

From Fr Simon,

Dear all

Whilst on holiday, I was halfway up a mountainside trying to keep up with my friend (who is rather fitter than me). Pausing for breath I turned round and looked at the view. On the lower slopes of the opposite hillside a farmer was cutting grass, it was making beautiful patterns in the field and was a joy to watch. For the farmer the satisfaction was in the production of hay within the deadline of the weather window. But I was further away and could see and appreciate something that the farmer could not – the sweeping curves of the shades of green blending with the contours and field edges slowly emerging as the tractor inched along.

It is often this way: when we are in the middle of things we miss some of their beauty, but when we step away we can look from a distance and appreciate them all the more. It's a bit like those great big oil paintings in galleries that look a random mess close up; to see the picture properly you have to step back.

I'm not saying that our Benefice of Golcar and Longwood is a random mess! What I am saying is that having been away I can appreciate them all the more and in different ways.

I appreciate the beauty of the location – the hills and woods and cloughs, the villages and canal.

I appreciate the church buildings – places of worship and beacons of hope – that have been so lovingly cared for over the years.

I appreciate the congregations – faithful and dedicated to God, to each other and to the community.

I appreciate all those who work so hard to keep our churches alive and open – far too many to mention here.

I appreciate the care that you show to each other and to me.

I appreciate the concern that you have for people outside of church.

I appreciate the old friendships that are so stable and strong, and yet make space for new people.

I appreciate your sense of fun and laughter.

I appreciate your prayers and all the ways that you dedicate yourself to God.

I appreciate you working with me – supporting but also sensitively challenging.

I appreciate the house and garden that my family and I are so fortunate to live in.

I appreciate your willingness to gradually work together as 2 parishes in 1 benefice.

I appreciate my calling to be a priest and to live out my faith among you and work with you here in this wonderful place.

There is great and Godly beauty here.

I am blessed. I pray that God blesses you too.

Notices

Public worship has resumed in our churches on Sundays at the normal times, these are live-streamed whenever possible. Remember to bring a face-covering.

Our Annual General Meetings have not yet been scheduled, but will be soon. Some people will not be able to attend in person so we will enable ways for them to participate using technology.

Kirklees is actively looking to churches to promote fostering within their congregations, saying that despite some mis-conceptions, faith is not a barrier. They say, "Unfortunately we don't have enough Kirklees foster carers, resulting in lots of children being placed with agency carers. This can mean they

find themselves further away from their local area, family, friends and possibly a school change, the cost to the authority is extremely high too.” If you are interested please let me know.

Please continue to pray for our parishes, congregations and local communities, and in particular that we draw others into our life in Christ even as we are growing in it ourselves:

Almighty God, who calls all creation to grow into your loving kingdom;

inspire us by your Holy Spirit so we

draw new people into our churches,

grow closer to you,

and increase our service to the world.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.