

The Seeker

February



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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The Real Easter Egg

80 Million Easter Eggs are sold each year in the UK. The Real Easter Egg is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate egg that explains the meaning of Easter. Each box has an activity pack including the Easter story, a poster, free iTunes download, and stickers. With each sale a donation is made to Tradecraft Exchange to support some of the poorest farmers in the world. Over £40,000 has been donated so far. A Fairtrade premium is also paid to farmers allowing them to invest in their community buying everything from schoolbooks and solar panels, to providing fresh water supplies.

Please think about *all* the chocolate you buy – and make sure it has either the Fairtrade or Rainforrest Alliance logo. If it doesn't, the chocolate may well come from a plantation that uses child labour. Let's make Easter good news for everyone!

Lent Course

Christmas and Easter are all part of the same story. Come along and explore the issues raised in our Lent Course this year, which starts on Tuesday 19th February at 7.30pm and runs for five sessions. Lead by different people, we shall look at the birth, infancy, childhood and adulthood of Jesus, as we follow his story. History. Come along to the vicarage and meet friends, drink coffee, find out about life in those times, and discuss important issues in a safe environment. Who knows, it might just make sense of your life!

Mothering Sunday

Join us on 10th March, Mothering Sunday, in St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley at 10am for a service when we combine with the children and staff from our village school to celebrate.

Holy Week and Easter

Join us to celebrate the story that continues from Christmas. On Palm Sunday, 24th March, we ride into Jerusalem with Jesus on a donkey at 11 o'clock at Sixpenny Handley. On Maundy Thursday, 28th March, we celebrate the first Holy Communion, with a gentle service at Gussage St Andrew. On Good Friday we tell the story around Sixpenny Handley in the morning, share quiet time in the afternoon at Pentridge, and then readings and music in the evening at 6pm back in Sixpenny Handley. Then on Easter Sunday itself, 31st March, celebrate the best news with us with a Family Communion at 9.30am at Sixpenny Handley and 11.15 at Pentridge.

Unsung Heroes

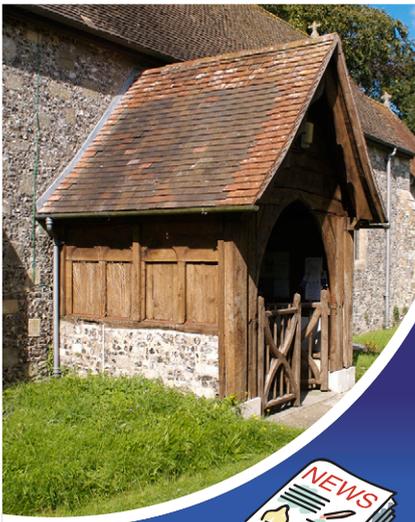
In his final New Year Message as Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams paid tribute to people whose unsung efforts and sacrificial generosity help to transform lives and build communities. He said:

"So many of the things which work well in communities come from the hard work and selfless generosity of ordinary people who want to make things happen. If you have the good fortune to live in a community where things seem to be working well the chances are that if you slip backstage you'll find an army of cheerful people making the wheels go round - and don't forget just what a huge percentage of them come from the churches and other faith groups. So let's recognise this steady current of generosity that underlies so much of our life together in this country and indeed worldwide. It's all based on one vision - to make our society, our whole world, work for everyone, not just the comfortable and well off."

And he challenges people to ask what they can do: "We should be prompted to ask the tougher question: what can I do to join this silent conspiracy of generous dedication? There'll be those who have time and skill and strength to offer; there'll be those who have less of these, but can support in prayer and goodwill."

All of this, he says, gives us joyful glimpses of the quiet, unflinching generosity of God.

www.handleychurch.org.uk



News items
and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!



Lee
Abbey

We are hoping to organise a weekend visit to Lee Abbey in north Devon early in the Summer. Watch out for details.

In the meantime, have a look at their website and see how beautiful it is and think about coming with us!

www.leeabbey.org.uk



Need a
lift to
Church?

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

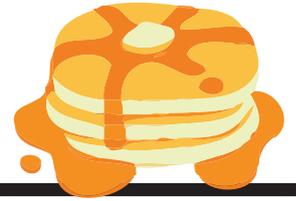
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- Church forms and reports



Dear
Friends



Thanks to whoever it was propped the Christmas tree back up in St Mary's Church on Christmas Day! I came in to lock up, and found a note explaining what had happened – so thank you, and I hope that made your Christmas Day that little bit more special!

Christmas and Easter are all part of the same story. You cannot have one without the other, so look out for details of our Lent Course. Easter is early this year, and so now we are already thinking about Lent. How time flies! And Lent is a time when suddenly people can become semi-religious and try out a new diet, go teetotal or try to give up smoking. And I, who they say should most observe it, feel very inadequate.

The word 'Lent' comes from the Middle English word for 'springtime'. It developed into a period of abstinence as a kind of re-enactment of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert, fasting and praying, resisting temptation.

Before Lent comes Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day. 'Shrove' comes from the old word 'shrive' which means 'confess'. In the Middle Ages people would confess their sins so that they were forgiven before Lent began. Gradually it became a chance to use up the last of the fat, butter and eggs, just as winter supplies were becoming thin, and were traditionally forbidden before the Easter celebrations. Pancakes were one last indulgence. With the Reformation, this practice tended to be played down, but there was something about it that lingered. Apparently the world record for the biggest pancake was set in Rochdale in 1994. It measured 15 metres in diameter and weighed three tons.

Last year Twitter published the top 100 things people give up for Lent. Top of the list was giving up Twitter and Facebook! After that came the inevitable chocolate, alcohol and coffee. I

like the idea of giving up technology, as it means we might actually have to *talk* to people, and perhaps even *meet* people, which sounds like a very positive thing to do!

Indeed, meeting people and working on relationships is good for our families and our community. Mortifying the soul only benefits the individual. Giving up chocolate or cake is only a spiritual discipline if it isn't '*me centred*' – done to lose weight or as a proof of our iron self-control. Real fasting, said the prophet Isaiah, is about actively fighting injustice, caring for the poor, and behaving with integrity. (Although this might mean that we need to give up something, if we find it is taking over our lives in an unhealthy way.)

So, shall I give up Facebook, or even emails this Lent, and pick up the phone instead? Or shall I remain technological and sign up for forty reflections and actions from www.40acts.org.uk? This is like an Advent Calendar for Lent. The Mothers' Union do a similar thing in their magazine '*Families First*.' There is also one on [@LiveLent](https://twitter.com/LiveLent), and www.livelent.net. Have a look.

Or how about a family 'Lent Bowl'? On Shrove Tuesday, after your pancakes, invite everyone to jot down ideas for something positive to do, perhaps someone to visit or phone or write to. Fold these up and throw them into the bowl. Then every Sunday of Lent, each family member draws out an idea they will have to fulfill during the coming week.

However you choose to mark it, remember that Lent prepares us for the Easter Story, which is the climax of the greatest story ever told, because it is true and tells us of God's love in the world he created and came to save.

Your friend and vicar, Mel

... doing what you are told?

- If you can start the day without caffeine or pep pills
- If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains
- If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles
- If you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it
- If you can understand when loved ones are too busy to give you time
- If you can overlook when people take things out on you even if it's not your fault
- If you can take criticism and blame without resentment
- If you can face the world without lies and deceit
- If you can conquer tension without medical help
- If you can relax without alcohol
- If you can sleep without the aid of drugs
- If you can do all these things

Then you are probably the family dog!

Obedience is not something we tend to think about all that much these days. We are much more proud if we can say 'I did it my way' rather than 'I did what I was told'. Obedience is a class... you take your dog along to.

Our dog Billy can be obedient – when he wants. For instance, he knows he is not allowed upstairs, and never makes any attempt to go – unless he is on his own. And he can hear a carrot being scrapped in the kitchen sink but he can't hear me yelling 'come here' if he is following a scent out in the fields. He *chooses* to be obedient. But sometimes he chooses not to be obedient, when it would be far better for him and for everyone else, to be obedient as well. And I think that makes him a bit like you and me, really. And he knows when he is doing wrong.

None of us like being in the wrong. And, if we're honest, none of us like being told what to do, either. So then, what is obedience? Is it blindly doing what we are told? When I was ordained I swore obedience to the Church, to the Bishop, to the Queen. Soldiers swear obedience to their leaders. Scouts promise *to do my best to do my duty to God and to the Queen, to help other people and to keep the Scout Law*. Does that mean we will do everything we are ordered to do – even if we know it to be wrong?

Well, no, of course not. 'Following orders' is not an excuse. That is not what obedience is about. There has to be a choice involved. Obedience has to include recognising what is right - and that can be costly, when it goes against what others are saying, what so much of

the world wants. Obedience is not blindly following. Obedience is not being selfish. And our example has to be Jesus. And Jesus stands firm, and lays out the definition of obedience needed for all potential followers. "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me," he says.

So, are we prepared to take him up on it? We can choose to pick up the cross of following Jesus – and this means opening ourselves up to all sorts of possibilities – possibilities that may be difficult, but that make life *real*. Because the cross is the way. There is no other way. The Easter story makes it clear. The cross is what it takes to be with the Son of God.

And why should we possibly want to be anywhere else?



Ten Things that we can learn from a dog

- 1 When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.**
- 2 Run, romp, and play daily. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a ride.**
- 3 Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.**
- 4 Be loyal.**
- 5 Never pretend to be something you're not.**
- 6 If what you want is buried, dig until you find it.**
- 7 When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.**
- 8 On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.**
- 9 When you're happy, celebrate! Dance around and wag your entire body.**
- 10 No matter how often you're disappointed, don't sulk. Run right back and make friends.**



+ 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, 7.30pm. Mike (01725 552620) for details.

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.

Come and meet friends

* Drop into the Post Office

Coffee Shop on the first Wednesday of the month from about 11 o'clock for a coffee and chat with the vicar.

T Free Teady Bear Drop-in

Pre-school children and their carers are invited to St Mary's on Thursdays during school term times from 10.30am to noon for fun, refreshments, and maybe a Bible story.

L Sunday Lunch

Everyone is welcome to join us at Hanlega's, on the campsite, on the first Sunday of the month for lunch – please book directly with, or just turn up!

◆ Fellowship Group

Is taking a break over Lent! Usually meet every Tuesday for chat, laughter and biscuits, some talk around serious themes too! Phone Paul Skinner (01725 552785).

☕ Men's Group – A beer and a chat usually on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Phone David Lockyer (01725 552492) for details.

☘ Mothers' Union – Tea, company and a good talk, usually on the second Thursday afternoon of the month, from 2.45pm. Phone Sheila (553133) or Mary (552041) for details.

Join us for February, March and Easter!

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
Feb 3 rd	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Feb 10 th	MP	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Feb 17 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Feb 24 th	MP		Inf & HC	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 3 rd	HC		#	Evensong	HC	#
Mar 10 th	Mothering Sunday		10am	Evensong	#	#
Mar 17 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Mar 24 th	Palm Sunday		11am	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 31 st	Easter Sunday		9.30am	#	HC	#

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

Ash Wednesday – 13th February

7.30pm Holy Communion & Ashing, St Mary's

Maundy Thursday – 28th March

6.00pm Holy Communion & Foot Washing, Gussage

Good Friday – 29th March

11.00am Stations of the Cross around the village
2-3pm Quiet Time, Pentridge
6.00pm Readings and Meditation, St Mary's

Easter Sunday – 31st March

9.30am Family Communion, St Mary's
11.15am Holy Communion, St Rumbold's, Pentridge



Lent Course every Tuesday, from Feb 19th to March 19th, 7.30pm, the Vicarage

February

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 +	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 T ☕		

Wed 13th 10.00am School Praise Assembly, St Mary's

Thu 14th 2.45pm Mothers' Union. 'To Thailand' with Jenny Rake, Handley

March

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 L	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 ☕	29	30
31						

Sat 2nd 10.00am Wedding Preparation Day, St Mary's

Wed 6th 7.30pm St Mary's PCC Meeting, Vicarage

Thu 14th 2.45pm Mothers' Union Lenten Reflection with Gwen Watkins, Handley

Thu 28th 10.30am School Praise Assembly, St Mary's