

RECTOR'S PINT

It is a shocking thing that food banks have become a fact of life and are now to be found in every city, and probably every town, in the country. We have a foodbank in Thame, a town which outwardly we would call prosperous, but tragically there is need for it. However, the response to our first monthly foodbank collection at St Peter's church was magnificent, and I very much hope that this generosity will continue.

We all know that 2023 will be a challenging year. The cost of living and energy crisis affects us all. We know that there are huge challenges ahead for our climate and we hope beyond hope that there might be a resolution to the terrible war in Ukraine and an end to the ongoing suffering because of conflict in the Middle East, in Syria and Yemen.

The Gate of the Year is a poem written by Minnie Louise Haskins, a retired London School of Economics academic. It was famously read by King George VI in his 1939 Christmas radio broadcast when this nation and the world faced a very dark and dangerous time. I have used it before so forgive me if this feels a little 'recycled,' however I think it is very apt to use again, it is filled with hope when we know there is a difficult road ahead.

The Gate of the Year – Minnie Louise Haskins

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'

And he replied: 'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the

Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And he led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

A member of our Benefice also suggested this, a poem written by novelist Susan Coolidge at the turn of the last century, and which is also particularly relevant at the start of a new year:

New Every Morning

Every day is a fresh beginning,

Listen my soul to the glad refrain.

And, in spite of old sorrows

And older sinning,

Troubles forecasted

And possible pain,

Take heart with the day and begin again.

Whatever the challenges that lie ahead this year, we can still embrace the joys, and there will be many of those as well. I pray and hope that you have a truly Happy New Year.

Simon