

Where, oh where, has this year gone? It doesn't seem five minutes since we were celebrating Christmas, and then celebrating Easter. Now Ascension and Pentecost are behind us too, we are back into 'ordinary time' in the Church year, and we are halfway through the calendar year already. Everyone says the weeks and months pass quicker the older you get; that definitely appears to be true!

As Church, we are now fully into wedding-season time, with the majority of celebrations in May, June, July and August. (Don't worry if yours is one of the weddings in September or October, I've got it in my diary!) And, of course, by the time you read this, the latest Royal Wedding will be over; as will the battle of the remote control to choose between Harry and Meghan or the FA Cup Final. I trust that peace has returned to your household.

There are also other things to look forward to in June (depending upon what interests you!): Royal Ascot, the Queen's birthday and Trooping the Colour, the Hampton Court Festival, the Battle of Britain Air Show at Headcorn, Father's Day, the tennis - the French Open, Queen's, Eastbourne - all in preparation, of course, for the big one: Wimbledon starting on 2 July; not forgetting the Benenden Church Fete in support of St George's Church on 16 June! (See insert and p13 for full details.) And just to prove that time really does fly by: 'Benenden's' are holding their third AGM in June.

Whilst we are celebrating, enjoying or simply tolerating all these events locally or nationally, violence still continues to happen around the world. The opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem and the violence it has triggered in Gaza are a real concern. The talks between the US and North Korea seem to be in jeopardy. Tensions over the Iran nuclear deal continue; as does the conflict in Syria. More terrorist-related killings in Paris, and the bombing of three churches in Indonesia. For now things seem to have gone quiet over relations with Russia; but then the matters related to Brexit seem to become ever more complex with every passing day.

Given how quickly time seems to pass by, it struck me that perhaps it would be a good time to take stock of all the good things we have in life; all the things we enjoy; all the freedom we have; that so few of us go without: food, shelter, warmth, clean water, gas/electricity, jobs, schooling, education, holiday ... good friendships and relationships. As we reach the halfway point of the year, let's remember to give thanks for what we have. Let's take time to appreciate all that we have, particularly our closest relationships; please do not take those for granted - they are the most precious thing we have. So, before June disappears along with the rest of the year, embrace it, and embrace your friends and loved-ones.

Revd David Commander, Rector