This Sunday, as our church year moves towards its end, we are set a Gospel which draws our attention to other endings and to time in all its complexity. If we read carefully that Gospel we have just heard, we will discover that a great deal of what is in it has to do with time – as the passage opens

Jesus predicts a time when the Temple will fall, not even one stone left upon another. A prediction that was fulfilled 40 years or so after his crucifixion, in AD 70 when imperial Rome sacked Jerusalem and destroyed its Temple.

The disciples respond to this foretelling with their own question about time. Just when, they asked, would that time be, and would they get a sign of it approaching?

Jesus's response is to say that they should not to listen to or run after anyone who claims to be able to predict an end to time, even though, in the meantime there will be wars and rumours of wars, natural disasters, famines, plagues and families turning viciously on their own.

Those close to Jesus, his disciples, want to know the time, want to know what the future time holds, want to know when the end of time will come. Time, time, time.

What is it? Some simple, relatively uncontroversial definitions of time include "time is what clocks measure" and "time is what keeps everything from happening all at once" Science informs us of many views of time these days, some very strange, but a clear, scientific definition of time would be –Time is the progression of events from the past into the future. Time moves only in one direction, it's possible to move forward in time, but not backward. And scientists believe that it is through the making of memories that humans begin to understand what time is.

With this morning's Gospel and with the approaching end of this church year, I want to focus on time as perceived by the church. The Judeo-Christian concept of time, based in the Bible, sees time as linear, beginning with creation and ending with the end of the world (whatever that means). So, if time for the Church is linear, I wonder what that would look like?

Looking at a length of ribbon we can easily see what represents the start time, and the end time in a linear form, but church's time is circular, cyclical, so we can represent this by tying the start and end time together to form a loop.

And that circle of time is our 'meantime', it is how we go from season to season, week to week and day to day in the church. Here, in the north of the world, as the days grow shorter and the darkness deepens, we are just about finished with the Season of Trinity, with its colour of green for vestments and hangings. Green - representing the growing of faith, the growing and deepening of our relationship with God the Holy Trinity.

After next Sunday we enter the four weeks of Advent, with its colour of purple for vestments and hangings; we use the colour purple too, during Lent's six weeks. Purple is a colour for royalty but also a sombre colour. The seasons of Advent and Lent lead us to look inwards to where we may need more forgiveness, to where we may need to stop and turn around and look at things anew, and where we may need help to grow in love. These are preparation times.

Both Advent and Lent lead to the great celebratory times in the church. The season of the Christmas mystery, when the soles of the creator's feet touched the earth and God came to us in utter vulnerability; and the season of Easter, as great a mystery as Christmas, a celebratory season

lasting many weeks. A time to celebrate the presence of the risen Christ, beyond his death on the Cross, with his friends and others, meeting them and meeting us in a completely new way, changing everything.

Both of these great celebratory festivals have the colour white or even sometimes gold for the vestments and the hangings symbolizing their great mystery.

The Easter season closes with Ascension time, when the physical encounters with the risen Jesus came to an end. But quickly time moves on, to the astounding festival of Pentecost, the time when the gift of the Holy Spirt of God runs wild in the world, inspiring, encouraging, challenging and enabling the spread of the living good news of Jesus Christ. As tongues of flame rested on the apostles' heads, they experienced heat and light when the Spirit arrived, so we celebrate this season with the hot, dangerous colour red.

Next comes Trinity Sunday and we enter the really long season of the church year, Trinity. The long time needed for growing our faith, the time needed for exploring our faith, the time of deepening our rootedness in the great mystery of the birth, life and teaching ,the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ; the time too to develop the community of faith, the time for strengthening our ability to live our lives suffused with the love of God as seen and shown in Jesus Christ, and make those lives count in God's world. And the colour for this long growing time is green.

This is the way that the church tells the time, I wonder which colour in the church year, speaks to you most profoundly?

Through the year in the church, we are guided through time, and if we pay attention we discover that it's all here. Everything we need. For every beginning there is an ending and for every ending there is a beginning. It goes on and on…… Amen.