

## Friends

It is perhaps inevitable that, as the minister of Windsor Methodist Church, I should be more interested than previously in the royal family. Watching the video made by the Prince and Princess of Wales to share something of Catherine's journey over the last year I, like most of us who know our Bible, cannot fail to respond viscerally to the statement "Out of darkness, can come light." For the writer of John's Gospel, it is Christ who is that light - the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

We are looking forward to a dark winter. The loss of over 6,000 jobs in the steel industry, primarily in Wales and the north of England, the cutting of the winter fuel allowance for all but the very poorest, and the fears of ongoing wars around the world are stressful and worrying. But the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

All of our churches in the Thames Valley Circuit are seeing growth as more people reach out to explore faith. Not in their thousands, not even in their tens, but they are there - you are there. The people who, for whatever reason, seek the light and have found it in the words and actions of Jesus Christ and in finding relationship with God through him, forgiveness of sin and hope for the future - a way to walk in the light.

As we journey into the autumn we will, as we do each year, be startled by the speed with which the nights draw in: the coldness in the air, the brittle leaves and the relief that the lawn mower can be returned to the garage for the next few months. In this literal and figurative darkness, the Church seeks to test its heritage anew. How do we reflect the light of Christ to the world? We three churches who stand at crossroads or on the brow of a hill - significant places - how do we as communities and individuals speak the hope of the world to the world? Let's think and pray this week about the ways in which we can light a candle in one place, or for one person, remembering the old Sunday School song "Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light, like a little candle burning in the night. In this world of darkness, so we must shine, you in your small

corner, and I in mine.” It was never a song about being apart, but about how all the little candles shining in their own little corner, could light a whole room as light joined to light.

God bless, Vicci