



## From Our Vicar

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### Keeping Faith: Seeking Guidance in Changing Times

It has always intrigued me that faith is a two-sided coin. There is 'faithfulness' by which one stands firm and steady when all around are losing their grip, continuing to serve and pray with trust in the goodness of God even when we do not understand all that God may be doing. Then on the other hand there is the faith that steps out onto the water at the word of Jesus — not knowing what will come, but believing without doubt that the Lord is true to his promise.

One shows stability, the other risk taking. Both are essential in life and are commended in scripture.

Each of course have their dark side. Stability can become rigidity and a refusal to accept change. Risk taking can be folly and cause lasting damage. How do we discern what the times call for?

It may be evident that the 'dark side' reflects either fear or pride. The source being what the scripture calls 'the flesh'. We all have a battle within ourselves in these areas and they can all too readily manifest when we are tired or under stress.

Our protection here is (1) the community of faith, (2) the word of God, and (3) the peace God gives to direct our hearts.

One, we speak and listen to one another and test our hearts and thoughts on the anvil of conversation and in processes of deliberation. Two, we also take counsel from scripture, being inspired by people of faith down the ages who both stepped out in trust in God and remained faithful through trying times; and we take warning from those who didn't. And three, in reflective listening prayer and muse, we wait upon God to test and hear what he will say to us.

Two further tools to guide us are: (4) common sense – what is the logic and reasonableness of the matter before us? and (5) circumstantial signs. This is the least authoritative, but often an encouraging or confirming aspect as we recognise a certain serendipity or coincidence of factors that point to the timeliness of an action.

May God guard us from either fear or folly. May he help us to listen, weigh and act in faith and love. May we thereby advance his purposes for the extension of his kingdom and for our joy in being part of it.

God bless you,

*Wayne*