope this small step will be the first of many. So, if you are interested in helping with a bit of gardening in our Church garden this Spring, or know others who might be, please let me know and we can get together and create a renewed garden ready for the summer.

We are having to re-think our Church Rose Garden. After many years some of the beds of roses are too old and are no longer flowering. Although the Council maintains the grounds we are responsible for the beds. We have plans to dig up these, remove

any old roses and replant with herbaceous plants and bulbs. We hope that by doing so it will make our Rose Garden bright and colourful for much of the year, and we also hope it will be attractive not just to those who walk through it and sometimes sit peacefully in it when the weather is warm but also to birds, butterflies and insects.

Finally, most of us will be concerned with the current political *impasse* in the Brexit negotiations and the looming date of 29th March. The Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) have asked us all to pray for the situation and for our politicians. May I urge you to do so? Here is one prayer you might like to use daily:

God of past, present and future,  
be with us as we take our next steps as nations together.  
May we strive to love our neighbour as ourselves,  
listening and speaking with respectful kindness,  
embracing difference.  
Remembering how much all have been forgiven by you,  
may we offer friendship, grant mercy,  
and seek peace and justice in our shared future. **Amen.**

with every blessing

Kate