



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.

Daniel 2:20-23 'The God of the Seasons'

²⁰ Daniel said: 'Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are his. ²¹ He changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

²² He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³ To you, O God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise.



Last March and April, I took several photos on the Downs which then appeared in the Daily Devotions. From memory, some were of the hills and slopes of the Downs themselves; some were of lambs with painted numbers on; some of flowers and trees. Little did I think that the 'lockdown walks' would get summery and warm, then turn wet and autumnal, and then wintery, cold, with ice and snow underfoot...and still they'd be 'lockdown walks'.

This photo is from a footpath by Eastbourne Downs Golf club looking South. Beyond the

trees in the distance, you can walk over East Dean Road and eventually to Beachy Head. On the morning I took the picture, it was just beautiful – freezing cold, but beautiful. The sun broke through the clouds as I 'clicked' and you can see the rays in the sky shining down. It'll take a while for the temperature to pick up, the ice and snow to melt and the landscape recover its natural green – but you know as well as I do that this change to come is inevitable. You and I will be walking in Spring days before long, and the world around us will look very different.

Don't we long for those days? When not just the temperature, weather, landscape and natural world will be different, but when the world returns to one where we don't jump out of each other's way in alarm; where we don't hide every face behind a mask; where we no longer follow the news with quite the same daily dread?

As strange and mysterious as the Book of Daniel is (and don't let anyone ever tell you otherwise) we find these nuggets of insight and assurance in it. Daniel's visions and imagery speaks of a God of all seasons, who "knows what is in the darkness" that we have felt in months gone by – but also in whom there is light and hope and life. So hold on everyone, for Spring is coming.

Prayer:

Creator God, as day follows night, morning follows evening, and sun follows moon, as spring follows winter and new life breaks through, help us to hold tight to you in wintery days, knowing you're with us not only in them, but in the warm days to come. We pray to you in Jesus' name – who knows our life in all its seasons. Amen.