

The Seeker

December



2012

The church magazine for St Mary the Virgin, Sixpenny Handley with Gussage St Andrew and St Rumbold's, Pentridge

Who's who?

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Churchwardens

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Licensed Lay Minister

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Lay Pastoral Assistants

Ted Cox 552801

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Margaret Durrant 552608

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A Christmas Story

An angel appears during the carol service and tells the vicar, "In return for your unselfish and exemplary behaviour, the Lord will reward you with your choice of infinite wealth, wisdom, or beauty."

"Give me infinite wisdom!" cries the vicar, without hesitation.

"Done!" says the angel before disappearing in a cloud of smoke.

All heads turned to the vicar, who sat surrounded by a faint halo of light.

"Well," said the churchwarden, "say something brilliant."

The vicar stood up and, with the poise of a great orator, said, "I should have taken the money."



Guidelines for Playing Carols

(or, indeed, just about any music in a group)

1. Everyone should endeavour to play the same piece.
2. If you play a wrong note, glare at your neighbour.
3. The right note, at the wrong time, is a wrong note.
4. A wrong note, played timidly, is still a wrong note.
5. A wrong note, played with authority, is your interpretation of the phrase.
6. If everyone gets lost except you, follow the ones who are lost.
7. Always play the maximum notes per minute. This will intimidate weaker players and gain you admiration from those who know nothing about music.
8. Markings such as slurs, dynamics and accidentals should be completely ignored. They are only there to make the score look complicated.
9. If a passage is difficult, slow down. If it is easy, speed up. Everything evens itself out in the end.
10. When everyone else stops playing, stop too. Do not play any notes left over.

A Sad Loss

We were saddened to hear of the death this week of one of our most valuable members, Someone Else.

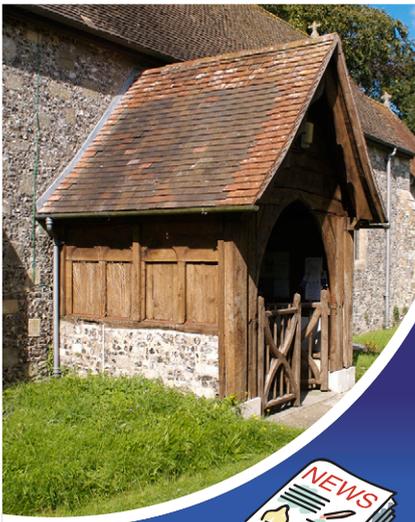
Someone's passing leaves a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with the church since its beginning, doing far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to be done, a function to attend, funds to be raised, one name was on everyone's lips, 'let Someone Else do it.'

It was common knowledge that Someone Else was the largest contributor to the Church. Whenever there was a need, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would volunteer. Someone was wonderful, but a person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everyone expected too much of Someone Else.

Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to do all the things Someone Else did? When you are asked to help in future, remember - WE CAN'T DEPEND ON SOMEONE ELSE.

We are hoping to organise a weekend visit to **Lee Abbey** in north Devon early next Summer. Have a look at their website (www.leeabbey.org.uk) and see how beautiful it is and think about coming with us! Please talk to the vicar if you are interested.





News items and articles welcome!

Please drop them in to the Vicarage, or email; rev.mel@handleychurch.org.uk

Thanks!

FROM THE REGISTERS



David and Kara Moralee were married on 30th June

Laurie Mullins' funeral took place on 6th August

Bertie Marshallsay's funeral took place on 8th August

Benedict and Catherine MacDowell's marriage blessing took place on 18th August

James and Bianca Reed were married on 8th September

Lee and Donna Stenner were married on 15th September, and Keagan and Rio were baptized at the same time

Eunice Prosser's funeral took place on 25th September

Eve Bingham's funeral took place on 1st October

Sophia Webb's baptism took place on 14th October

Jody and Donna Hodgson were married on 20th October

Joan Newman's funeral took place on 22nd October



Need a lift to Church?

Please ring Paul Skinner on 01725 552785 and we should be able to arrange transport.

Dear Friends

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken... so Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth... to Bethlehem.



People have been travelling around in anticipation of Christmas ever since. Whether we are sitting in an overloaded car or standing on a crowded train, many of us will be part of the massive 'Christmas Getaway.' Not many will be travelling by donkey, but for some the journey will be just as dangerous as that taken by Mary and Joseph.

What goes through your mind as you travel towards Christmas? The anticipation of seeing people again; a sense of sadness because someone has died since last year; worry about what might be said; or just the excitement of getting away and getting together?

For some the journey may not be a physical one at all. Perhaps we have concerns about illness, work, or the future. And I am sure that for many there will come a moment over the season when we ask ourselves 'why do we do this, year in year out?' What is the use of all the travelling, gifts and food, if they leave us feeling there is no point to it at all? Jesus said, 'What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?' (Matthew 16:26).

The purpose of that first journey was so that the Son of God would be born in the village that God had chosen. Yes, Caesar Augustus was responsible for the practical details of the census, but it was always God's plan that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2 for details). And the purpose of the birth was nothing less than the saving of the whole world (see Isaiah 49:6 for more details).

God wants each one of us to know that we are loved and are of infinite value. Life is meant to be lived and enjoyed - with God. We can know peace and goodwill to men (and women and children!) however complicated and difficult our lives sometimes become. And this is not just for those who can afford the latest

gadget or the organic free-range turkey. We can all qualify! 'To those who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God' (John 1:12).

Jesus came to that stable to make connection with God a possibility for everyone. We don't have to travel very far to experience the joy of Christmas for ourselves. We simply turn to God. After all, anyone can go to a stable.

God always had a plan and purpose, and part of that plan is that you and I should know his love for ourselves. So here is our prayer for everyone setting out on any sort of journey this Christmas; 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15:13).

Have a wonderful Christmas.

Your friend and vicar, Mel



As we approach Christmas, please remember to check that your chocolate has the Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance logo. If it doesn't, it may be made from cocoa that comes from plantations using child labour - children who, in effect, are slaves. You can find out more from the www.stophetraffick.org website.

And remember to look out for other fairtrade goods. Many charities do a brilliant range of Christmas gifts at this time of year and supermarkets have growing ranges of ethically sourced goods. They deserve our support. How we spend our money says everything about what we believe.

Please be aware of where the things you buy come from, and who makes them. Let's make Christmas good news for everyone!

One stormy night, an elderly man and his wife entered the lobby of a small hotel in Philadelphia. Trying to get out of the rain, the couple approached the front desk hoping for a room. The clerk, a friendly man with a winning smile, looked at the couple and explained that there were conventions in town. "All of our rooms are taken," the clerk said. "But I can't send you out into the rain at one o'clock in the morning. Would you perhaps be willing to sleep in my room? It's not exactly a suite, but it will be good enough to make you comfortable for the night."

When the couple declined, the young man pressed on. "Don't worry about me, I'll be just fine".

So the couple agreed. As he paid his bill the next morning, the elderly man said to the clerk, "You are the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I'll build one for you."

The clerk looked at them and smiled. The three of them had a good laugh. And as they drove away, the couple agreed that the helpful clerk was indeed exceptional, as finding people who are both friendly and helpful isn't easy.

Two years passed. The clerk had almost forgotten the incident when he received a letter from the old man. It recalled that stormy night and enclosed a round-trip ticket to New York, asking the young man to pay them a visit. The old man met him in New York, and led him to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. He then pointed to a great new building there, a pale reddish stone, with turrets and watchtowers thrusting up into the sky.

"That," said the older man, "is the hotel I have just built for you to manage."

"You must be joking," the young man said.

"I can assure you I am not," said the older man, a sly smile playing around his mouth.

The older man's name was William Waldorf-Aster, and that magnificent structure was the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt. This young clerk never foresaw the turn of events that would lead him to become the manager of one of the world's most glamorous hotels.

Kindness is something not talked about very often. But it is a virtue that remains central to what Christianity is all about, how we behave as Christians. There is nothing new in saying it is good to be kind, of course. Aesop, who wrote those famous fables, said, *No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.*

Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, said, *Forget injuries, never forget kindnesses.*

Plato, the Greek Philosopher, said, *Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.*

The difference is that they were expressing something they considered unusual. But at Christmas we celebrate that

God is unbelievably kind to us. He gives us the greatest gift – Jesus Christ, his Son. God became man to show us his kindness and his love. So shouldn't we try to imitate Him? Being kind and compassionate should be as natural and as ordinary for us as breathing. After all, we have Jesus to copy.

And don't confuse kindness with weakness. They are quite different. Kindness is not about giving in, it is about going the extra mile, meeting people where they are, with love – just like Jesus. J.M. Barrie, the writer of Peter Pan, said, *Shall we make a new rule of life from tonight: always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary?*

We might not get to be manager of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, but I pray that if we were arrested for kindness, there would be enough evidence to convict us all.



Church Action
on Poverty

We believe in a world free from poverty and inequality

Tax dodging is a major obstacle to achieving such a world. It hurts us all, especially when global companies and large sums of money are involved. It robs countries of the taxes they're owed - money that could be spent on essential services. Financial secrecy is at the heart of this problem – especially in tax havens.

Christian Aid (christianaid.org.uk) can show that in poor countries tax-dodging by global companies results in a lack of clean water, sanitation, roads, schools and hospitals, and in people going hungry. *Church Action on Poverty* (church-poverty.org.uk) can show that in the UK, tax-dodging contributes to cuts in benefits for families, children and disabled people, reduced care for the elderly, less childcare and fewer libraries, youth services and other vital community facilities.

Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God (John 3:21).

Tax dodgers must have nowhere to hide. Please help us call on the prime minister to use his global leadership to end financial secrecy and end an injustice that keeps some people poor while others get richer. Companies need to report on the profits they make and taxes they pay in every country in which they operate. Tax havens need to share information about the money flowing through them with all other countries. Please see the websites for more details and to sign the petition. Thank you.



+ Bible Study

As we hope you see from *The Seeker*, the Bible is THE Book! Read it and understand more in good company on a Thursday evening once a month, 7.30pm. Mike (01725 552620) for details.

Midweek Holy Communion

Join us for a gentle service in St Mary's on the second Wednesday of the month at 11.30pm, followed by coffee.

Come and meet friends

*** Drop into the Post Office Coffee Shop** on the first Wednesday of the month from about 11 o'clock for a coffee and chat with the vicar.

T Free Tedy Bear Drop-in Pre-school children and their carers are invited to St Mary's on Thursdays during school term times from 10.30am to noon for fun, refreshments, and maybe a Bible story.

L Sunday Lunch Everyone is welcome to join us at Hanlega's, v the campsite, on the first Sunday of the month for lunch – please book directly with "The Shed" (or just turn up!)

◆ Fellowship Group – Meeting every Tuesday for chat, laughter and biscuits, some talk around serious themes and sometimes a steak supper at the pub! Phone Paul Skinner (552785).

☕ Men's Group – A beer and a chat usually on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Phone David Lockyer (552492) for details.

☼ Mothers' Union – Tea, company and a good talk, usually on the second Thursday afternoon of the month, from 2.45pm. Phone Sheila (553133) or Mary (552041) for details.

Join us for Christmas and the New Year

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary the Virgin Sixpenny Handley			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	Informal service includes children's time					
	9.30am	☕	11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
Dec 2 nd	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Dec 9 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Dec 16 th	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	Carols	MP	#
Dec 23 rd	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Dec 30 th	HC		#	#	HC	#
Jan 6 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Jan 13 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Jan 20 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Jan 27 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC

HC = Holy Communion | MP = Morning Prayer | SofP = Songs of Praise | # = No service



For unto us a child is born!

We wish you a joyful Christmas and we hope that you will join us at some of the events listed here.



Sun 2nd Dec	2.30pm	Scouts Christmas Celebration, St Mary's
Fri 14th Dec	5.30pm	Carols in the Barn, West Woodyates
Mon 17th Dec	6.00pm	Carols at St Rumbold's, Pentridge
Fri 21st Dec	6.00pm	Carols at Gussage St Andrew
Christmas Eve	10.30am	Come along and help us make the Christingles!
	5.00pm	Christingle, St Mary's
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion, St Mary's
Christmas Day	9.30am	Family Communion, St Mary's
	11.15am	Holy Communion, St Rumbold's, Pentridge



December 2012

See side panel for key to symbols

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Wed 5th	7.30pm	St Mary's PCC
Thurs 13th	2.45pm	Mothers' Union Christmas Meeting
Wed 19th	10.00am	School Praise Assembly, St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley

January 2013

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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27	28	29 ◆	30	31 T ☕		