



# The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



Aug 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 in interregnum. Our new vicar, Reverend Canon Richard Hancock, will be joining us in September

### Curates

Rev Paul Skinner  
01725 552 785

Rev Dr Michael Foster  
01258 830 764

### Churchwardens

*St Mary's with Gussage St Andrew*

Sue Curtis                      552 397

*St Rumbold's, Pentridge*

Mary Ferguson                552 222

Jane King                        552 231



### New Vicar!

We are delighted to announce that a new priest in charge has been selected for our Parish. He is the Reverend Canon Richard Hancock, currently of the parish of Shrivenham.

Richard was originally a Freelance Professional Photographer and then became a Full-Time Youth & Childrens' Worker before being ordained in 1997 after studying at Westcott House Cambridge. He is an Honouree Canon of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford and a life professed Tertiary in The Society of St Francis [TSSF].

His Hobbies include Photography, Campaign for Real Ale [CAMRA], and Classic Cars & Motor Sport. Richard is married with two teenage children, they join us on 27th September.



Sat 8th September

for Churches

Ride+Stride is a sponsored event in which people walk or cycle or horse-ride between churches, exploring our wonderful Dorset countryside and enjoying the hospitality of our church communities.

Ride+Stride started in 1991 and raises funds for the Dorset Historic Churches Trust, which helps churches and chapels of all Christian denominations meet the increasing costs of maintenance, restoration and improvement of facilities. They have given Sixpenny Handley significant help over the years. Half of the money raised is returned directly to your nominated church and the other half is used to fund Dorset Historic Churches' grant programme. Visiting Dorset's beautiful churches on foot, by bicycle or on horseback provides a fun day out, suitable for children, families and friends.

Find out more: [www.rideandstrideuk.org/counties/dorset/](http://www.rideandstrideuk.org/counties/dorset/)

### Did you know?

It costs over £40,000 each year just to keep our churches open and functioning.

Remember, we get no funding from the government at all, so if you would like to keep the church near you, we need your help! Please think about giving regularly.

There are different ways you can help. The easiest is a Standing Order, which gives regularly for you. Please talk to us if you are interested - and think about giftaid if you are a UK taxpayer so we get 25% extra at no cost to you.

The Church is for *everyone*, so please contact us if there is any way we may be able to help you



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

## FROM THE REGISTERS



**The weddings took place of**  
 Spencer and Todd  
 Jon and Mel Pittard  
 Brian and Sarah Camp  
 Pete and Sam Bolton

**The funeral took place of**  
 Kirsten Mariner

### Thinking of switching?

If you take out insurance with Ecclesiastical.com – a church of your choice gets £130 as a celebration of the insurance company's 130th anniversary.

You don't have to be a connected with the church to use the firm or take advantage of this offer and help your local community.

### In full colour

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



## Dear friends...

Mel Durrant

There was a vicar who was an avid golfer. Whenever he could, he was on the golf course swinging away. It was an obsession, and he loved telling people how good he was. One Sunday was a picture-perfect day for golfing. The sun was out, there were no clouds in the sky, and the temperature was just right. The urge to play golf overcame him. He called his curate and told him that he was ill and could not take the service. Then he drove to the golf course and happily began to play the course. An angel was watching and was quite perturbed. He went to God and said, "Look! He should be punished for what he's doing." God nodded in agreement.

The vicar teed up on the first hole. He swung, and the ball sailed effortlessly through the air and landed right in the cup three hundred and fifty yards away, a perfect hole-in-one. The vicar was amazed and excited.

The angel was a little shocked. He turned to God and said, "Begging Your pardon, Sir, but I thought you were going to punish him." God smiled. "Think about it - who can he tell?"

Telling people is important. Talking is important. There are some things in life that we need to talk about, even if it is hard to find the right words. Love is like this. Try to define why you love your partner, your children, your pet, or even a piece of music or a book or film... and words quickly fail you. It can be very difficult to explain.

And this can also be true of God. Explaining God is difficult. And sometimes – often, even – we just don't understand God at all. That's what 'God moves in mysterious ways' is all about!

In church we celebrate God as Trinity, and the vicar (if he isn't playing golf) talks about God as the Three-in One, and things get very impressive. And, sometimes, very difficult! The problem is that any explanation of the Trinity is bound to fall short. By definition, God is beyond our human understanding – and that has to be part of the definition! God is more.

To understand fully the nature of God, and what the Trinity fully means, is always going to be beyond our scope. We are only human. And God is so much more than human that we can't ever fully get there. We can't understand God the Father, so that is why he gives us God the Son, Jesus, the Man who is God.

And this means that God was born in a stable in Bethlehem, lived, and died on the cross just outside Jerusalem and then rose again. This means that God has scarred hands and feet. This means that God knows what it means to love and be loved - and to be hated, to live and to die. And God chooses to live.

And what leads to all this is the Holy Spirit. After Jesus returned to heaven (at the Ascension, which we celebrate forty days after Easter), the Bible tells us that God is with each one of us through the Holy Spirit. Always. Sometimes we sing a very simple little song that tells us a lot about the Trinity.

*I can be what God wants me to be,  
 by the power of the Holy Spirit in me.  
 More like Jesus I would be, Holy Spirit  
 work in me.*

You may have been told that the Trinity is not in the Bible. Well, it is not fully spelled out, but then the Bible is not a theological textbook: It is a story about a relationship. However, the Trinity is there throughout, from page one to the very end. Think of God – Father Son and Holy Spirit – as a relationship of love. A relationship that transforms people and transforms the world. Getting this is what matters.

Here is one image I find helpful in thinking about the Trinity: Picture the planets of our solar system orbiting around our sun at the centre. Think of the sun as God. Think of the light as Jesus. And think of the warmth as the Holy Spirit. You can't have one without all three. The sun holds everything together, keeps everything in balance, but we can't look at it directly. The light brings life to everything that has life, connecting us directly with the sun. And the warmth is the presence of the light and the sun within every living being.

Sometimes people ask me how God can be with all of us all the time. How can God be concerned about my little problems, where there are such enormous problems elsewhere? Well, think of a vine growing on a hillside. Together the sun, the light and the warmth ripen each and every single bunch of grapes, as well as each flower, each grain of corn, giving each one its full and complete attention. Shining onto each one of us, like they have nothing else to do in the whole world...

## WATER INTO WINE

Mel Durrant

The story of the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast is only told in John's Gospel, (John 2:1-11). We know that this Gospel was written some decades after the first three and John wants us to think about what it all means. John selects his stories so that we can make connections. He wants us to ask the question, *who is this man Jesus?*

The plentiful good wine we see in this story, together with the multiplying of the bread at the feeding of the 5,000 (in a few chapters time) suggest that John is particularly struck by the way God offers us abundant life, a banquet, as an image of life through Jesus Christ. And indeed, throughout the Bible, the image of a wedding and a wedding banquet is used as a symbol of the Messiah's coming. It is only fitting that it is at a wedding banquet we get our first glimpse of the Messiah's glory.

The abundance and generosity in the water changed into wine is also a reminder that the Messiah is actually here. We are seeing the evidence. And we are being invited to respond to his presence, and to join in with the feast.

The wine runs out before the end of the celebration, but very few people at the time were aware of what happens to save the day. In John's Gospel, in John's way of thinking, it stands as the first action in Jesus' ministry, and so, in retrospect is given great significance. Mary notices the lack and tells Jesus, and then tells the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them. And at this point, the nature of the miracle also becomes significant. It is the water in stoneware jars used for ceremonial washing that is turned into wine.

The use of jars used in Temple worship highlights the contrast between the old and the new order. It makes clear that God is doing something new in Jesus. Right here, right now, God's generosity is overflowing.

There is the further complication of Jesus' words with his mother. When she points out the practical problem the party is having – a terrible social disgrace – Jesus simply replies *'my hour has not yet come'*. This sounds odd, rude even. But 'Hour' is a key word used throughout John's Gospel to represent the coming of God's kingdom, often with specific reference to Jesus' death on the cross. This *'hour'* has not yet come. Perhaps this is why so few see what is happening.

But now we are being invited, looking back after the Resurrection, to see this wedding for what it is, the first public act of Jesus, the first sign of who he is. And we are meant to see its link with the famous introduction to John's Gospel, to 'In the beginning...' We hear this famous passage every Christmas and it tells us of the coming of Jesus, and that 'we have seen his glory full of grace and truth.' This is a picture of that abundance and God's desire for us to share it.

When Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus says, she expects the unexpected. This is a good starting point for us as well. The servants obey their strange instructions, filling the jars with water, and so they make the miracle possible. Once again, we see Jesus relying on his followers. And he still relies on us today to do the same.

The wedding organiser does not know where the wine has come from, but recognises its quality as soon as he has a taste. It is still true today that many who have not encountered Jesus for themselves recognise something of God's goodness, and are surprised. So come and see, come and taste the wine. You may well be surprised by how good life can be. Amen.

## A Prayer Sidebar

*We all need to take time out from our daily chores. We know that our bodies need a rest, our minds and spirits need refreshment.*

### Presence

I slow myself down for a moment, and try to realise that God is present.

To me. Here and now. He is in present in what I do, in the people that I meet, and the situations I find myself in daily.

How can I make this reality real for myself?

I pause for a moment and reflect on God's life-giving presence in every part of my body, in everything around me, in the whole of my life.

### Freedom

By God's grace I was born to live in freedom, free to enjoy the pleasures He created for me. Dear Lord, grant that I may live as you intended, with complete confidence in your loving care.

Thank you God for my freedom. May I use this gift to do what I can for those who are oppressed or burdened.

It is so easy to get caught up with the trappings of wealth in this life.

Grant, O Lord, that I may be free from greed and selfishness. Remind me that the best things in life are free: Love, laughter, caring and sharing.

### Consciousness

In God's loving presence I unwind the past day, starting from now and looking back, moment by moment. I gather in all the goodness and light, in gratitude. I attend to the shadows and what they say to me, seeking healing, courage, forgiveness.

Dear Jesus, I can open up my heart to you. I can tell you everything that troubles me. I know you care about all the concerns in my life. Teach me to live in the knowledge that you who care for me today, will care for me tomorrow and all the days of my life.

### Conclusion

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



**+ 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**

**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
Aug 5 <sup>th</sup>	HC	Evensong	HC	#
Aug 12 <sup>th</sup>	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Aug 19 <sup>th</sup>	HC	Evensong	MP	#
Aug 26 <sup>th</sup>	Informal	HC	#	MP
Sept 2 <sup>nd</sup>	HC	Evensong	HC	#
Sept 9 <sup>th</sup>	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Sept 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Harvest</b> HC	Evensong	MP	#
Sept 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Informal	#	#	<b>6pm Harvest</b>
Sept 30 <sup>th</sup>	Informal HC	Evensong	<b>Harvest</b> HC	#

**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.

**Harvest Festival**

Looking ahead, make a date for our Harvest Festivals – at Sixpenny Handley on Sunday 16th September at 9.30 am, at St Andrew's on Sunday 23rd September at 6 pm, and at Pentridge on Sunday 23rd September at 11.15 am. All of them are followed by refreshments – do come and celebrate the wonderful world around us, and stay for something to eat afterwards!



**August**

See side panel for key to symbols

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 <b>HC</b>	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**St Mary's Teddy Bears**

The Teddy Bears at St Mary's have a rest over the summer holidays, but remember that they come back in September. All pre-school children and their carers are invited for a drink and a biscuit, a good natter and a play in the church. There is no charge and you don't need to come to church at other times – we just love seeing you! Come along for as long as you can between 10.30 and noon and make your Thursdays brighter.



**September**

See website for updates

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