

“In the quiet of the morning, God is already at work”.

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you all.

Although this letter will appear in the monthly newsletter at Heswall Methodist Church, it is also written to be shared as a standalone letter with friends at Irby Methodist Church and Greasby Methodist Church. As minister of all three congregations, I am always aware that while each church has its own distinct identity and weekly pattern, we are united in Christ and connected in our calling. It is a privilege to share in the life of each fellowship, and to witness the different ways God’s grace is at work among you.

We find ourselves continuing our journey through Lent, that reflective season in which we are invited to slow down and turn our attention more intentionally towards God. Lent is not about gloom for its own

sake, nor about spiritual endurance tests. Rather, it is about honesty and attentiveness. It is about creating space for God to search our hearts and renew our spirits.

In a culture that prizes speed and productivity, Lent can feel like an interruption. We are used to filling our diaries and measuring our worth by activity. Yet Jesus consistently made time to withdraw from the crowds. He stepped aside from the demands and expectations placed upon him in order to pray. If we are to follow him, we too must learn the discipline of pause.

Perhaps for some of us, that pause is deeply needed. There are many pressures at work in our lives: family concerns, health challenges, financial uncertainties, and the quiet anxieties that surface in the early hours of the morning. Lent gives us permission to bring these things into the light of God's presence. We do not have to pretend that everything is fine. We come as we are.

Across Heswall, Irby, and Greasby, I see so many expressions of faithful discipleship. There are those who prepare and lead worship, those who steward buildings and finances, those who offer pastoral care, those who organise community activities, and those who uphold the life of the church in prayer from their own homes. Some ministries are visible and public; others are quiet and hidden. All are precious.

Being church in this time is not without its questions. Like many congregations across the country, we are conscious of changing patterns of attendance, of financial pressures, and of the challenge of engaging new generations. It can be tempting to focus solely on what feels fragile or uncertain.

Yet the Christian story reminds us that apparent fragility is not the end of the story. As we move closer to Holy Week, we remember that the disciples themselves faced deep confusion and fear. On Good Friday, everything they had hoped for seemed to collapse. And yet, God was not defeated. Easter was already unfolding beyond their sight.

That truth speaks powerfully into our present circumstances. Our calling is not to guarantee outcomes or to recreate a past era. Our calling is to be faithful in this season. To worship with sincerity. To love with generosity. To serve with humility. To pray with expectation. God is not confined by our limitations. Often, it is precisely through our weakness that his strength is revealed.

Serving three churches gives me a unique perspective. Each congregation carries its own history and personality. Each has its own cherished traditions and particular challenges. Yet I am struck time and again by the common threads: warmth of welcome, deep-rooted commitment, resilience through change, and a desire to remain faithful to Christ.

Our communities, too, are evolving. New homes are built; demographics shift; patterns of work and leisure change. The question before us is not simply how to maintain what we have known, but how to discern where God is leading us now. Where are the opportunities for connection? Who feels overlooked or isolated? How might we embody good news in practical, tangible ways?

The answers may not always be dramatic. They may lie in simple acts: a thoughtful conversation, an invitation to coffee, a willingness to listen without judgement, a readiness to try something new. The Kingdom of God often advances quietly, through small seeds planted faithfully.

As your minister, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your willingness to share honestly in both joys and concerns. Ministry is never the work of one person; it is something we undertake together. I am grateful for the trust you place in me, and for the many ways you support one another.

As we approach Holy Week, I encourage you to engage deeply with the story at the heart of our faith. Do not rush too quickly to Easter morning. Sit with the vulnerability of the Last Supper. Stand at the foot of the cross. Allow yourself to feel the weight of silence on Holy Saturday. Only then does the proclamation of resurrection ring with its full depth and power.

Resurrection hope is not naïve optimism. It is hope forged in the midst of suffering and uncertainty. It declares that love is stronger than hatred, that forgiveness is stronger than failure, and that life is stronger than death. It assures us that no situation, whether personal or congregational, is beyond God's redeeming grace.

There may be areas in your own life where you long for signs of new life. Perhaps you carry grief, disappointment, or unanswered prayer. Perhaps you feel weary in faith, unsure of your direction. Lent invites us to place these realities before God, trusting that he meets us not with condemnation but with compassion.

My prayer for Heswall, Irby, and Greasby is that we would be communities marked by steady hope. Not a superficial cheerfulness that ignores difficulty, but a deep-rooted confidence in God's faithfulness. May our churches be places where people encounter welcome and authenticity. May our worship draw us closer to Christ. May our fellowship strengthen us. May our service reflect his love in practical ways.

As we continue this journey together, may we encourage one another. May we be patient in times of change. May we remain open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. And may we walk forward with courage, trusting that the God who has been faithful in the past is faithful still.

With every blessing for this Lenten season, and with hope as we move towards Easter,

Yours in Christ,

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