



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



June 2018

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

Who's who?

Vicar

We are currently between vicars. The interregnum isn't expect to last long. Watch out for news in the next issue.

Curates

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Senior Exercise – a theological approach

There has been concern that older people are not getting enough physical exercise or mental stimulation, so here are three theological points to consider about old age:

- 1) Most seniors don't get enough exercise. However, in His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things, thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.
- 2) In His wisdom God made seniors lose co-ordination so they would drop things, requiring them to bend, reach, and stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.
- 3) Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would make additional calls of nature, requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing yet more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was very good.

So if you find that, as you age, you are walking more, getting up and down more, and stretching more, remember it is God's will. It is all in your best interest. Even though you mutter under your breath, remember that God looks down and loves you.

NOTICE: The Perfect Vicar — a Job Description

The Perfect Vicar preaches for exactly 10 minutes. He condemns sin roundly, but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 a.m. until midnight, and is also the church caretaker.

The Perfect Vicar is paid £40 a week, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, and donates £30 a week to the church. He is 29 years old and has 40 years' worth of experience. He has two children and available day and night. Above all, he is handsome.

The Perfect Vicar has a burning desire to work with teenagers and he spends most of his time with senior citizens. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humour that keeps him seriously dedicated to his church. He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office when needed.

The Perfect Vicar always has time for church meetings and all of its committees, never missing any church organization. And he is always busy evangelizing the unchurched.

The Perfect Vicar is always in the next village!

If your Vicar does not measure up, simply send this notice to six other churches that are tired of their Vicar too. Then bundle up your Vicar and send him to the church at the top of your list. If everyone cooperates, in one week you will receive 1,643 Vicars. One of them should be perfect. Have faith in this notice. One church broke the chain and got its old Vicar back.

PS: The Vicar might be a woman, too! **Mel Durrant**



**News items
and articles welcome!**
**Please drop them in to
the Vicarage, or email;
ask@handleychurch.org.uk**
Thanks!

The Demon Drink

A vicar was completing a sermon on abstaining from drinking alcohol. With great expression, he said, 'If I had all of the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.'

With even greater emphasis, he said, 'And if I had all of the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.'

And then finally, he thundered, 'And if I had all of the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river.'

The church was silent. Not a single member of the congregation made a sound.

The choir leader then stood up and said, 'For our closing song, let us sing the hymn "Shall We Gather at the River."'

In full colour

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



Dear friends...

Mel Durrant

I was in our village school a while ago and noticed that they have got some new posters. I didn't have time to copy them all down, but they have slogans like *Mistakes are proof that you are trying*. Or, *You read so you can go somewhere else when you have to stay where you are*.

Some of them were quotations from famous people, such as Mickey Mouse, who said *Mathematics is so you can count up to 20 without taking your shoes off*. One of my favourites was *Everything is difficult before it is easy*.

And then some were rather more serious; *You are wiser than you think*, *You are stronger than you realise*, *And you are loved much more than you will ever know*. And *Never give up your sense of wonder and asking questions*.

And finally *Stand up for what you believe, even if it means standing alone*.

There is a story in the Bible of Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers arriving to take Jesus home. They have come to take him away from all the fuss he is creating and to stop him behaving in such an embarrassing manner, walking around the countryside telling people about God. He is bringing dishonour on the family. It is clear that they think he is somewhat off his rocker. (Despite what some Christians have sometimes said about Mary, at this stage she clearly doesn't have any idea what Jesus is up to).

And what does Jesus do? Jesus makes matters worse. When told that his mother and brothers are outside, he asks *'Who are my mother and my brothers?'* Then he looked at those seated in a circle round him and said, *'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.'* (Mark 3:33-34).

Jesus slices through the whole traditional family structure in one clean cut. Today, we don't hear how new and scandalous his words are. But back then it was normal for children to live close to their parents, often in the same house. And the

family unit would often be a business unit as well, sharing everything in common, the family against the world. What's more, loyalty to family was the local and specific working out of loyalty to God and of being God's People. Break the link and you would undermine a major part of the way they thought and felt about the world and themselves.

Jesus challenges that assumption. He is not concerned with the old meaning of the word 'family'. He has a different mission, a different idea, and it involves God doing the unthinkable. God is making a new family, a new Holy People, and doing so without any regard for ordinary human family bonds.

The whole point is that anyone can belong to this new family. It doesn't matter where you come from and it doesn't matter about your DNA. It's not where you start it's where you finish!

'Here are my mother and my brothers!' Jesus says. And it is only when we hear how shocking and new and exciting these words are, that we get the message. It is so easy to slip back into a group identity that comes from something other than loyalty to Jesus. We all, so easily, substitute membership of the same group, tribe, family, club, party, class or whatever it may be, for what really matters.

Christians may not be perfect (we definitely *aren't* perfect!) but we know a man who is. And we try to be like him. Like that poster in school, encouraging us to *Stand up for what you believe, even if it means standing alone*, Jesus says do what is right, stick with me. Celebrate.

Of course, the great truth is that we never stand alone. And we are members of the only group that really matters. We are the subversive counter-cultural ones who say everyone is equally loved and equally important. And there are countless millions, billions of us, here and all the way to eternity. We are with God and we are family.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

Mel Durrant

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.'

⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

⁶Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life.' John 14:1-6

Have you ever been on a long journey and stopped to take a break? Motorway services might seem a long way away from the Bible, and quite different from the 'many rooms' that are 'in my Father's house' Jesus talks about, but they have the same purpose: a safe resting place on a journey!

And we all need to have safe places on our journey of life. You might like to think about what are your safe places...

They may not be places! They may be about being with special people. The people who we love and love us.

Jesus explains to his friends that he is not always going to be with them, not physically. But they needed to know that he will always be with them and they can always pause to spend time with him, to pray and to be refreshed. And we need to know this as well.

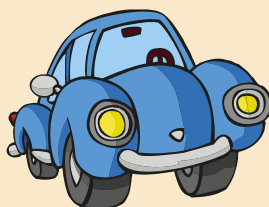
The journey – life's journey – might still be dangerous (*will* still be dangerous sometimes!) but Jesus is always with us. Of course, we still have to be careful, have to work hard at doing the right thing.

It is a bit like having a torch on a dark night. Torches, like all gadgets, need to be charged up so that they are useful again. And so do we! Left on our own we can get run down and flat. When we are sad or lonely or worried, we need a safe place to go to where we can 're-charge our batteries' and shine again.

We can do that by going to a place where we feel safe, or talking with someone we trust. When we talk to God, we call it prayer. And we can do this anywhere and anytime. There is no one single place: God is on the journey with us all the time, always beside us. But it is still good to stop and spend some quality time with Jesus now and again, because he is our friend who wants to spend time with us...

A Child's Point of View

The story of Adam and Eve was being carefully explained in the children's Sunday School. Following the story, the children were asked to draw a picture that would illustrate the story. Little Bobby drew a picture of a car with three people in it. In the front seat was a man and in the back seat, a man and a woman. The teacher was at a loss to understand how this illustrated the story of Adam and Eve. Little Bobby was prompt with his explanation. "Why, this is God driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden!"



A Rare Book

A collector of rare books ran into an acquaintance who told him he had just thrown away an old Bible that he found in a dusty, old box. He happened to mention that Guten-somebody-or-other had printed it.

"Not Gutenberg?" gasped the collector.

"Yes, that was it!"

"You idiot! You've thrown away one of the first books ever printed. A copy recently sold at auction for half a million pounds!"

"Oh, I don't think this book would have been worth anything like that much," replied the man. "It was scribbled all over in the margins by someone called Martin Luther."

A Prayer Sidebar

Presence

Dear Jesus, today I call on you in a special way. Mostly I come asking for favours. Today I'd like just to be in Your presence. Let my heart respond to Your Love.

"Come to me all you who are burdened and I will give you rest"

Here I am, Lord.

I come to seek your presence.

I long for your healing power.

Freedom

God is not foreign to my freedom. Instead the Spirit breathes life into my most intimate desires, gently nudging me towards all that is good. I ask for the grace to let myself be enfolded by the Spirit.

Lord, I pray for your gift of freedom. May your Holy Spirit guide those in power to work for equality for all your people.

Consciousness

We all need to take time out from our daily chores. We know that our bodies need a rest. When we come into your presence, Lord, our hearts and minds are refreshed, our spirits lifted.

Knowing that God loves me unconditionally, I look honestly over the last day, its events and my feelings. Do I have something to be grateful for? Then I give thanks. Is there something I am sorry for? Then I ask forgiveness.

Conclusion

I thank God for these few moments we have spent alone together and for any insights I may have been given. Amen.



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.

L Church Lunch

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

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.

 **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).

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's Sixpenny Handley		St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew
	9.30am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
June 3 rd	HC	Evensong	HC	#
June 10 th	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
June 17 th	HC	Evensong	MP	#
June 24 th	Informal	HC	#	HC
July 1 st	HC	Evensong	HC	#
July 8 th	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
July 15 th	HC	Evensong	MP	#
July 22 nd	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
July 29 th	HC	HC	MP	#

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

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

St Mary's Teddy Bears

Don't forget our Teddy Bear Drop-In at St Mary's on Thursday mornings during term time for pre-school age children and their carers. Come along for a cup of coffee and a chat for grown-ups, and a good play (and lots of biscuits and juice) for children.







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

The Christian Barber

There was a barber that thought that he should share his faith with his customers more than he had been doing lately. So the next morning when the sun came up and the barber got up out of bed he said, “Today I am going to witness to the first man that walks through my door.”

Soon after he opened his shop the first man came in and said, “I want a shave!” The barber said, “Sure, just sit in the seat and I’ll be with you in a moment.” The barber went in the back and prayed a quick desperate prayer saying, “God, the first customer came in and I’m going to witness to him. So give me the wisdom to know just the right thing to say to him. Amen.”

Then quickly the barber came out with his razor knife in one hand and a Bible in the other and said “Good morning sir. I have a question for you... Are you ready to die?”

July		See website for updates				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5 T 	6	7
8	9	10	11 HC	12 T 	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 T 	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 T 	27	28
29	30	31				