



October 2022

Dear Friends,

As I write this we have just been through 10 days of mourning for our late Queen Elizabeth II. Yesterday was her funeral. Watched by millions across the world it will have made many people remember loved ones and friends who have died and perhaps think of their own death. At times like this many think about and ask themselves '*What happens next?*'.

Loss, for many of us is hard to accept. I've been with too many people mourning the loss of a friend or loved one, ... and experienced it myself, to believe that death is the end. There is a lovely little book, written for children but ideal for us all, that gives a wonderful explanation about death. '*Water Bugs and Dragonflies*' by Doris Stickney, tells the story of a small colony of water bugs living happily below the surface of a quiet pond. Every so often one of them climbs up a lily stalk and disappears from sight, never to return. Those left behind are faced with the mystery of figuring out what has become of them. The story reveals the miracle that water bugs leave the pond and emerge on the surface into a wonderful new world to find they have turned into beautiful dragonflies. The nature of their new being - their beautiful wings - prevents them from returning to the water to tell their friends what has happened. They have to wait until they are all reunited into their new world as dragonflies.

My Christian belief leads me to know that death is simply a transformation - moving from one season to the next. It's the end of our present life; the parting from loved ones and moving on. Like that of the dragonfly or like in winter, when the trees lose their leaves and to all intents and purposes appear to be dead, but after a short time return to life again in spring.

The one who dies is like one of those trees, simply moving from one season to the next. They leave us with many memories, and even though they're no longer here to share the memories with us, to show that friendship or love in person, the positive effect of their life remains with all who knew them. They are with us every time we remember them, every time we talk about them or even talk to them.

The love of God shines like a light of hope, in the darkness of grief, with the promise that death isn't the end. Christians can trust in the promise of Jesus that the dead have gone to our "*Fathers house*". That they have moved on to the next season, that they can have a new and immortal body to replace the one that failed them. And that they are now with friends and family that have gone before them. And that one day we'll meet up with them again.

*Rev'd Nicki*