



The Seeker

August



2013

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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A gift from the Church

You may have heard talk about Chancel Liability recently. This is an old system whereby landowners might be required to pay for repairs to the chancel of the church (where the choir sits). You may even have taken out insurance against it when you bought a house. As land has been sold and resold, and houses built upon the land, this ancient law has become increasingly difficult to implement – and increasingly absurd.

We are happy to report that Chancel Liability lapses in October. In our area, this means you no longer need insurance against it, because you will never be called upon to pay up - it will not happen!

This has been a legal minefield. To ensure that you will not be called upon, and there will be no legal problems for the Church at any time in the future, has taken a lot of nervous energy by a lot of people. I particularly want to thank Carole Wyatt and Nick Sherman for their time, persistence and hard work — thank you!

HARVEST

Question: what's big, red, and might squash you if it falls out of an apple tree as you walk underneath?



Answer: a combine harvester.

As we enjoy the summer we see the beautiful world around us. Come and celebrate all things bright and beautiful, and share our Harvest Festivals, at Gussage St Andrew on Sunday 22nd September at 6pm, at Sixpenny Handley on Sunday 29th September at 11 o'clock, and at Pentridge on Sunday 6th October at 11.15am. At each service we will sing the traditional harvest hymns, and there will be refreshments afterwards.

Compassion

Nearly a billion children in the world live in poverty. That's a staggering number of children struggling for the very basics to survive. We can look at the huge number and say 'We can't do anything' or we can look at an individual and say 'I can help that person.'

Compassion is an international Christian child development and child advocacy ministry. Partnering with local churches, they are committed to the spiritual, economic, social and physical development of children living in extreme poverty in 26 countries, enabling them to become responsible, fulfilled Christian adults. Compassion's ministry is focused on the individual child and his or her development. By working with individuals to address their spiritual, economic, social and physical needs, they present every child with an opportunity to become fulfilled Christian adults.

What happens in the life of a child ripples through their environment now and in the future. Compassion believes that changed environments may assist children, but transformed children will inevitably transform their environments. Compassion works exclusively with over 5,000 local churches in developing nations to deliver a holistic child development programme. How all the monies are spent is available online.

For only 70p a day, less than the price of a newspaper, you can sponsor a child and change a life forever. You might like to do this as a group to share the cost. Ted Cox (01725 552 801) has more details and is willing to act as intermediary on behalf of groups. There are also more details at www.compassionuk.org

www.handleychurch.org.uk



News items and articles welcome!

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

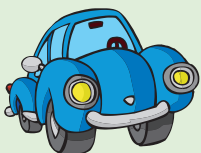
Thanks!

FROM THE REGISTERS



Molly and Edie Watkinson were baptized on 30th June

Remember the Church gets no funding from the government. We are completely self-supporting. To keep the churches in our villages open we need your regular support. There are many pressures on our time and pockets, but please consider giving to your local church regularly – and if you are a tax payer please sign a gift aid form (in all the churches) so we get an extra 20% at no cost to you. The church belongs to everyone – if there is any way we might be able to help you, please contact us (details on page 1).



Need a lift to Church?

Please ring Paul Skinner on 01725 552 785 and we should be able to arrange transport.



“I once had a wedding couple walk down the aisle to the Star Wars theme!”

Your friend and vicar, Mel

You may have read recently that church organists have been slipping pop tunes, advertising jingles and TV theme tunes into services.

In a survey of churchgoers by an organization called Christian Research, at least half of the respondents had noticed the man or woman at the keyboard go beyond the usual repertoire of hymns and other sacred music. The research uncovered stories of a congregation passing round the collection plate to the sounds of Abba’s ‘Money Money Money’ and a Holy Communion accompanied by Bon Jovi’s ‘Livin’ on a Prayer.’

One organist confessed to pulling out all the stops and frequently playing Oasis, Billy Bragg and Kylie Minogue. I once had a wedding couple walk down the aisle to the Star Wars theme, which, you may know, is called ‘A New Start’ – particularly appropriate as it was the groom’s second time around – and the organist was his father!

It seems that when congregations do notice, they usually react with smiles, although in one case the vicar was angry and sacked the organist for playing ‘Roll out the Barrel’.

There is no set formula to becoming a Christian

However, many people have found saying this prayer a helpful step in their relationship with God:

Lord Jesus Christ, I am truly sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life.

Please forgive me. I now turn from everything that I know is wrong.

Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I can be forgiven and set free.

Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Holy Spirit.

Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me for ever.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

In fact, the difference between sacred and secular music is not black and white. J S Bach used a folk tune for an Easter hymn, which Paul Simon later took and re-arranged as a folk song. Songs sung in church have become pop hits. ‘Amazing Grace’ has been in the Top Ten twice and Emil Sande had a minor hit last year with ‘Abide with Me’, which she sang at the Olympics.

The relationship between secular and sacred is organic (sorry!). Churchgoers know that the joys, sorrows, regrets, hopes and fears we all feel and sing about in church are just as real when we are at home, at work or on the bus and listening to music on the radio or iPod.

We know that God isn’t confined to church. Instead, the love He revealed for everyone in Jesus can give us guidance when we need to work out how to live, forgiveness when we get it wrong, comfort when life is hard, and hope as we look to the future.

It is why ‘Abide with Me’ contains the line ‘I need Thy presence every passing hour.’

And, if we accept that presence, as Bon Jovi says, ‘we’re halfway there.’

What’s it all about?

If you would like to find out about what Christians believe, we plan to offer an Alpha Course in Blandford next year.

This is a time to explore and ask those questions you’ve always had, in good company over some good food and a lively discussion. Look out for more details later in the year.



The challenge to *'go on then, prove it!'* is as much a part of the school playground as the science laboratory. Increasingly cynical as society, we seem to need the reassurance of 'proof' more and more.

The dictionary defines 'proof' as *'evidence or argument establishing a fact or the truth of a statement; the spoken or written evidence in a trial; a series of stages in the resolution of a mathematical or philosophical problem; a test or trial of something.'*

People sometimes say 'you can't prove that God exists.' 'It doesn't stand up to reason.'

Well, there are two methods of reasoning: induction and deduction. Together they include the elements of proof.

Induction starts with a general observation, from which a pattern is detected and a theory developed.

Imagine that we are travellers in a foreign country. As we look out the window, we notice a purple sheep, then another and another. Every sheep we see is purple.

Can we conclude that all the sheep in the country are purple?

No, we do not have absolute proof. We would need to see them all to know if this is true, and just one non-purple sheep would mean that our theory is wrong. This is induction.

Deduction is much more important. It starts with a general premise that is assumed to be true and then is tested through a series of possibilities – what-ifs – until it is either confirmed or not. Each stage in the process is a logical consequence of the one before.

In the board game Cluedo, for instance, players use deduction to find out the perpetrator, weapon and scene of Dr Black's murder.

The game starts with the three cards, telling the name of the murderer, the weapon and location, being placed in an envelope. The winner is the first player to solve the crime and announce the three facts correctly.

In turn the players move around the board gaining information and suggesting to each other a series of suspects, eliminating them from their inquiries as they go. When they think they have accounted for all possibilities, a player makes

an accusation and opens the envelope. If their reasoning is correct, their answers will match the cards inside. If their answer is wrong, it is not the solution that is wrong but the player's reasoning process.

The answer can be proved absolutely because the cards in the envelope are the only ones missing from the set, which are otherwise distributed evenly among the players and board. There can be no other solution.

Each player has only one chance to make a definitive accusation. If they are correct, the game ends. If they are wrong, they are out of the game. With six suspects, six weapons and nine locations, it is possible to guess whodunit, but there are 325 possible solutions, and only one of them is correct!

According to the deductive method – as Cluedo shows – if the premise and reasoning are correct, there is absolute proof of the conclusion.

The real world is not a board game, of course. In a real-life criminal case evidence is gathered and tested. Detectives use deductive processes, many of them supported by science. The Prosecution tries to link the evidence in such a way that, through a process of deduction, the jury will be convinced that the accused is guilty as charged.

But while the deductive method is an important element in its procedures and proceedings, British law is not founded on the need for absolute proof. Judges and juries are not required to be 100% certain of a person's guilt or innocence. In civil law, the burden of proof is based on *'a preponderance of evidence'*. In criminal law, a jury has to be satisfied *'beyond reasonable doubt'*.

In this, law reflects life. How often are we 100% convinced about anything at all? How often do we wait for absolute proof before we make a decision? Rarely. There is always a little doubt. We usually act on the basis of our interpretation of the best information available.

In common with everyday life, when it comes to the matter of proving God, it is a conclusion we must come to – on the basis of observation, testing, analysis, probability and deduction – without having absolute proof.

And that is what we call *'faith.'*

EXTREMISM

The murder of a soldier on a London street leaves us feeling outraged, nauseated and maybe a little vengeful. Who do the killers think they are? How could they imagine that the world wanted to hear their excuse for their actions?

Despite the men's reference to Allah, the act was immediately condemned by the Muslim Council of Britain, which described it as 'a truly barbaric act that has no basis in Islam.'

Hate-filled religious extremism of any persuasion is based on incorrect interpretations of holy teaching. The man's talk of *'an eye for an eye and a*

tooth for a tooth' was splashed across the front pages of the papers the following morning. But he got it wrong, badly wrong.

And so did whoever taught him that this piece of Holy Writ is a rationale for revenge. It is not. Not now and never has been. The original Old Testament context is not about revenge. It is about damage limitation. If a quarrel led to a tooth being knocked out, the victim could seek damages (if they wished), but only to the value of that tooth.

Justice is optional. Revenge is never an option. Referring to *'an eye for an*

eye' in New Testament, Jesus raises the stakes further. He says we should turn the other cheek and go the extra mile. His cry is *'love your enemies.'*

Restraint is much harder than revenge, but justice matters. It must be directed and considered, not arbitrary or summary. In the face of extremists, what happens now is up to us. The purposes of God are not served by violence, whether we worship in church, mosque or synagogue. They are, however, advanced by the extremism we celebrate each Sunday, and know as love.



+ Bible Study

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 552 620 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 ...** The Walnut Tree on the first Tuesday of the month or the Post Office Coffee Shop on the first Wednesday from about 11 o'clock for a coffee and chat with the vicar.

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.

L Sunday Lunch

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

◆ 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 Summer

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
Aug 4 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Aug 11 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Aug 18 th	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Aug 25 th	MP		Inf & HC	Evensong	#	HC
Sept 1 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Sept 8 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	#
Sept 15 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	HC
Sept 22 nd	MP		Inf & HC	#	#	Harvest
Sept 29 th	#		Harvest	Evensong	MP	#

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

Midweek Holy Communion — Join us for a gentle service in St Mary's on the second Wednesday of the month at 11.30pm, followed by coffee.

August

See side panel for key to symbols

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

September

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 L	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					

Dates for your Diary

Puzzleburger Evening Saturday 3rd August

St Mary's Sixpenny Handley. Come along from 4pm and enjoy a puzzle and have a burger and a drink in good company. Puzzles of all sorts for all ages are free – buy a burger.

Grace's Concert Saturday 14th Sept

St Mary's Sixpenny Handley. Grace's annual concert looks set to be another success. Come along for a fun evening.

The Pentridge Barbeque, Saturday 10th August

On the Pentridge Village Green from 7.30pm. Come along on a summer's evening for good food, company, music and fun.

Ted & Meg's Barbeque, Saturday 7th September

Enjoy a Woodcuts welcome from 5pm.

Mike Swan's Walk and Barbeque Saturday 15th September, West Woodyates

A chance to see how farming works in with nature, in a beautiful valley and with some great food.

Jamie Walton Concert, The Barn Saturday 5th October

The renown 'cellist returns to play again for a beautiful evening of music and refreshments.

Wed 11th September— Healing Service, Tisbury