



# The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



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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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## Talks

## Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

The Mothers' Union group (you don't have to be a mother to come along!) meets on the second Thursday of the month in the Parish Office, Sixpenny Handley. In October Rev Francis Canham will talk about the Salisbury Hospital Chaplaincy, and in November Emma Gothard will talk about her family's project in Uganda. There will be items from Africa for sale. Come along, have a chat and a cup of tea, and meet some friends!

### Red Remembrance

The red poppy is worn by millions of people every year. The British Legion website reminds us what the red poppy is, and, very importantly, what it is *not*. It is *not* a symbol of death, or a sign of support for war. It is *not* any reflection or support of political or religious beliefs. It is *not* red to reflect the colour of blood. No, poppies are red because that is their natural colour, and they are the first thing to grow and flower when land is disturbed. Poppies are worn by millions of people coming together, as a symbol of remembrance and hope.

It is the stories of individual people that make history come alive. For instance, Albert Penn, newly married to Florence and living in a village near Chesterfield. Keen Sunday School teachers, their lives focused around their little chapel and their home.

In 1916, Albert volunteered. At first he was refused because his wife was pregnant, and he was told to return when the baby was 3 months old. He did, and 8 months after that, when baby Mary Estelle was just 11 months old, Albert was dead.

He died as Passchendaele on 30th October 1917, just 29 years old. His body was never found – the last recorded sighting of Albert was of him standing in an open field, with his Bible in his hand. Soon after this, the regiment went over the top. Florence was a widow at the age of 23.

Their granddaughter, Cynthia Hardiman, said *'in that situation, in war, he was still preaching. He was still encouraging young fellas and trying to keep up morale. I like to think that in that terrible time, he didn't keep the faith. The faith kept him.'*

At this time of year we give remember and thanks for people like Albert. His name does not sound as old-fashioned as it used to; names like his are back in fashion. Perhaps this can prompt us to keep praying and working for peace in our own time, in so many places in our troubled world, both near and far.

This year we come together to remember those who have suffered in war and conflict at our services at the War Memorial in Sixpenny Handley on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November and in St Mary's and St Rumbold's on Remembrance Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November. Please join us.





News items and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!

### Planning Ahead

This is the season when we start planning ahead for next year – so why not think about a wedding or a christening? They are wonderful times when families come together to celebrate. Please talk to the vicar for more details.



### No Chancel Tax here!

If you are buying or selling a house in Sixpenny Handley, remember that you do not have to pay for a search for Chancel Tax. This was an historic tax that might be payable by property built on land that was once owned by the church. This tax is out of date and cancelled. If you need written proof to go with your documents, please contact the church office.

### In full colour

A full colour PDF of The Seeker is available from our website.



## Dear friends...

Have you ever heard something so ridiculous that you find yourself exclaiming ‘Oh come on!’? Sometimes the world is just so ridiculous. For instance, I read the other day about someone being arrested for ‘stealing electricity’ from a train company by plugging his phone in on the train. Then he was de-arrested, because it was so ridiculous, and then he was re-arrested because of some ‘inappropriate behaviour’ related to the original arrest. ‘Oh come on!’

For some people, the most ridiculous thing they have ever heard is that God loves them and sent his Son for them, died and rose again for them, and wants to know them as a friend... ‘Oh come on!’

Psalm 67 says, *The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us.* At this time of year we celebrate the harvest, and we are very aware of change. The turn of the seasons brings changing colours of the leaves and changing patterns in our lives. For farmers this means bringing the dairy herd in, getting the ewes in good condition before they go to the ram, bringing the sheep down off the hills, drilling the winter wheat, and all this before the heavy rains come. And so the farmer’s work goes steadily on, season after season.

Autumn is all about mists. It is the famous *season of mists and mellow fruitfulness*, (which sounds much better than ‘damp and dull’!). Mist and fruit go together at this time of year, like apple and blackberry – and I think they can be found together in our spiritual lives as well. So I wonder what ‘season’ you find yourself in at the moment. There is no right or wrong answer.

Perhaps it feels like *winter*, when the soil of your faith is cold and there is little sign of anything that might bear fruit. Or do you feel like it is *spring*, and your life sees signs of growth? Or do you feel like you live in warm *summer* days? Or have we come full circle and you are living in the *autumnal* mists again? You know there is much to give

thanks for, but your inner questions seem unanswered and the way ahead is unclear.

The seasons of our lives are constantly changing, and we need wisdom to recognize the gifts, challenges and opportunities of each one. Perhaps God gives us earthly seasons to remind us of the things that really matter, and to push us to explore further and further into the reality of His love for us.

There is an old hymn that goes,

*Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy,*

*The praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ.*

So perhaps the problem is how we look at things. We usually say, ‘Oh come on!’ in a negative way. But think about how powerful it becomes if we use it as a request, an invitation, a prayer to the living breathing God to enter a situation – our situation, ‘Oh come on, Holy Spirit, come!’

Let’s give thanks for what we have: God gives us an amazing world. And we can think about those who have less than we do, and ask for God to move in our lives, in their lives, and in his world, to make it and us the people we should be. This is a journey that starts right here and right now, *for the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* Amen.

Your friend and Vicar, Mel



Do you have a Quiet Time? St Mary's and St Rumbold's are open every day for prayer, and of course we can pray anywhere. However, you may like to have a private little prayer at home, knowing that others are praying at the same time. If so, perhaps you can set aside a few minutes on Monday evenings at 9 o'clock. Use the prayers included here as well as your own, or just be quiet in the presence of God, knowing that you are sharing the time with others in our area.

# Prayers

## A Prayer for Today

I remind myself that I am in your presence, O Lord.  
I will take refuge in your loving heart.  
You are my strength in times of weakness.  
You are my comforter in times of sorrow.  
Lord, you granted me the great gift of freedom.  
Remind me, Lord, that we are all equal in your loving eyes.  
Help me to see others as you do.  
As I turn my thoughts to you  
I will take rest and refreshment in your presence Lord.  
Amen.

## A Prayer for Autumn

There are some who rejoice in this season, Lord.  
The harvest past, we welcome the darker nights  
and the joys of cosy nights by the fire,  
talent shows on the television,  
and groups and societies in full swing.  
Thank you, Lord, for the joys of autumn.  
But for others, this season is dark in more ways than one.  
The days diminish, and the nights are long;  
some are lonely, finding no solace  
by empty fireside of noisy TV;  
going out in the darkness is fearful,  
a primal anxiety which grips the soul.  
We pray, Lord, for those who suffer as autumn sets in.  
For some, this is a time of settling:  
settling of the year, settling of the spirit.  
For others, it is unsettling, as the shadows creep and fall.  
Lord, take us all into the shelter of your being;  
let us dwell in the shadow of your love.  
Amen.

## Support your local church

The church is a presence and a place, offering time and space for celebration and mourning, song and quietness. It is *your* church. We get no funding from the government – if we want to have a church in our communities we have to do something about it ourselves. In fact, having a church is a bargain! For instance, it costs only about £5 an hour to keep St Mary's open. Please think about paying for an hour or two. After all, this is only the price of a coffee and cake in town, less fattening and longer lasting!

If you shop online, you can raise money at no cost to you by registering at [www.easfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easfundraising.org.uk). Top retailers donate a percentage of what you spend to say thank you for shopping with them. It is a very simple process, with a handy toolbar reminder  
What we do with our money says everything about who we are. As we start to think about Christmas, let's remember that our God is a giving God. He gives us life and his giving is renewed daily. In giving to others we have the opportunity to reflect something of God's nature.

## A Prayer for Peacemakers

History can inspire or trap.  
Walls can protect or divide.  
Words can encourage or inflame.  
Power can free or destroy.  
Touch can comfort or violate.  
Peace can be shared or withheld.  
Gracious God, as we remember past and present conflicts, we pray for the divided people of the world, that leaders, governments and each one of us may use our resources, our opportunities and our lives in the service of reconciliation, for the sake of future generations and to the glory of your name.  
Amen.

## Prayer Reflection

*A seasonal way into prayer for winter*  
On a large dinner plate, stand a tea light surrounded by three or four ice cubes. Watch the ice melt.  
(Or freeze some cubes with dilute food colouring or ink and put them in warm water to melt.)  
Think of the Spirit of God, which cannot be contained. The Spirit of God moves where it will. Even the water will not stay on the plate but will, in its own time, evaporate and rise invisibly into the air.  
What comes to mind when you consider frozenness, melting, movement, rising, air?  
Offer your reflection to God and listen to what God might say in response.  
The next time you see frost on the grass or ice in a drink, remember your prayer and offer a new one.

## Excuses, Excuses

If you take the same excuses that people use for not going to church and apply them to other important areas of life you realize how inconsistent we can be in our logic. For example:

### Ten Reasons Not To Wash

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who make soap are only after your money.
3. I wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter.
4. People who wash are hypocrites - they think they are cleaner than everyone else.
5. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
6. I used to wash, but it got boring so I stopped.
7. None of my friends wash.
8. The bathroom is never warm enough in the winter or cool enough in the summer.
9. I'll start washing when I'm older.
10. I can't spare the time.



### ✦ 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 alternate Thursdays at 7.15pm. Details from Mike on 01725 552 720.

### 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 Monday of the month 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

Meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm for a steak supper at the Roebuck.

☕ **Men's Group** – A beer and a chat to finish off the month at 7.30pm. Details from David Lockyer (552 492).

☼ **Mothers' Union** – Tea, company and a good talk, usually every second Thursday of the month, from 2.30pm. Details from Mary (552 041).

## Join us for 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 2 <sup>nd</sup>	HC		Informal	Evensong	Harvest HC	#
Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	MP	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Oct 16 <sup>th</sup>	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Oct 30 <sup>th</sup>	HC		Informal	All Souls	HC	#
Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Nov 13 <sup>th</sup>	10:50 Remembrance ➤			Evensong	10:50 Rmbrn	#
Nov 20 <sup>th</sup>	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Nov 27 <sup>th</sup>	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC

☕ Holy Communion MP Morning Prayer ☼ Songs of Praise # No service

Our Informal service is geared more towards families and includes activities for children.

### Harvest Festivals

You may still be in time to celebrate Harvest – at St Andrew's on Sunday 25th September at 6pm, and at Pentridge on Sunday 2nd October at 11.15am. Both of them are followed by bread, cheese and cider refreshments – do come and celebrate the wonderful world around us, and stay for something to eat afterwards!

### All Souls Service

You are invited to come along to St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley at 6pm on Sunday 30th October 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.

### Posada – Starts 11am Sunday 27th November

On the last Sunday in November we will again be sending Mary and Joseph off on their journey around our villages as they begin their travels to Bethlehem. Yes, Christmas is coming! Come along to St Mary's to wave them goodbye – and make sure they come to your house on the way!

#### October

See side panel for key to symbols

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

#### November

Updated weekly on our website

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