

St Mary's Church Knowsley Village

Team Vicar: Rev Hugh Lea-Wilson, St Mary's Vicarage
Tithebarn Road, Knowsley Village L34 0JA tel 0151 546 4266
www.knowsleychurch.co.uk



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Dear Friends at St Mary's

Hoping for better?

This comes wishing you God's very best for the New Year.

No, we've not had the best of starts with an immediate lockdown, but I'm writing very specifically to encourage you to keep holding on in hope as we set out into a new year. Yes, hope for the early roll-out of the Covid vaccine, but even more in the certain hope of God's holding presence.

But it's not something that just happens! We are instructed in Hebrews chapter 6 v18 to '*take hold of the hope set before us (that we) may be greatly encouraged*'. And then verse 19: '*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure*'. Are you taking hold?!

I wonder if you remember me highlighting this latter verse at the beginning of the first lockdown? Well, it's just as much for us now. So yes indeed, may your anchor hold in the storm of life. So much ahead of us is unknown, and this brings me to quote another verse which you might well know, this time not from the bible. It was written by Minnie Louise Haskins, and was quoted by King George VI at the outset of WW2:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown"; and he replied,

"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way."

So I encourage you: step out in faith and place your hand in God's hand. His presence will keep you safe, and his light will point the way. I have already been aware of how many are suffering in our midst, and this call is for each one of us who might be fearing darkness and uncertainty ahead. This is the reality of faith, and is matched by the certainty of God. The poem continues:

*So I went forth, and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone east.*

So may Almighty God keep you and lead you as you place your trust in Him. The lockdown has meant we have unfortunately had to close St Mary's again. But if there is any chance of joining us in worship on Zoom, please see our website and log on or ring in: www.knowsleychurch.co.uk

I close with the very next words of the poem: '*So heart, be still!*'

Wishing you God's richest blessings – take care, stay safe, and keep hopeful!

Rev Hugh Lea-Wilson
Team Vicar, 4Saints Team (Huyton Deanery)