

## Ponderings from Greenbanks



*'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord;  
plans for welfare and not for evil,  
to give you a future and a hope'.  
Jeremiah 29:11*

September in all schools is a time of 'new beginnings'. There are new pupils, parents, staff and Governors and those first few weeks are a time of settling into new classes and classrooms, new subjects and timetables and sometimes an opportunity to make new friends. Each September is a new start and a new beginning.

As you and I travel along life's journey, we too experience many new beginnings. Life is about change - some changes are for better and some are for worse. The places we know and love may alter out of all recognition; new jobs and people come into our lives and we mourn the loss of others. Life never stays the same - for us there are many new beginnings!

And that's true in our faith journeys too. As Christians, Jesus teaches us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves' - he asks us to respond with care and consideration to everyone we meet - but so often we get it wrong, over and over again! The wonderful thing is that God allows us to have a new beginning every time; he doesn't keep a tally of the times we fail. The disciple Peter asked Jesus how many times he should be expected to forgive someone who had harmed him. Peter suggested 7 times was enough - he thought he was being generous! Not seven times said Jesus but 70 x 7 times - in other words as many times as you have to. And that is how it is for us when we do things God dislikes - each time, we can come back to him and when we are genuinely sorry he gives us another new start, each and every time we get it wrong. And God does that because he loves us, wants the best for us and wants to be part of our lives.

Some people I meet think that because they have done something they are ashamed of, they are a lost cause as far as God is concerned. God may not like what we do but he never stops loving us, whoever we are, however weak our faith is or whatever we've done. God gives us a new beginning whenever we ask for it - all we have to do is talk to God and ask Him.

With every blessing, Sue