

Connecting faith and daily life

A pause in time

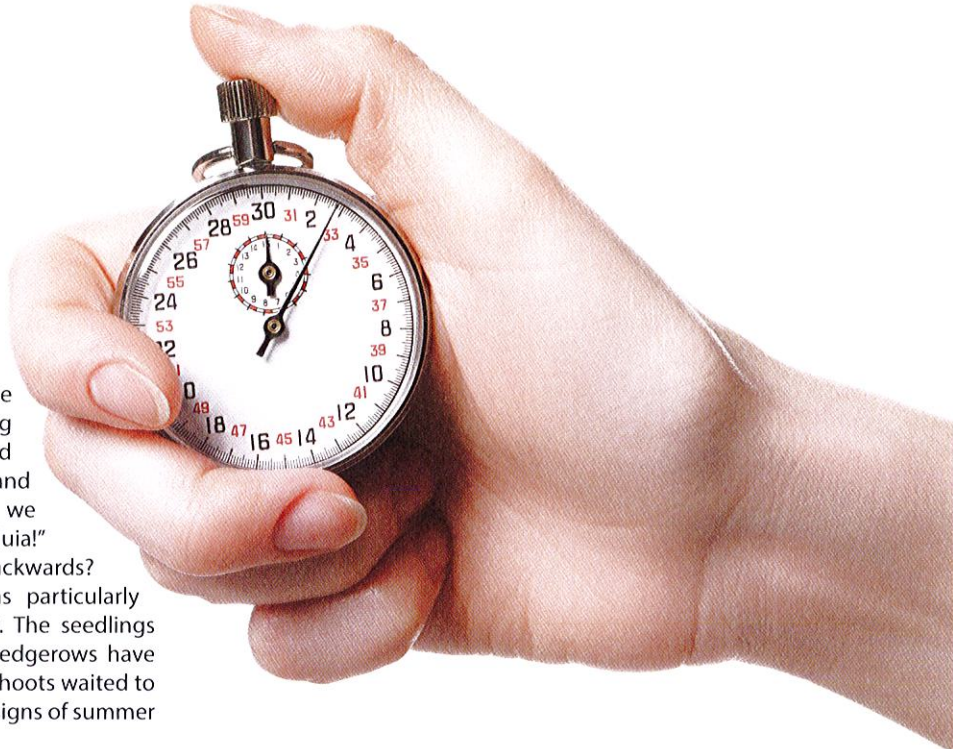
Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Ezekiel 36:24-28

At this time of year I find myself wondering why the lectionary propels us back to the events leading up to the crucifixion. We've been through Lent and Holy Week; we witnessed the horrors of Good Friday and we experienced the dank darkness of the tomb. Then we celebrated the resurrection by singing and shouting "Alleluia!" with gladness and gratitude. So why must we now go backwards? Can't we move forward into light and life? It seems particularly appropriate that we should do so at this time of year. The seedlings peeping out of the soil and the green shoots in the hedgerows have waited the winter – buds waited to blossom into flower, shoots waited to clothe the trees in lush leafy green – and now, finally, the signs of summer are appearing all around us.

And then I realise that there's a quality about this time between Ascension Day and Pentecost – a moment suspended in time – when, yet again, our breath is baited. Jesus has ascended to be with his Father but the Holy Spirit has not yet been sent. God has even more to give.

And so we wait, and in the waiting time we have today's words from Ezekiel, bringing the promise of Pentecost: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh".

And the most wonderful thing about it? God's promise of the Spirit has already been fulfilled, and is renewed in us with every beat of our heart, and every time we draw breath. 🌿



Holy Spirit, you complete and fulfil us. Teach us how to live in these holy, in-between moments. Teach us to relax and be real for one another in the waiting time, to live out the promise of Pentecost, until your Spirit bursts into the world. Amen.

Mental Health awareness

Part 2 – taking stock and assessing

by Katharine Smith

Katharine Smith continues her series about depression.

Now that you recognise the symptoms of depression approaching you may be able to work out what's triggered this unwelcome visitation. Are you particularly stressed about work or in your relationships? Are you in the process of moving house? Has there been a significant change in your medication? Have you been ill recently – flu, chest infection, shingles?

Lots of things can trigger depression and it might help to try and identify any such triggers in your life. Perhaps it is time to call on all the resources that helped you before. Your doctor or psychiatrist can advise about medication. You might want to see a therapist or counsellor you've seen before or trust in one or two friends to support you and keep everything confidential. And don't forget, God says: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (Isaiah 43:2).

www.mentalhealth.org.uk 🌿

Walking with Rosie

Abundance

by Gillian Cooper

We go birdwatching (well, I'm doing the watching!) to a reserve where dogs are allowed. The sun is shining, but, astonishingly, the path from the car park seems to be covered in snow. On closer inspection, the snow turns out to be white fluff, and there are piles of it everywhere. It is from the goat willow, I am told, seeds blown off by the recent sea breezes, drifting into piles by the

shop doorway and clustering around the tree trunks.

How many of these seeds will grow into new trees, I wonder, since most have landed on tarmac? Once more I am taken aback by the abundance of nature. Thousands, millions of seeds to produce a handful of trees. What a world God has given us, that is capable of sustaining itself so extravagantly. And how much effort we need to give, to fulfil our God-given commission to be stewards of it all. 🌿

“Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.”

Martin Luther (1483-1546), German theologian, composer, priest and Augustinian monk