

The Seeker

April ~ May

2009

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

Who's who?

Vicar

Rev Mel Durrant
The Vicarge,
Sixpenny Handley
01725 552608
rev.mel@handleychurch.org.uk

Curate

Rev Dr Michael Foster
The Rectory, Tarrant Hinton
01258 830764

Churchwardens

St Mary's with
Gussage St Andrew

Mr David Salmons 552721
Mr Graham Smith 552149

St Rumbolds, Pentridge

Mrs Jane King 552231
Mrs Mary Ferguson 552222

Lay Pastorial Assistants

Ted Cox 552801
Margaret Durrant 552608
Maureen Lockyer 552492
Jean Mayne 552692
Janette Salmons 552721
Paul Skinner 552785
Carol Wyatt 552572

Need a lift to Church?



Please ring Paul Skinner on 01725 552785 and we should be able to arrange transport.



Dear Friends

Mystery visitors were sent to more than 70 churches around the country. The churches were secretly judged on everything from the comfort of seats and volume of music and speaking to the building's appearance. However, the main emphasis was on how visitors were welcomed and treated. The visitors did not usually go to church, and the reality confounded their expectations: Over three-quarters said they would go back.

Over half said they were made to feel comfortable, involved and genuinely welcome and around 90 per cent said that there was a real sense of community. 'Some expected church would be dull, boring and dark and that the sermon would not speak to them' said the report*. 'We wanted to hold up a mirror to the Church and see how it looks from the outside and the results are incredibly positive. The Church is not in as much a holy huddle as we'd thought. Most of them are warm and welcoming.'

These remarkable findings go against the common belief that church today is out of touch. One couple prepared themselves for a 'stuffy' experience. 'We thought it was going to be a hard slog,' they said, 'but it wasn't at all. We loved it – and are thinking of going back.' Another visitor expected the sermon to make them feel guilty. 'It was a nice surprise to hear something relevant about current affairs,' they said. There's room for improvement, the report concludes, but these results show most visitors are genuinely impressed.

And over the last few months we have been conducting our own little survey at St Mary's and St Andrew's to see how we can improve our worship. Regulars and visitors have been asked to answer a questionnaire highlighting likes and dislikes and areas for improvement. Like the bigger research by the Bible Society, the results have been largely positive. The sermons, prayers and music have attracted positive comments, but what most impressed people is the love and caring atmosphere and sense of community in our churches. The social contact (including over coffee between the morning services at St Mary's) and the companionship of fellow worshippers comes up time and again as the most valued aspects of our life together.

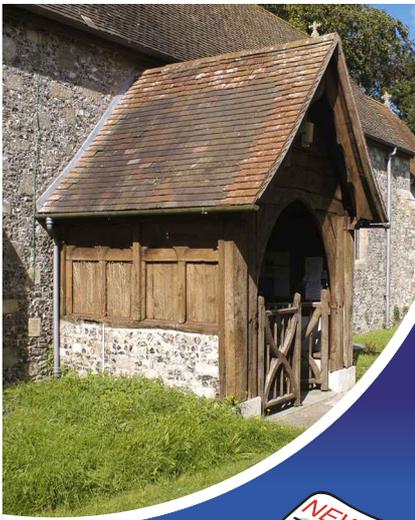
I would like to thank everyone who makes this possible, from the people on the door to the flower arrangers, from the coffee-makers and cleaners to the large team of people who lead services. And more people are working behind the scenes to get the changes to the building we have been talking about for years. We shall start the actual work on these in the summer. At St Andrew's we shall improve the heating and find out more about caring for our wonderful paintings, and at St Mary's we shall have a social area and a long-awaited toilet and better heating, sound and vision.

And as we approach Easter and the climax of the Christian story, we remember the reason for these changes and the reason we meet together. Jesus has been drawing crowds for two thousand years. His values reflect his life of love and he teaches a new way of living. As he approached the cross he knew what lay ahead. Even when he was betrayed he responded with compassion. And when he died, the world stopped. Three days later, Jesus' friends were still in mourning, but the tomb was empty.

Come along and be part of the community. *Your Friend and Vicar, Mel*

*The report was compiled by Christian Research for The Bible Society.

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Any Pentridge and Woodyates news for The Seeker to Maureen Swan on 01725 552561

Any other news to the Vicarage, please.



Open Gardens

We are planning another Open Gardens weekend, this year over the weekend of June 27th. Look out for more details. Happy gardening!

Pentridge and Woodyates News

Peggy Sergeant died peacefully at her home in Broadchalke in early March. She lived for many years with her husband Will at Cobley House, Woodyates.

FROM THE REGISTERS



The funeral of Marie Ross took place on 19th March

The wedding of Laura and Rob Webb took place on 14th March

The wedding of Jenny and James Walker took place on 28th March

Coffee Morning

Stella Symes and Jean Mereweather are organising a Coffee Morning at 16 St Mary's Close, Sixpenny Handley on Saturday 25th April from 10am until 12.30pm. There will be a Bring and Buy, raffle and cakes for sale. The proceeds go to the 50K Challenge (see below).



Plans drawn up, tenders sought

We are at the tender stage for the flooring, toilet and font work at the back of St Mary's and a survey of the paintings in St Andrew's. We hope to begin the work in the summer. Please come up and have a look at the plans inside the church.

Many people are giving generously of their time, but I would particularly like to thank Sheila Bradley, Margaret Durrant and Gillian Wadge. These improvements will benefit the church and the community and we believe St Mary's will look like less has been done to it than before as the work is in keeping with our heritage, while bringing our beautiful building up to date.

We still do not have all the funds we need to do all the work intended, so if you would like to give to the 50K Challenge to help us serve our community better, please pick up a leaflet from the church or contact the Vicarage.

Beyond the Stave



'An enchanting evening' was how the Blackmore Vale described the concert by 'Beyond the Stave' at St Mary's on Saturday 28th March. Sixpenny Handley's own Mary Chelu (soon to be Mary Mills – congratulations Mary and Ashley!) and friends brought us an evening of music cleverly linked by light anecdotes and sketches in benefit of the 50K Challenge. Look out for details of more concerts around our villages.

Stop the Traffik campaign success

You may have seen that Cadbury's Dairy Milk, one of the biggest selling bars of chocolate in the country, is going fair trade this year. Two years ago they said it was impossible. Now it is happening – thank you to everyone who signed the Stop the Traffik campaign about the exploitation of children on cocoa plantations. People in some of the poorest parts of the world will benefit because people like us got angry on their behalf. Together we can change the world! Please read the 'Turning the Tables' article opposite.

Celebrate Easter with us

Easter is the climax of the Christian year a time to celebrate. On **Palm Sunday** Jess the Donkey joins the Informal Service at Sixpenny Handley (beginning at 9.30am for a change – there is no service at 11 that week). There is a quiet Holy Communion in the evening at 6pm if you are not keen on donkeys! Then on **Maundy Thursday** we have the traditional Foot-washing and Holy Communion at Gussage St Andrew at 7.30pm.



On **Good Friday** we have the Stations of the Cross around Handley from 11am, a Quiet Hour at Pentridge from 2pm, and the Readings and Meditation back at Handley at 7.30pm.

On **Easter Sunday** itself, celebrate the Resurrection at 9.30am at Handley with a traditional Communion (again there is no 11am service), 11.15 at Pentridge or back at Handley in the evening at 6pm.

Gentle Jesus meek and mild? Not in this story of Jesus turning over the tables of the moneychangers!

Up to two million people had come to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. The city was teeming, and everyone was expected to pay a Temple tax of half a shekel, which was equal to one or two a day's wages. This was to keep the Temple running - a good idea. Perhaps you would like to put a day's wages into the collection! But there was a problem – the tax had to be paid in special, Temple money. To help the visitors there were moneychangers in the temple precincts. If the trade had been fair there would have been no objection, but they charged the equivalent of an extra day's wage to change the coins.

Everyone would then sacrifice an animal or a bird as part of their sacrifice of thanks, which then became part of the feast. However, each animal had to be absolutely perfect and any brought into the Temple was inspected to make sure it met very high standards of purity... and for this there was a charge of about a quarter of a day's wage. And it was almost certain that any animal brought in from outside the Temple would be declared impure – some fault would be found and the worshipper would have to buy another 'pure' animals from the stallholders inside the Temple.

You can see where this is going: The stallholders inside had a captive market. A dove that would have cost about a day's wage outside would cost 20 times as much inside.



Your yearly visit to the Temple worked out at something over three week's wages! Work out the equivalent today: Money that just disappeared into traders' pockets.

Unfair exchange rates, corrupt bankers, unfair trade practices... Does this sound modern? If you were rich, you might grumble, but you could afford a visit to the Temple. If you were poor, it might mean that you would not eat while you saw others around you getting richer and richer. No wonder Jesus was so angry about what was going on! Everything unfairly balanced in favour of the rich and powerful against the poor and the weak. The system was being abused by selfish people. And Jesus knew that very soon he would be making the greatest sacrifice of all. Jesus alone was going to bear the cost – and a cost that was not paid in shekels but on a wooden cross on what we now call Good Friday. Jesus gave up everything for us. He had every right to be angry!

And we should be angry too. We should be shouting about injustice wherever we see it. When we hear of people suffering because of others' actions; when we hear of people being driven from their homes by bad economics; when we hear of others starving just so that we can have cheap clothes or cheap food; when we hear about the loss of our environment, illness and deprivation caused by human greed, we should be angry.

We live in a time of great change. We can see society and the world changing around us. The good changes we must support. The bad we must stand up against, seeking the values and truth of the Kingdom of God, on earth as it is in heaven.



3KC King of Kings Kids' Club
Next 3KC – Saturday April 4th

We begin Easter with our (now) traditional Palm Saturday 3KC at Sixpenny Handley on 4th April. We shall be thinking about Jesus the Humble King and looking forward to the events of Palm Sunday. Children are invited to come from 9.45am and we shall finish at 12.30. By the time you read this there will only be a few places left – so don't delay, phone Maureen on 01725 552492.

Alpha Course – asking the questions...

Would you like to have a faith? Do you think faith is all complete nonsense?

The Alpha Course is your chance to ask difficult questions and think through what you believe; Did Jesus actually exist? Why did he die? Does evil exist? What about the Holy Spirit?

We explore these subjects after a great meal in comfortable surroundings among friends. Look out for the Alpha Course starting after Easter and come along! More details on the website.



Alpha is back!

Mothering Sunday



On Mothers' Day (Mothering Sunday), 22nd March, people from all over our benefice came along to a lively service where children from the school and the scouts talked about love and mothers and sang, prayed and drank coffee together. Thanks go to the school and the Scouts for all their work making this possible.



St Mary's Sixpenny Handley
Welcome
www.handleychurch.org.uk

- Weekly diary
- Photo archives
- Building news
- Seeker downloads
- Verse of the Day
- Historical information



Bible Study

Come along to explore the most important book ever. Phone Heather on 552308 for details.

Praytime

The bedrock of all our lives, meeting (nearly) every Monday at the Vicarage at 7.30pm for an hour of prayer for our community and our church within it. Phone Paul on 772785.

Midweek Holy Communion

Join us at our midweek Holy Communion, using the 1662 Prayer Book, at Sixpenny Handley, on the first Wednesday of the month. It begins at 11.30 and is followed by coffee. Please join us.

Come and meet friends

Soup Lunches – After an Easter break we return on the third Wednesday of May. Come along from 12.30pm and meet new and old friends, have some good home-made soup, bread, tea or coffee, all for only £2. Profits go to the Trussell Trust (www.trusselltrust.org). Fairly traded goods are also available, with the profits going to World Vision.

Fellowship Group – Continuing on Tuesdays for chat, laughter and biscuits, some serious talk and sometimes a steak supper or Chinese takeaway!

Men's Group – A beer and a good old chat usually on the last Thursday of the month. Phone David Lockyer 552492.

Mothers' Union – Meeting monthly on a Thursday for a talk and tea. Phone Jean on 552692 or Mary on 552041.

Join us during April and May 2009

Palm Sunday (April 5th)

9.30am Informal Service with Jess the Donkey at St Mary's
11.15am Holy Communion, Pentridge. 6.00pm Evensong at St Mary's

Maundy Thursday (April 9th) 7.30pm HC & Foot-washing at Guassage

Good Friday – (April 10th)

11.00am Stations of the Cross around Sixpenny Handley
2–3.00pm Quiet Hour at St Rumbold's, Pentridge
7.30pm Readings and Mediation at St Mary's

Ascension Day (Thursday May 21st) 7.30pm Holy Communion at Gussage

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary the Virgin Sixpenny Handley			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	Informal service includes children's time					
	9.30am	☕	11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
April 12th	9.30 Easter Sunday HC (Trad.)		HC	HC	HC	No service
April 19th	HC	Coffee (10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	MP	
April 26th	MP		AGM	HC		HC
May 3rd	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	
May 10th	MP		Informal	HC		HC
May 17th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	
May 24th	MP		Informal	HC		HC
May 31st	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	

HC = Holy Communion
MP = Morning Prayer

always a warm welcome...

April 2009

See website for updates

Wed	1st	10.30am	School Assembly in St Mary's Church, Handley
		11.30am	Holy Communion, Handley
Sat	4th	10.00am	King of Kings Kids Club, Handley
Mon	6th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	7th	7.30pm	Fellowship Group steak supper at The Roebuck
Thurs	9th	2.45pm	Mothers' Union, Neem Tree Trust, 15 Paddock Close

See above for Easter services

Sat	11th	2.30pm	Wedding of Robert Tye and Anna Wilkinson, St Mary's
Mon	20th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	21st	7.00pm	St Rumbold's Annual General Meeting, Pentridge
		7.30pm	Fellowship Group, 11 The Parsonage, Handley
Thurs	23rd	7.30pm	Bible Study, 2 St Mary's Close, Handley
Sat	25th	10.00pm	Coffee Morning at 16 St Mary's Close, Sixpenny Handley
Mon	27th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	28th	7.30pm	Fellowship Group, 11 The Parsonage, Sixpenny Handley

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Sat	2nd	4.00pm	Marriage of Rory Ferguson and Louise Bottomley, St R's
Mon	4th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	5th	7.30pm	Fellowship Group, 11 The Parsonage, Handley
Wed	6th	11.30am	Holy Communion, Handley
Sat	9th	2.00pm	Marriage of Lee Read and Joanne Corbin
Mon	11th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	12th	7.30pm	Lent Course at the Vicarage
Thurs	14th	2.45pm	Mothers' Union Army Welfare Officer, 15 Paddock Close
Mon	18th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	19th	7.30pm	Fellowship Group, 11 The Parsonage, Handley
Wed	20th	12.30pm	Soup Lunch at the Vicarage
Mon	25th	7.30pm	Prayertime at the Vicarage
Tues	26th	7.30pm	Fellowship Group, 11 The Parsonage, Handley
Thurs	28th	7.30pm	Men's Group