

This issue's letter is from Local Ministry Assistant Adrian Whalley
Have Faith!

I presided at St Michael and All Angels last Sunday evening and talked about 'faith' and, specifically, our faith in God. We were using Hebrews 11 vs 1-3, 8-16 and Luke's Gospel 12 vs 32-40 as our readings.

I am sure that you have considered what is 'faith' and where does our faith come from? Faith is sometimes presented as being something separate to evidence. If you prove something, you do not need faith to believe it. But these readings suggest that faith is something chosen on the basis of what is already known and experienced. Do you agree that sometimes we can just know what is the right thing to do or to say which comes to us through our faith? Faith is all-pervasive.

Golly, who ever said that having 'faith' is easy – be that faith in God or in something else. My south-facing garden has lots of sun and I had faith that if I plant my vegetable seeds in the greenhouse then transfer the baby plants to the garden and keep them watered, there would be lots of courgettes, butternut squash, swiss chard etc. Not this year – even with our fabulous weather! The courgette numbers are now increasing and there are flowers on the butternut squash, but no fruit! Our Swiss chard went to seed!

Our first reading opened with: *'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'*. We then have examples of what Abraham did 'by faith' - which are quite remarkable!

Our Hebrews commentary makes faith the air that Christians breathe to live. Like Abraham, Christians are part of an ongoing story - we come in on an existing conversation, in which something of the character of the main speaker – God – is already evident. Like Abraham, we are aware that our story, too, will have consequences. Hebrews tells us that the patriarchs do not see the completion of God's plan, but they see enough to be able to guess and to be excited. Are we excited? Although the Christian life is very far from easy, are we excited about our being that little bit different and about what may come next?

So we are beginning to build a picture of faith. But we need to watch and wait. Verses 34– 40 of our Luke 12 Gospel reading provide strong guidance as to how to do this. In verse 34 we are offered the powerful advice that *‘For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’*. But, in the following verse, we understand that we should *‘Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning’* for when our master returns – which could be at any time.

So, to conclude, remember:

- *We can be sure of what we hope for and, through our life experiences, can be certain of what we do not see. So keep your faith.*
- *Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.*
- *We should be dressed ready for service and keep our lamps burning.*

We will get our just reward - but only when our master is ready.

Adrian Whalley