



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



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Reflections

'What is this world if full of care we have no time to stand and stare'.

Over these last few months I have felt compelled at some time each day to stand and stare out of my kitchen window, the reason - 'my girlies' - my three hens. What fascinating creatures they are, each with different characters but all of them creatures of habit. So much so that when the front door of their house was frozen up in the snowy days they were very surprised to see me open the back door of their house and encourage them out from that direction!

They soon learned when and where their corn was given, and even what happens when the vicarage back door is unlocked - usually the Vicar comes forth to feed us I hear them think as they merrily cluck and tumble over themselves to get to the gate. I wondered - are people always so keen to see their vicar arrive at their gates.

My girlies soon learned to recognise my voice and the noise of the corn container, and I know its all cupboard love really but I like to think they miss me when I am away.

After 2nd February the Festival of Candlemas, the church enters into a few ordinary weeks before we look towards Lent, Holy Week and Easter, so maybe we should all use sometime during these days to stand and stare, at God's creation, at our community, and at this thing we call the church.

The church is really you and me, the people of God that gathers together, fascinating creatures that we are, all of us with different characters and most of us creatures of habit. We soon learn when and where there are times of spiritual food that suit us, and indeed sometimes find ourselves surprised when changes occur to our regular habits and we have to be encouraged (sometimes by the Vicar) to head out in a different direction.

'My girlies' sometimes stand and stare, but most of the time they are busy searching for this and that, enjoying a dust bath, or having a time of preening. All of this I can see, from my kitchen window. At some time each day they take themselves off to their quiet space, knowing themselves to be safe and secure, they nestle down and do their work - producing eggs, goodness to share with the Vicar and her flock.

As I nestle down this February to recover from operations on my feet I shall not be doing any of my work, that will be done by visiting preachers and our lovely Readers, Pat and Howell. I may find myself having more difficulty to stand than to stare, but I will remember the words of the psalmist 'keep me as the apple of an eye, hide me under the shadow of your wings' and as I stand and stare at 'my girlies' I will ponder on the goodness that you have shared with me over these last four years and how best I can continue to feed the flock God has given me - in you- to care.

Do take time to stand and stare and wonder. Take yourself off to a quiet secure place and nestle down to do some praying, you'll produce no eggs and yet you just never know what new life in the church will be hatched.

Bye for now.

Reverend Ann

Past Reflections