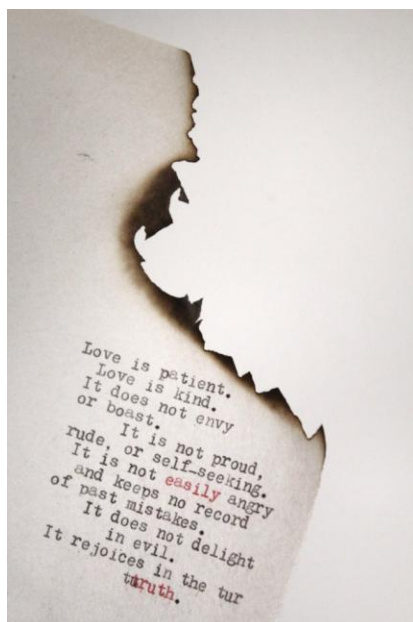


## Saturday 26th October



*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. [1 Corinthians 13:4–8]*

The words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church is a well-loved passage. It is a passage often chosen at weddings and at funerals. It reminds us of what real, true love is like – love between humans, between God and humans, and between humans and creation.

Whenever I share this passage with a congregation, I encourage them to re-read the passage and instead of the word 'love', to use 'God'. God is love, and reading the passage in this way gives a very clear image of what God is like: patient, kind, not proud, never failing and so on. After doing this I then encourage them to read it once more, and instead of putting the word 'love', to replace it with 'I' or their own name.

This is often very challenging for people; we are called to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves, and reading the passage as a description of ourselves challenges us to think what our love is like and what it *should* be like. Are we patient and kind? Do we keep no record of wrongs? Does our love never fail? All of these are a description of the love we should emulate, with everyone, even those we find it difficult to love.

*God of steadfast, unending love,  
we thank you for your love that is beyond all understanding;  
we thank you that you keep no record of wrongs;  
we thank you that your love endures forever.  
Teach us to love as you love.  
Teach us patience and humility.  
Help us to let go of past wrongs.  
Help us to love all people persistently and in truth –  
the way that you love us.  
Amen*