

The Seeker

April ~ May



2013

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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Mothers' Union

Thanks go to Janette Salmons and all the members of the Mothers' Union for their work on the banner. This was paraded in Salisbury Cathedral and was made in sections by the members. It hangs on the back of the old one, worked by Kathleen Hardiman some years ago.

The banner will be on display in St Mary's so that both sides can be seen! Thank you!



Ascension Day

The story does not end with Easter. Join us to celebrate the day Jesus ascended into heaven, at Gussage St Andrew on Thursday 9th May at 6pm for a very special Holy Communion.

Annual Meetings

It is the time of year to hold our Annual Meetings. Join us at St Mary's on Sunday 21st April at 6pm (in place of the evening service) or at St Rumbold's on Tuesday 23rd April at 7pm. If you would like to help with the running of our churches in any way, please talk to us!

Saturday Afternoons

As the clocks have changed over the Easter weekend, so our Saturday afternoon drop-in at St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley starts up again. If you are passing – or would like to have a chat with someone trained to listen – pop in for a cup of tea from 2.30pm (weddings permitting!) This is in addition to the drop in in the Post Office café on the first Wednesday of the month when Mel or Paul will be available for a chat.

Church Fete – Sat 25th May

There isn't a Street Fayre this year, so we have decided to stage a traditional Church Fete at and around St Mary's Church, Sixpenny Handley on Saturday 25th May.

There will be all the traditional attractions, games, exhibitions and stalls as well as cream teas and cakes.

It is the place to be. Come along for a great time – more details on the poster in this Downsman.

*Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see,
and what I do in anything
to do it as for thee.*

*A man that looks on glass,
on it may stay his eye;
or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
and then the heaven espy.*

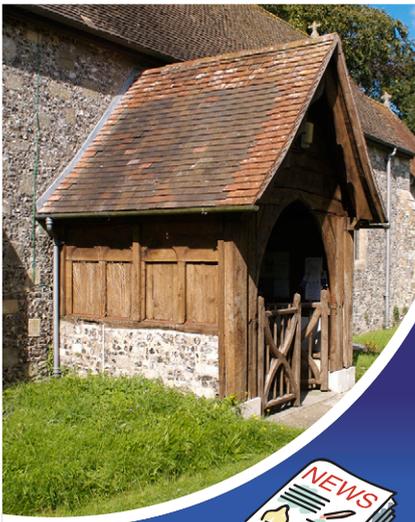
*All may of thee partake;
nothing can be so mean,
which with this tincture, "for thy sake,"
will not grow bright and clean.*

*A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine:
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
makes that and the action fine.*

*This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.*

George Herbert, 1633

It was Palm Sunday, but because of his sore throat, five-year-old Bobby stayed home from church with a baby-sitter. When the family came back they were carrying palm crosses. Bobby asked what they were. 'Well, people held them over Jesus' head as he walked by,' his father told him. Bobby was horrified. 'I don't believe it,' he gasped, 'The one Sunday I don't go and Jesus shows up!'



News items and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!

FROM THE REGISTERS



Lydia Smith was baptised on 16th December 2012.

Arthur Rowe's funeral took place on 15th November 2012.

Jenny Churchill's funeral took place on 12th December 2012.

Ron Howard's funeral took place on 28th December 2012.

Colin Mardlin's funeral took place on 11th March 2013.



Need a lift to Church?

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

Download from our website archive!



- The Seeker – in full colour!
- Minutes of PCC meetings
- Church forms and reports



When the vicar rehearses his sermon, is he practising what he preaches?

Dear Friends

Daily Prayer – Lord, keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth.
The nice thing about getting forgetful is that you can hide your own Easter eggs.

A little question – Which of the 10 Commandments do Christians *always* break?

You will receive The Downsman just as we are thinking about Easter Eggs. We have a lot of eggs at this time of the year. An egg looks as dead and as smooth as a stone, yet we know that if the egg is fertilized, and kept warm, its hard shell will crack, and into the world will climb a fluffy yellow chick, the colour of sunshine. The egg reminds us that what looked dead and hopeless on Good Friday (when Jesus's dead body was buried) was actually full of life and hope – because Jesus broke out of the tomb to be alive forever!

And so we eat eggs. These remind us of God's love, because he was prepared to live among us, to eat with us in person, and we can *'taste and see that God is good'* (Psalm 34:8).

And so, which of the 10 Commandments do Christians always break? Answer; The fourth one, *'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath.'*

The Commandments were drawn up for the Jewish people and the fourth one refers to their holy day, which is of course Saturday. Jesus said he did not come to sweep away the Law, but to fulfill it. And this is one God still wants us to keep – even if on a different day. Christians, of course, keep Sunday holy, as the first day of the week and the day Jesus rose from the dead. But with so many jobs to do around the house and in the garden, it is often quite difficult for us to think of Sunday as a 'holy' day. And Sunday is also when families have the opportunity to eat a meal together and to catch up on all that is going on.

At the Last Supper, Jesus introduced us to the idea of a very special meal being the centre of the Christian family. It wasn't new, of course; he

was taking the ancient idea of the Passover meal, the celebration of God delivering his people from slavery in Egypt, and bringing it to a whole new level of meaning: A new level of freedom. And the truly amazing thing is that Jesus *shares his meal with us*. He shares his meal, his life – and his death. And the impossible happens. Jesus returns to life.

It isn't the same kind of life, of course. How could it be? Death has taken him beyond ordinary human life. God's loving power has drawn him into a life that is so completely new, so completely full, that it has no limits in time or space.

In all the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection we see people who really struggle to accept that Jesus is risen. Mary Magdalene has to be told by *two angels* what has happened, and yet she still doesn't see Jesus when he is standing right in front of her. At other times Jesus patiently explains the scriptures or eats with his friends, but to Mary, he just calls her name... *'Mary!'*

This must have been such a still moment. Just that one word hanging in the air, as the truth of the moment sinks in. Perhaps this was Mary's *'Sabbath moment'* – indeed, the most holy moment of her whole life. The moment when Jesus called her name. And we can be still as well. We can listen to God as He calls our name, as we take in the most wonderful news ever.

As she runs away to tell the others, Mary must have thought that it was all too good to be true. Today, when there is so much bad news, such good news can seem too good to be true. Maybe elsewhere, if something seems too good to be true, it is.

Here, it is just good news.

Your friend and vicar, Mel

IS THERE REALLY NO OTHER WAY? MEL

'Christians are so intolerant of other religions.' 'You can't possibly think you're the only ones who are right and everyone else is wrong.' Any one in any situation where a high value is placed on 'tolerance' can find themselves up against a barrage of criticism for having faith. So how do Christians respond to accusations of intolerance and arrogance? Can we really claim that the only way to know God is through Jesus? Where does that put us in relation to our pluralist society?

Well, we have to start with the person of Jesus, because he caused all this trouble in the first place! Jesus said 'I am the way, the truth and the life' (John 14:6). Not only that, but he also claimed that no one could come to the Father except through him. As intimidating as it might be to be accused of intolerance, is it really so offensive to claim that we have been won over by the truth – not a truth but the truth? Jesus identified himself as God. Not a part of God, or a reflection of God, but truly and fully God. He is the visible revelation of the invisible God.

Christianity is not a set of beliefs that we sign up to, and think that everyone else has to sign up to as well. It is encountering a person. There is no one else like him. Rather than focusing on a set of beliefs, we focus on the person who has won our hearts, who pours out his Spirit on us so that we can be free from all the destructive and corrupting forces of evil in the world.

Do Christians make exclusive claims? Yes. We have to, because we put our faith in the one who made them in the first place. Is this arrogant? No. After all, everyone makes exclusive claims – even those who claim they are being the most tolerant. All religions claim to be or have the ultimate way of truth. And even those who have no faith also claim to have discovered the ultimate truth – that everyone else is wrong. But this is the most arrogant thinking of all. The only position that might be considered tolerant could be extreme agnosticism: 'I'm going to leave it open that someone somewhere might be right.'

This view may be less arrogant than atheism, but is also a refusal to admit that there is such a thing as right and wrong, and that we all make decisions based on belief. Everyone believes something is true and good, and that the world would be a better place if everyone else agreed with them. This is the human condition.

I believe that Jesus came among us, not to create a group of people who thought they were right and everyone else was wrong. He came to lead us back to the God who created us in the first place. The fact that he did so while we were arrogant, proud and rebellious should only humble us deeply. We did nothing, absolutely nothing, to deserve this stooping down, this sacrifice, this death so that we could live.

The Holy Spirit works in the whole world, not just the Church. Our attitude to others should always be that we have much to learn, and God will always surprise us through those who live differently. Rowan Williams said that 'tolerance' is an awful concept. It means I can just about tolerate you. *Respect* is better. But *attention* is best.

God pays attention to us. We should reflect that in our dealings with others by giving them our attention. The truth embodied in the person of Jesus Christ places a value on every single human life. We are of infinite worth – every single one of us. The working out of Christian truth is to treat others, of whatever creed, culture or background, as they deserve – as people infinitely precious to God.

Adapted from an article by Lucy Peppiatt in **New Wine Magazine**



Everyone in the world can have enough food IF world leaders act. This is the message of over a hundred charities that have banded together to launch a special appeal. The UK will chair the G8 group of world leaders this year and this presents a golden opportunity to address the root causes of poverty and hunger. The charities include Christian Aid, Cafod, the Salvation Army and Tearfund. The main objectives are that companies should be more transparent in their accounting; that land should be used for food and not fuel; that taxes are paid to poor countries where they are due; and that we help the poor to feed themselves. It does not sound much to ask.

Please search '**Christian Aid IF**' for more details, and look out for Christian Aid Week in May. Remember to look for the Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance logos whenever possible to ensure our food comes from good sources. Every little helps to raise someone out of poverty.



Teddy Bears celebrate

It is a year since we started our Teddy Bears pre-school morning on Thursdays during term time. Many thanks to Jean Mayne and her team for running this, and to celebrate we invite all the Teddy Bears in the village (and beyond) to a special 11 o'clock Service in St Mary's on Sunday 19th May. Come along and enjoy some lively stories, songs, coffee and a ring biscuit or two!



+ 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 St Mary's!** on most Saturday afternoons from 2.30pm during British Summer Time for a cup of tea and a chat with someone trained to listen.

* **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-schoolers and their carers are invited to St Mary's on Thursdays during school term from 10.30am to noon for fun, refreshments, and maybe a Bible story.

L **Sunday Lunch** Join us at Hanlega's, on the campsite, on the first Sunday of the month for Sunday lunch – Everyone is welcome.

◆ **Fellowship Group** The Fellowship Group (usually) meet every Tuesday for chat, laughter and biscuits, some talk around serious themes and sometimes a Roebuck steak! Phone Paul Skinner (552785).

☕ **Men's Group** – A beer and a chat usually on the last Thursday of the month. Details from David Lockyer (552492).

☼ **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 this April and May

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary the Virgin Sixpenny Handley Informal service includes children's time			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	9.30am ☕	11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am	
April 7 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
April 14 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
April 21 st	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	APCM	MP	#
April 28 th	MP		Inf & HC	Evensong	#	HC
May 5 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
May 12 th	MP		#	Evensong	#	HC
May 19 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
May 26 th	MP		Inf & HC	Evensong	#	HC

HC = Holy Communion **Baptism of Lily Parson – Sunday 14th April**
 MP = Morning Prayer 11.00am St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley
 S of P = Songs of Praise **Ascension Day Holy Communion – Thurs 9th May**
 # = No service 6.00pm St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley

April		See side panel for key to symbols				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 ◆	3 *	4	5	6 ▼
7 L	8	9 ◆	10 HC	11 ☼	12	13 ▼
14	15	16 ◆	17	18 T +	19	20
21	22	23 ◆	24	25 T ☕	26	27 ▼
28	29	30 ◆				

Thu 11th 2.45pm Mothers' Union. Water Aid, Sixpenny Handley
 Sat 20th 2.00pm Wedding of Frances Lovell and David Bursey, St Mary's
 Sun 21st 6.00pm Annual Church Meeting of St Mary's and St Andrew's, St Mary's
 Tue 23rd 7.00pm St Rumbold's Annual Church Meeting, Pentridge

May		Updated weekly on our website				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 *	2 T	3	4
5 L	6	7 ◆	8 HC	9 T ☼	10	11 ▼
12	13	14 ◆	15	16 T	17	18 ▼
19	20	21 ◆	22	23 T +	24	25
26	27	28 ◆	29	30 ☕	31	

Sat 4th 1.30pm Wedding of Christopher Snell and Sarah Reed, St Mary's
 2.45pm Mothers' Union in the Caribbean, Sixpenny Handley
 Thu 23rd 10.30am School Praise Assembly, St Mary's
 Sat 25th Noon Church Fete, St Mary's

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 13th July
 St Mary's Concert, Sixpenny Handley. Our annual celebration of talent. Come along and perform, or come along and enjoy! Please contact John and Gaye Cullingford if you would like to take part.

Saturday 29th June – Three Men in a Boat (to say nothing of the dog) at The Barn Woodyates. A brilliant one-man telling of this famous story.

Saturday 20th July – Puzzleburger Evening from 4pm at St Mary's Church. A summer evening that does what it says on the tin. Come along for a burger and a puzzle – jigsaws and other puzzles fit for all ages to have some family fun.

Saturday 10th August – The Pentridge Barbeque!