

The Seeker

www.handleychurch.org.uk



October

2014

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

Who's who?

Vicar

Rev Mel Durrant
The Vicarage,
Sixpenny Handley
01725 552 608
ask@handleychurch.org.uk

Curates

Rev Paul Skinner
01725 552 785
Rev Dr Michael Foster
01258 830 764

Churchwardens

*St Mary's with
Gussage St Andrew*

Sheila Bradley 553 133

St Rumbold's, Pentridge

Mary Ferguson 552 222

Jane King 552 231

Licenced Lay Minister

John Cullingford 516 453

Lay Pastorial Assistants

Lydia Carter 552 720

Margaret Durrant 552 608

Margaret Jones 552 358

Maureen Lockyer 552 492

Jean Mayne 552 692

David Salmons 552 721

Carole Wyatt 552 572

(Area code 01725)

What would you say?

You are standing in the queue in the shop when someone says, 'You go to church. Do you believe all that stuff?' What do you say? We tackled this question in meetings earlier in the year, and I was humbled by the response. People came up with;

'I find peace and the chance to ponder on my thoughts of the past, present and future and be there to listen to others.'

'It feels like the most real part of me, in which everything might be able to hand together.'

'I was brought up to believe in God. When I was confirmed I experienced the Holy Spirit.'

'I'm a Christian and treat everyone like I would like to be treated – help everyone whatever their colour of skin, religion.'

'I'm not entirely sure about all of it, but some stuff I do get and other things are just a little beyond me. One thing is for sure: It is constant.'

'I'm a Christian and I believe.' 'I was privileged to be brought up in a Christian family, so I had the foundations. I have never regretted my commitment and my faith is now even stronger.'

'Jesus matters because he makes it possible for us to be forgiven for all the things we do wrong and know that we are loved and accepted.'

'I have found that God is my best friend.'

'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'

'I don't think this is the place, but if you'd like to come around for a cup of tea...'

This is the time of year when we start planning ahead – so why not think about a wedding or a christening?

GET MARRIED IN CHURCH!

You don't have to be christened to get married in church, just live in the area or have some other link. If you are not sure, just ask the vicar! And it needn't cost the earth. The service costs only about £500, depending on details.

God intended marriage to offer the right place to grow in love and support for each other, fulfill our sexuality, and provide a stable and secure environment for bringing up children. A good marriage will change us for the better, and as we change, our marriage grows with us.



GET CHRISTENED!

For your child, baptism marks the start of a journey of faith and becoming a member of the worldwide Christian family. For you, it means thanking God for the gift of life, and giving that life the best start possible with the support of millions of Christians across the whole world. Christening and baptism are different words for the same thing. You are only baptized once, but it can happen at any age. Teenagers and adults can also be baptized, making the choice for themselves. This is usually accompanied with Confirmation. The Church believes that God's love is available to all, so even if you are not a regular churchgoer you can still have a baptism.



News items and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!

www.easyfundraising.org

Shop online and raise funds for

Sixpenny Handley Church

Just visit easyfundraising.org and search for our church and follow the simple steps to sign up. Each time you shop online you'll earn us a donation, just by making an extra click!

£300 raised so far!

Did you know?

It costs over £40,000 each year just to keep our churches open and functioning. So if you would like to keep the church open near you, we need your help! Please think about giving regularly, and think about giftaid if you are a UK taxpayer so we get 25% extra at no cost to you. Remember, we get no funding from the government at all. The Church is for *everyone*, so please contact the vicar if there is any way we may be able to help you.

Pardon? I can't see!

Our new sound and vision system is now up and running. Contributions towards this (or any of the other areas we need to improve) are still needed. Please contact the vicar or churchwarden to find out how you can be a part of it.



Dear Friends

You know the picture of Moses coming down the mountain with the Ten Commandments carved on two slabs of stone. But why were they written in stone? It was because the principles they embody are permanent and unchanging. They are the basis of our society - and the same principles are found in virtually every culture in the world. People often think the Ten Commandments are about what we are NOT allowed to do. In fact, they are about what we DO do, about behaving in a civilized way. They are about respecting other people, looking after each other, and realizing that there are important things greater than any one of us. So what about people who have never heard of God, or Jesus, or the Ten Commandments?

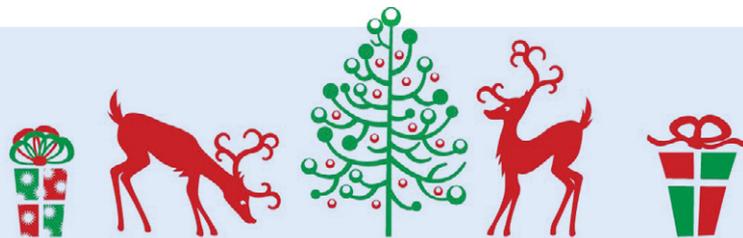
We all have a conscience. Perhaps we can think of our conscience as acting like a God-given compass. If we let it, it'll guide us in the right direction. We usually know when we are doing something wrong. But if we continue doing wrong and reject warnings from our conscience often enough, its voice gets quieter and quieter until we no longer hear it. That is a dangerous condition to be in.

Picture yourself standing on a bridge and dropping pebbles into the water. Watch the ripples go all the way to the edge. It is just a little pebble, but look at the effect it has! Yet in winter, when that same water freezes over, you can drive a truck across the water without it changing.

Your conscience is like that. If we keep disobeying God, our hearts become calloused and hardened and we no longer hear him speaking to us. Saint Paul wrote, I strive to keep my conscience clear before God and man (Acts 24:16). That is a good rule of thumb to try to live by.

And there is no conflict between faith and reason. Both connect us with God. Just look at the night sky. If you count the stars at the rate of 125 a minute, it will take about 2,000 years just to count the stars in our Milky Way. Saint Paul wrote, for since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:20). If you look, you will see God at work everywhere - including your own life.

Your friend and vicar, Mel



Christmas Fayre

in aid of St Mary's Church Sixpenny Handley

Saturday 29th November 12 - 4pm

The Shed - Hanlega's - Church Farm Campsite - SP5 5ND
All the traditional Christmas stalls and lots more! Only 50p entrance

It is nearly time to start thinking about Christmas!
Come to our Christmas Fayre in The Shed. There will be refreshments available as well as all the traditional Christmas stalls, great gifts and a few surprises.

The fayre just gets better and better each year, so don't miss out!

It was called 'The Great War' at the time, 'The War to End all Wars'. Now, of course, we just call it the First World War. They didn't know that just 25 years after it ended, there would be another terrible conflict, the Second World War.

And a hundred years earlier, a coalition of nations had fought another war. In 1813, the Battle of Leipzig marked the beginning of the end of Napoleon's domination of Europe and led to his fall and imprisonment on Elba. It was the biggest battle that had ever been fought - so big that it came to be called the Battle of the Nations. 600,000 men fought and at least 100,000 men were killed in just one day. And to remember the centenary of what was seen as a great victory, a huge war memorial was built in Leipzig itself.

It is still there, and the story of its construction shows that it took all those 100 years to complete. There were endless debates and delays, but it was finally built as the biggest war memorial in the world. Remembering that victory from a century before reminded them how wonderful it had seemed to beat an enemy. Perhaps they could do it again. Remembering can be dangerous.

The words of Jesus can help guide us in the way we remember. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-16, often called The Beatitudes), *Jesus began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. In one translation it says blessed are those who know their need of God.* Perhaps that is it. We get things wrong by ourselves. We need help. We need God, or we might do the wrong sort of remembering.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. When there is war, we know that people will mourn. Something like 10 million soldiers died in the First World War alone, and 7 million who were not soldiers. Every family was touched - and again 25 years later. Could those left behind be comforted? Perhaps only by knowing that the dead are now where the evils of war cannot touch them; only by knowing that God will not let war or death have the last word.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. It sounds impossible, but it is true. Evil comes to an end. Tyrants fall. The survivors are the meek.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are those who are not corrupted, who seek to do what is right rather than what is easy, who remember in love. They will be able to live with themselves, their conscience and their God.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. At the end of the Second World War, the surviving nations tried to build peace. Old enemies, Japan, Britain, France, Germany and the United States decided to build each other up, not wipe each other out. The United Nations, Nato and the

European Union came into being. It isn't perfect, but the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for holding war at bay in Europe and beyond for 60 years.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Old feelings die hard. Can we put aside greed, envy, anger and hatred? Jesus promises that love is greater than all other things. We can know him, love him and finally see him face to face.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. It is not easy, but the work of the peacemakers goes on. We see what it has achieved in Northern Ireland. We see what it has achieved in South Africa. And we see where it is still needed: in Israel and Palestine, in Syria, Sudan. So many countries. Wherever there has been conflict in the past, there is work for the peacemakers now, for the children of God.

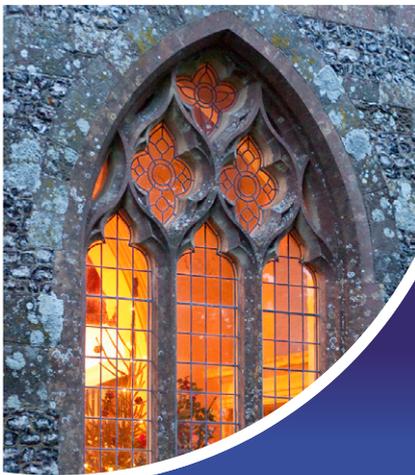
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. We hear almost every day of those who dare to tell the truth about oppression, those who speak out against injustice, those who blow the whistle on wrongdoing. Not everyone blows a whistle for the right reason. But will we dare to stand up for the truth? Will we do what is right when it is costly; the hard truth instead of the easy lie?

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. But how can we rejoice when there is so much that is wrong, so much that is evil in the world? How can we rejoice when good people suffer? Because we have the example of men and women who dared to speak out and who changed the world. We have the example of Jesus who embraced his calling, his life, even though he knew it would lead to his death on the cross. Jesus inspires us to put the world right. It can be done. When we remember before God the blessings we have received - this beautiful world, the love of those around us, and life itself, things we can do nothing to earn - we remember to put away what leads to war, to death. We remember to speak out in respect and honour. We remember to value and love and serve. We remember to pray for peace, that God's Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.



A Message Home

A young soldier wrote home from the trenches, 'Only recently I was in a very big engagement, when bullets and shells were bursting around us every minute, and none of us knew when one would burst and blow us to pieces. Dear friend, that was the time when I turned to God and prayed for protection, and he has answered my prayers.' Remember those who have suffered in war and conflict at our Remembrance Services in November.



+ Bible Study Group

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, 7.15pm. Phone Mike on 01725 552 720 for details.

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 from about 11 o'clock, or The Walnut Tree on the last Wednesday, for a coffee and chat with the vicar or curate.

T Teddy Bears

Pre-school children and their carers are invited to St Mary's on Thursday mornings during school term from 10.30am to noon, for fun, drinks and biscuits and maybe a Bible story or two. There is no charge.

◆ 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 (552 785).

☕ **Men's Group** – A beer and a chat usually on the last Thursday of the month. Details from David Lockyer (552 492).

🍵 **Mothers' Union** – Tea, company and a good talk, usually on the second Thursday afternoon of the month, from 2.45pm. Phone Sheila (553 133) or Mary (552 041) for details.

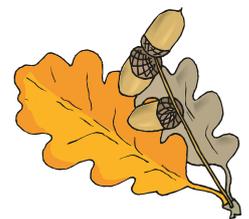
Join us this Autumn

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's 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	
Oct 5 th	HC	10.30am	Informal	Evensong	Harvest HC	#
Oct 12 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Oct 19 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Oct 26 th	MP		Inf HC	Evensong	#	HC
Nov 2 nd	HC		Informal	All Souls	HC	#
Nov 9 th	10:50 Remembrance		Evensong	10:50 Rmbrn	#	#
Nov 16 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Nov 23 rd	MP		Inf HC	Evensong	#	HC
Nov 30 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#

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

All Souls

You are invited to come along to St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley at 6pm on Sunday 2nd November for this gentle service as we pray together and remember before God those we love but see no longer. There will be a chance to have names of loved ones read out and to light a candle as we pray together. There will be coffee and biscuits afterwards.



October

See side panel for key to symbols

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 *	2 T	3	4 ▼
5	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	

Wed 1st 7.30pm St Mary's PCC Meeting at the vicarage

Tue 7th 7.15pm Fellowship Group – supper at the Roebuck Inn

November

Updated weekly on our website

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

Tue 4th 7.15pm Fellowship Group – supper at the Roebuck Inn

Wed 26th 7.30pm St Mary's PCC Meeting at the vicarage

Sat 29th 12.00pm Sixpenny Handley Christmas Farye. The Shed