

'A view from the Rectory Window – a view looking out into 2026!

I imagine I am not alone in noticing how soon in January I find myself impatiently thinking and wondering how the new year has been different to the previous one, waiting in expectation that there may be signs and indications of how the following year will unfold - trying to discern and recognize any sign that situations in the world and/or in my own life are going to be different in the coming months. In other words, I soon, within days and weeks, realise that I am seeking **hope within the barrenness of winter**. Having concluded 2025 with a New Year's Eve set of prayers for the coming year, I cannot wait long before I am looking for things to have changed and hopefully resolved themselves. An impatience and desire to move on into the future that is based, I believe, on a positive hopeful view of what the new year will bring.

Therefore, my article this month is deliberately focusing on prayer, and out of the very nature of prayer, the hope that prayer expresses and embodies. The motive for our prayer is often one of anxiety, fear or distress. Sadly, we are all less likely to turn to prayer in times of thanksgiving when our lives are going well, and we have reasons to give thanks and praise to God for our blessings and good fortune. So, I would like this month to suggest to all of us, me included, that we use January as a time of prayer, mindfulness, and reflection on the year ahead. That all of us incline our hearts and minds to embrace a season and time of waiting on God, waiting on that sense of life being 'suspended in expectation and hopefulness' until the way forward is made clear in the new life and renewed energy of the coming of spring.

This sense of expectation and hopefulness in prayer leads me to the first event we are holding at Roadwater village hall on the **afternoon of Sunday the 25th of January**. A relaxed and informal gathering for a time of prayer, fellowship and thanksgiving, with refreshment included! An opportunity to meet and share with prayer, expectation, and hope for the future. We plan for these events to continue each month as a way of resuming our Christian presence in the village of Roadwater since the closure of the Methodist chapel. Your prayers and your hope for our first event on the 25th will therefore be gratefully appreciated and be a part of planting the seeds of the coming year.

Colossians 3:17 'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' And

Psalms 104:33 'I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being'.

Happy new year to you all.

Rev. Richard