



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



#5 2020

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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The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam

The impact of COVID-19 is changing us. In many ways, people have stepped up to look after each other. Churches have been part of this but it's been a much broader movement of neighbourly care. We have applauded the NHS and care workers and we have redefined who are the key workers. The desire to look after each other is strong.



Every organisation has had to change rapidly. Churches have adapted locally extraordinarily fast. Thank you for all you have done to help. None of us knows if this is the new normal but at the end of summer it looks as though the winter could be long and difficult. This virus is not yet finished with us.

We are being tested. The virus is not limited by national boundaries. It is a global pandemic. There have been some key moments and our responses have been revealing. The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis set off an international movement that Black Lives Matter. Who are the people we want to celebrate and why? We have been too slow re-evaluating the statues populating our public space and frustration boiled over. People want to be dealt with justly and we need to rework our history so that it helps us tell a better story in our own day.

For example, there are lessons for us with regard to slavery. Church was part of the problem and became part of the solution. We were among those who profited from slavery and claimed it was part of God's given order. We were also among those who campaigned for its abolition. In this respect my predecessor Bishop Burgess (1825-37) was courageous in the late eighteenth century in articulating his opposition to slavery. Nowadays no-one is in favour of slavery and the Church is among those challenging modern-day slavery. The question for us is why there was a re-evaluation of the way we understood scripture that changed our values and the way we acted.

One of my favourite Bible stories is from Matthew 22.15-22 when the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus with a political question. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor? Smelling hypocrisy, Jesus asked whose image is on a coin? They answered the emperor's. "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's."

It's a clever and enigmatic response. Whatever it means about God and Caesar, paying taxes, and the Christian engagement with political life and power, a Jew at the time of Jesus would have heard an unspoken second question: 'And you, whose image are you made in?' We are called to live as people made in God's image.

That's at the heart of who we are and we need to take care to live up to it. A time of crisis is both a judgement and an opportunity.

Church Services during COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we are only able to offer church services in a very limited way. At the present time we are offering a 10am weekly Sunday Service at either St Mary's Handley or St Rumbold's Pentridge which are also broadcast live online. St Andrew's sadly remains closed as COVID restrictions would not allow worship to happen safely in the building. This is being reviewed regularly and as restrictions are lifted, or reintroduced, we will endeavour to adapt the service provision. See page 2 for details.

Please join us
LIVE DAILY 10am
BROADCASTS

on Facebook or
watch later on YouTube
with this link:

[www.facebook.com/
St-Marys-Church-Sixpenny-
Handley-
558498850977107](https://www.facebook.com/St-Marys-Church-Sixpenny-Handley-558498850977107)



DIARY OF A COUNTRY PARSON: Autumn Leaves

As summer slowly fades over the horizon, we continue to find ourselves in strange times. The phrase, the “New Normal”, seems to be anything but normal as our lives are in a constant state of flux. Local lockdowns, quarantines, when and where to wear face masks seems to change weekly if not daily.

Brave attempts have been made by our leaders to develop some sense of normal, with children returning to schools and people encouraged to head back to the office. However, no sooner do we think we know where we are then COVID-19 kicks us back into the long grass. It seems as if anything can happen between the 1 o'clock news and the 6 o'clock news.

More than ever we want to be able to grab onto the familiar, but we feel the wet rope slipping through our hands and we are up to our neck in water. Autumn and Winter bring about a physical and emotional change in us, but we normally can look forward to Harvest, Bonfire Night, Christmas and New Year. It can be all very depressing and make us think that hibernation might be the best thing and hopefully by Spring all will be well.

However, there are constants in our life if we look for them and the change of seasons is one, as our small plant makes its 365 journey through space. Harvest is a time for us all to celebrate the beauty of God's creation and how blessed we are to live in such a beautiful part of the world. Autumn will bring is amazing colourama

of reds, browns and golds, long shadows and golden light, the joy of morning mists and diamond dew drops on the grass. The air takes on a new earthiness mixed with cold freshness. God has fixed all of these things for us, they are constants and have been since before we began and will continue after we have been gathered to God. This is beautifully phrased in Ecclesiastes 3.1-8.

And I find when I feel low, that getting out into my garden or the local countryside and just looking closely at the beauty and wonder that is around me revives my soul. Here I find two constants that offer me firm ground to stand on God and his creation. Psalm 19 reminds us of this wonder and greatness of God.

Though it will not be possible to celebrate these Autumn and Winter festivals in the way we have in the past they can still be celebrated. Over the coming months we will have new opportunities as communities to celebrate these great feasts. Who knows we may even develop some new traditions or discover some old ones which were lost.

I hope that we can all be creative in celebrating these wonderful feasts both as families and corporately as communities. Despite the virus we will need to find new ways of togetherness and appreciate more that which we have so often taken for granted.

Blessings **Canon Richard Hancock**

Ecclesiastes 3.1-8

¹For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; ⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; ⁸a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

Psalm 19.1-6

¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
³They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. ⁵It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. ⁶It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

Church Services

October 2020

Sunday 4th (Trinity 17)

10am Harvest Festival for Pentridge & Woodyates, venue TBC.

Sunday 11th (Trinity 18)

10am – Autumn Church Walk Pilgrim Service. St Mary's Join us at 10am outside St Mary's Handley where we will set off on a short 2 mile circular walk worshipping as we go with Psalms, Hymns, Readings and Stories. This is particularly suited for families and children. Bring a flask of coffee or tea and your favourite sweet treat.

In the event of bad weather a service will be held in church.

Sunday 18th (Trinity 19 Luke the Evangelist)

10am – Said Matins BCP St Rumbold's Pentridge.

Sunday 25th (Last Sunday After Trinity)

10am – Said Holy Communion St Mary's Handley.

November 2020

Sunday 1st (All Saints Sunday)

10am – Said Holy Communion BCP St Rumbold's Pentridge.
 6pm – All Souls Service St Mary's Handley

This will be a service of thanksgiving for the lives of those we love and see no longer. There will be readings poems and music with an opportunity to light a candle in remembrance.

Sunday 8th (Remembrance Sunday)

11am – Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial Handley
 11am – Act of Remembrance on the Green Pentridge

Sunday 15th (2nd Sunday Before Advent)

10am – Said Matins BCP St Rumbold's Pentridge.

Sunday 22th (Christ The King)

10am – Said Holy Communion St Mary's Handley

Sunday 29th (Advent Sunday)

10am – Benefice Service St Mary's Handley