

As the year turns we leave behind us a time of political turmoil in our country; and have ahead of us the expectation of more of the same before resolution is reached.

Uneasiness overshadowed our Christmas celebrations because the immediate future was looking uncertain. I do hope that in spite of this everyone was still able to celebrate the wonderful event of God reaching out to earth with such love, generosity and humility.

Whilst our domestic political muddle reflects something of the whole world's pain and confusion, the message we carry with us as we travel on into the season of Epiphany is of the constancy of God and also of hope that the Christ-child brings.

Perhaps 2019 will be a year when following the seasons of the church will be more valuable to us than ever, because through those seasons we're offered an old, old story; a story that comes up fresh every time whilst reassuring us that the world has survived upheaval and mess many times. In church we see the colours change in the same way that the scenery changes outside. We move from the white hangings of Christmas and Epiphany to the purple of Lent, the red of Passiontide, returning to white for Easter before, as the summer begins, going to the green of growth. In our country services at Peper Harow we mark the beginning of the farming year with the Plough Service early this month, in May we ask for God's blessing on the land at Rogationtide and in August we give thanks for the harvest at Lammastide.

And whilst we mark the seasons in these ways, we retell and hear again the story of how God's love was, and is, revealed to us. What might be most important to us at the moment is that that love is revealed to us as steadfast and constant. The rhythm of the seasons of the church year offers us a scaffold to hang on to, being a scaffold built from old wisdom and constantly renewed love.

Who knows how 2019 will unfold? I hope that God's story will be part of its unfolding for you.