## A Letter from Rev Rona

Dear Friends,

As we step into March, we enter the season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, 5th March. Lent is traditionally a time of fasting, self-examination, and preparation for Easter. Many of us think of giving something up for these forty days, but what if we also took something up? This year, I invite you to embrace a few moments of daily contemplation – a chance to rest, reflect, and listen to that still small voice inside you.

Christian tradition has valued this type of contemplation for thousands of years. Jesus himself often withdrew to quiet places to pray, showing us that stillness is not just inactivity, but instead can be a vital part of an inner life. In today's world, this idea finds echoes in the secular practice of Mindfulness – the art of being present in the moment, attentive to our own thoughts and surroundings. Whether we call it contemplation, prayer, or mindfulness, the principle remains the same: we have wisdom within us, and sometimes we need only be still to hear it.

Lent offers us an opportunity to develop the discipline of silence. What if, instead of fasting from chocolate or alcohol, we put down our digital devices for just five or ten minutes each day? Instead of scrolling, we could listen—to our own thoughts, to birdsong, to the wind in the trees, or to the unspoken emotions of those around us. In doing so, we might notice something unexpected: the voice of God, speaking in the quiet.

For those who feel uneasy about 'contemplation,' think of it as time spent pondering on a bench or in a garden shed – or any age-old retreat for quiet thought! And as we near the end of the month of March, Mothering Sunday reminds us to be grateful for those who have nurtured us, perhaps by simply being present and listening.

May this Lent be a season of meaningful reflection and renewal.

With love, *Rev Rona*