Dear Friends

I am so pleased that the sun has made a welcome return after some much-needed rain last week, it will allow us to gather again in each other’s gardens or meet up to go for walks thout the fear of being caught in a shower. I have enjoyed being able to make plans for visiting family and friends further afield as life slowly and tentatively feels more positive. However, as things ease there are the inevitable questions, what happens next, will the current easing quickly lead to more?  When might a second or even third wave hit?

There is much in the media on this issue, ultimately there is going to have to be a trade-off.  Coronavirus is not likely to disappear until a vaccine is developed.  On the other hand, our physical and psychological wellbeing rests upon many things, from shopping to meeting with our families and friends to being able to work and of course physical touch.  So, it seems to me, we are going to have to accommodate ourselves to a new way of living with that there is a need to manage our expectations, hopes, fears, and worries.

I had a long discussion with some friends who visited yesterday about public figures being able to say ‘we don’t know’. How often do we hear a public figure – a politician, journalist or interviewer especially – acknowledge that he or she, having heard other opinions, weighed up new arguments, heard about different experiences, has changed their mind? On the rare occasions it happens, they are all too often criticized for admitting they have changed their mind or didn’t know something. We hear taunts of you’ve ‘done a u-turn’ or so you were lying before….. admitting you don’t know seems automatically to be deemed as a sign of weakness and those who admit them are thrown into the pit. I would like to suggest we all need to be much more open to the possibility of changing our minds – and of being gracious to others who change theirs. In the last few months, every day we’ve been inundated with new data, new statistics, new interpretations, corrections, evaluations. Who among us can assess all this information instantly and reach the correct decision every time? Then having come to an opinion realised that maybe we need to change our mind. Thinking over a longer period than just the past few months, which of us would say we have the same opinions as we did ten years ago? – or when we were teenagers?

It’s only to be expected that our views change as our experience enlarges and our circumstances alter. It’s important, to move on and grow from our beginnings, in our attitudes and sympathies and understanding holding on to and developing good values and changing the negative harmful behaviour, opinions and attitudes. These last months have opened many of us to new ways of living life – even if it’s only allowing ourselves to be helped to do things we’ve always done for ourselves. And the coming months will be challenging too, as workplaces, shops and entertainment venues try to keep hygienically safe; along with our churches being run somewhat differently, and our worship will look and feel a little unfamiliar as we return. To grow, we have to be open to change our minds about matters we may have thought were settled and changeless for ever. I’m sure I’m not the only person who has been reluctant to accept that the experience of God that I’ve been comfortable with for years may not be the whole story, God does not call us to a life spent sitting comfortably where we first met him. He constantly calls us on to new things that enable us to grow as the people he has called us to be. He always has more for us to discover about him.’ The future might be different from how we imagined it was going to be, and we may have to change our minds about all sorts of things.

When we take that new step on the road it may be scary and feel like we are on the edge of a precipice but there is also that sense of delight, excitement and awe if we’re willing to trust God’s promise that, however good we may think it is where we are, or we know we are in a rut but too afraid to get out of it we need to trust that it’s a lot better up ahead.’ So I pray that we all might have the gift of faith that will draw us on, trusting in your promise that the best is yet to come. Amen

Rev Fi