

Crowland Abbey

FROM THE RECTOR



I am sat in my garden writing this, I have the sun shining, with birdsong and hum of insects in the background.... along with the traffic on the A15! I am very blessed with the view from my garden and with all the busyness of life this gives me space, calm and a feeling of well-being.

There is a lot in the media about the mental health crisis and the need to address this, along with many theories about its cause. Society has changed over my lifetime, many things have improved beyond all measure but many of these improvements have come at a cost. Although communication is more immediate and effective than ever before, somehow we have become more isolated, the sense of community seems to be anchored more in the place than in the people that inhabit it. I wonder whether this is where some of the issues lie.

One of the health trends that is emerging is social prescribing and how sad is this? People are being prescribed walks or support groups, activities such as singing, all in the search for a feeling of mental well-being. Please don't think for a moment that I am belittling the struggles people have, that is not the case at all, I am more interested in the reason we have the need for some of these types of support. Now I know that in the past there have been vast failings in the care of many with mental health issues, we all know the lack of support for those suffering from what we know now was PTSD in the post war years, and many other areas in which the stiff upper lip has been the coping strategy. However, there were some strengths in those times when people knew each other and talked to each other.

There is a place where those values are still reflected, there is a place where you can go and chat to people, where you can take time to reflect on your day, your week or your year. There is a place where you can sing your socks off or sit quietly and let tears pour down your face. There is a place where you can have a cup of tea and a chat. There is a place where the space outside is full of the past and the present and is being nurtured for the future. It is somewhere that people of years ago knew about and they used, because it is in community and fellowship that you find love and support.

If you haven't guessed yet, then it is your local church, why don't you pop along to the Abbey one Sunday morning, it may surprise you!

Rev. Carolyn Bailey is one of the clergy in the Welland Mission Partnership, of which Crowland Abbey is part.