

## This month's letter is from Revd Andrew Smith

Up and down the country - and around the world - local communities will now be making their final plans for celebrating our Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Throughout the seventy years of her record-breaking reign, Queen Elizabeth II has served the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth with grace, integrity and wisdom. She has remained upright and dignified despite experiencing many personal and national tragedies. But what stands out more than anything during her reign is her deep personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At her coronation, Elizabeth spoke these humble words: *"I have chosen this position for myself: God has appointed me to it. Because He leads, I can follow in complete trust."* As she has grown older, our Queen has become even bolder in her proclamation of Jesus. Her Christmas speeches have not only referenced the birth of Christ but have also offered a gentle evangelistic message. Consider this quote from her 2019 speech: *"...through his teaching and by his example, Jesus Christ would show the world how small steps taken in faith and in hope can overcome long-held differences and deep-seated divisions to bring harmony and understanding."*

Or, what about this from her 2014 Christmas speech: *"For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing."*

I'm not really the biggest 'flag-waver' on occasions like jubilees or at royal weddings and births. But I genuinely give thanks to God for our Queen, Elizabeth. I fear that we may never again possess a monarch with such a faith in Jesus as she has. Although the British monarchy is less powerful than once it was, I am sure that our present Queen will be remembered as not only one of our finest monarchs, but also one of our most influential.

The long jubilee weekend of 2nd to 5th June will be full of celebrations in every local village, and I hope to be visiting every event. Let us also be mindful that the 5th June is also Pentecost Sunday and I'm convinced that her majesty would not want a celebration of her reign to trump the celebration of God's Holy Spirit being poured out on all believers! That said; there will, of course, be prayers of thanksgiving for our Queen and – *go on then* – we'll even sing our National Anthem!

I hope to see you all at some point in the Jubilee weekend, flag in hand!!

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the life and reign of our Queen, Elizabeth II. We thank you for her integrity, humility, wisdom and resolve. Above all, we thank you for her faith in you, and in your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Revd Andrew**