



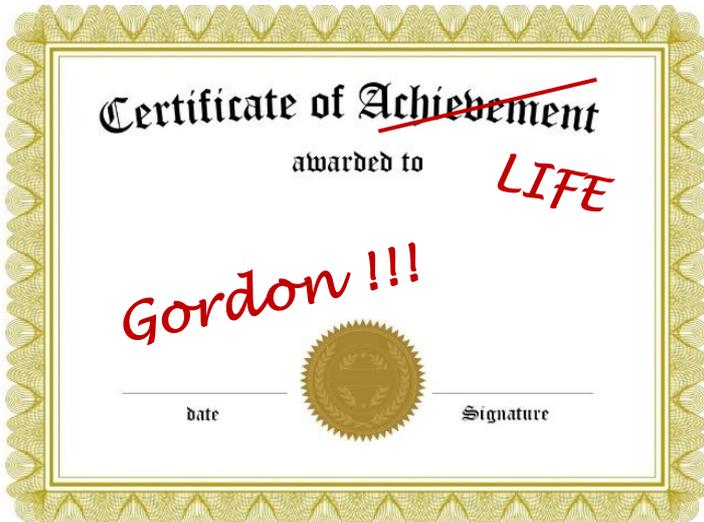
Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

John 10:10

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

Philippians 1:21

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”



The other day I had to sign a ‘Certificate of Existence’, which sounded like the opposite of a death certificate! I asked Rev. Paul to witness and certify that (a): I was alive and (b): I was regularly receiving my pension!

“To be or not to be, that is the question” said Shakespeare’s brooding, existential Hamlet. Other questions arise. What does it mean ‘to be’ or to ‘exist’? Is existence the same as being alive? What does it mean to ‘be alive’? What causes us to feel ‘alive’?

It is of course perfectly possible to exist but feel ‘dead’ in so many ways. To be alive suggests more than a heartbeat. Experiencing love (receiving and giving), joy and a sense of hope are important contributions to being alive in spirit.

Causal factors in feeling alive will include enjoying our physicality and our mental acumen as well moments that lift our spirits. The intense release of feelings and emotions experienced in both the joys and sorrows of life: gladness and sadness, success and failure, also come to mind. Close affirmative relationships are significant, as is laughter – both clever wit and belly laughs. We also all like to feel useful; the knowledge that in some way we are contributing to the greater good.

What about our Christian beliefs? For many, faith is the key to ‘life in its fullness’. Many are inspired each day by the life and teaching of Christ, or by a keen sense of the Spirit at work in their lives. Others are able to contemplate the majesty of God however they might interpret or understand it. Certainly many would attest to the biblical statement of faith: “for me to live is Christ”.

The current pandemic has made us all more aware of our vulnerability. A spin-off of this has been to value each day we are given with an increased sense of thankfulness and commitment to live each day to the full.

Assuming one day I enter a new life experience beyond this one, I only hope I don’t have to sign another Certificate of Existence... even if the witness should happen to be St. Peter himself!

A Prayer of Praise: using a verse from ‘How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds’ John Newton (StF 322)

Jesus! My Shepherd, Brother, Friend;
My Prophet, Priest and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End;
Accept the praise I bring.