I trust that you were able to enjoy the Easter holidays, and to engage with all the services of Holy Week and the celebrations on Easter Sunday. If you didn't manage to get to any of the services, I hope you may have been able to use your parish church for your own private quiet time and prayer. Apart from regular Sunday worship, and baptisms, weddings and funerals, that is what the church building is there for - for you to use whenever you want to, whenever you need to. Please just come in; make use of the space for some quietness, away from all the busyness of life. Everyone needs to do that from time to time.

Right now, it feels like the whole world, and the whole of our society, is in need of prayer. There seems to be so much 'bad news' around at the moment, on TV, hearing about people we know, from things that are affecting loved ones, to things that are affecting us individually. There are many people in our communities who are anxious about so many things.

We are so fortunate, though, in where we live. If you are feeling anxious about something, take the time to notice the beauty of the countryside in which we are living. I know it doesn't pay the bills, it doesn't put fuel in your car, it doesn't put food on the table, or warmth into our homes, but there are signs of new life everywhere we look in nature, which is encouraging. It can give us hope. It can help us to put things into perspective when we see the plight of refugees and see harrowing pictures from Ukraine.

However hard things can seem at times, a new sunrise or new growth in the garden, new-born lambs out in the fields, a smile and a kind word from a friend, neighbour or even a stranger, all these show that this is a new day, with new opportunities, with new hope. "This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." The times are hard right now; but take time to notice the good things and rejoice in them. And provide that smile yourself for someone else, too; they might really need it. God bless.

Revd David Commander, Rector