



Hello All,

I hope you are all enjoying the Summer, I certainly am: the first 6 months of this year saw me drop a few stones in weight and I'm now feeling a lot better, a lot fitter and much happier! This is a double-month issue covering both July and August so by the time we get to September much more will have changed and I don't mean just the weather, our sun tans and my waist line!

By July our Curate the Revd Maureen Desborough will have taken up her new post as Deanery Priest for the North Holderness Deanery and I have asked Maureen to tell us more about that in the September issue.

This appointment is brilliant news. Not only will it mean we are not saying a final farewell to Maureen yet and that I will continue to have an ordained colleague to share some of the ministry in this benefice but it also means that for the first time in history the number of ordained women in North Holderness outweighs the number of ordained men!!! It is difficult to believe that only a few years ago the appointment of women in such roles would have not only been impossible but also totally improbable. It is totally right that women should be fulfilling their ministry in these roles: such inequality has gone on far too long and it is a shame that it has taken the time that it has. But I appreciate that not everyone thinks this way and it has been good that the church has shown patience in this matter to try to accommodate and take into account the views of those who have found this change difficult.

This of course is the latest (even if it has been a long time coming) example of the widening understanding of the expansiveness of God's love for humanity and each change has found resistance along the way. When Jesus and then St Paul suggested that God's love was not just for the children of Israel but for every nation, they found resistance; when William Wilberforce and others suggested that race was no barrier to God's love they were laughed at and worse, and now at last the church has caught up with what the rest of society have found to be self-evident over the years since the suffrage movement of 100 years ago; that Women and Men are equal, even in the eyes of God. I wonder what the next barrier to be breached will be?

We only have to look in Luke's Gospel and notice those whom Jesus healed to see these healings as symbols of the expansiveness of God's love. He healed only those who were considered to be outcasts or second class citizens: Women, Children, Lepers, the poor, slaves, "servants" of Roman Soldiers, those thought to be possessed and those of other nations and faiths. It wasn't hard: we only had to read the bible, without our prejudices, to see the truth! But perhaps, given some of the prejudices I still see flying around, it isn't that easy?

The expansiveness of God's love is sometimes called the "Scandal of Grace" because for some reason we cannot get our heads around the idea that God loves those who we judge do not deserve God's love (and by what authority do we feel we can judge that?) and we resist such a scandalous grace.

Anyway I hope you enjoy your summer and I that ask you to spare a thought and a prayer for those going through changes at this time, especially those of our children who are starting a new school in September and may well be excited and anxious in equal measure.

Yours in Christ,

Revd. Andy Simpson