

Death is a bit like the speed limits in Burnham Market: there are a lot of people who think it doesn't really apply to them. But whereas gamblers may avoid the grim speed gun (and it *is* used here), nobody is going to avoid the grim reaper. Grim start (or ending)? Read on...

For Christians this year's June starts with the great feast of Pentecost - the new life put into the people of God by His (gender for convenience only!) Holy Spirit. And it's yours for the asking, not just new life now but also new life to follow death. Jesus dealt with death and part of the Good News ("Gospel") is that his resurrection leaves us the example that trusting in God brings something more than whatever eternity outside God's love might be... This gives a confidence for a new way of living. The covenant with God guarantees all this. Covenants are two-way however, so we have an active part in that, to live loving one another as Jesus loved us. (See last month's letter about covenants.)

Talking of which, May's "clever man" had a second simple statement: God says of Himself "I am." (The response to Moses' "Who are you, Lord?") Note well, God doesn't say "I was," "I have been," "I might be later," "I could be one day." He says, "I AM." God is always modern because in every age He is current. God is now - and the Church tries to stimulate us to have that present, living relationship with Him.

(A common lack of Church history obscures that both buildings and services have indeed changed over the centuries and we would be really glad to have suggestions about how we can be relevant to your needs now. Yet there remains a common misunderstanding that buildings and services have to stay "as they always have been." This is rubbish. They were never static; our so-called heritage is how it is because it *has* changed over the centuries - albeit in fits and starts!)

Yes, death will come to each of us. But if in covenant with God, we move into the permanent "now" of God's eternal Present/Presence. (Btw, without the covenant? Just death.) Until that moment, another part of the Good News: repentance and forgiveness of sins, giving restored relationship with God; by this we can know God, well, er, now, and so abundance of life in every moment. The Church is called by God to be the Church now, not in the past. The Holy Spirit breathes new life into people and the finite life is finished. With Jesus, life, along with June, is bursting out all over!