

## Reflection for Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020

By Deacon Liz Day

**Reading** : 1 Peter 1 : 3 – 25

**Theme** : A Living Hope

*'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.....'*

1 Peter 1 : 3



Why have I sent you a picture of the herb trough in my garden?

Well I seem to remember in a local supermarket, some time ago, I was searching for some mint and found some in two different sections on the shelves. One notice read 'herbs' where I could buy some cut mint in a plastic bag and the other section was entitled 'living herbs' where I could buy an actual plant in a pot.

The herbs in my picture are obviously 'living herbs' as they are alive, still growing and sending up new leaves. The cut variety in bags are obviously not alive, they will soon wither and die completely if not eaten quickly.

This passage from Peter is incredibly meaningful and significant to me personally.

When I was about 15/16 I attended a service at St Andrew's Methodist Church in Halifax which marked the end of a circuit youth weekend away. It was just an ordinary evening service but it had a deep impact on me. There are three elements of the service I particularly remember. Firstly, this reading from Peter, secondly, the hymn, 'To God be the glory' and lastly an altar call when the minister asked if anyone wanted to come to the front of church to express their commitment to Jesus in a 'public' way. This didn't usually happen, but the minister felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit to ask, and I felt the prompting to act!

I found myself kneeling at the altar rail with a friend and we couldn't stop crying. Not through sadness or grief, but through total joy – the 'indefinable and glorious joy' Peter talks about in verse 8. I suppose some might call it a conversion experience after which I knew I would never be the same again.

I believed in God and Jesus and regularly prayed and attended church, but from that moment, something was different, something within myself was 'alive'. My faith was 'alive' and my hope was 'living'.

The fact that Jesus was alive and present suddenly became very real. Our living hope is based on a risen Lord who is with us throughout our lives, guiding, comforting, challenging and prompting.

Cut herbs serve their purpose if we use them before they wilt but the 'living' herbs have roots and continue to grow.

My experience marked a new beginning of my journey with Jesus. But the fact that my hope is living means that I keep growing in faith (I hope!) and continue to change into the person God wants me to be.

Lockdown has not been very pleasant for many, but Kerry, our district chair is encouraging us not to return to church too soon and simply try to carry on where we left off.

This is an opportunity to give our lives to God again and for all of us to experience a new beginning knowing that life isn't going to be the same ever again. God is constantly making things new, so let us all listen very carefully for what He wants from us all.