



The Seeker

www.handleychurch.org.uk

February



2015

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

Who's who?

Vicar

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The Vicarage,
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01725 552 608
ask@handleychurch.org.uk

Curates

Rev Paul Skinner
01725 552 785
Rev Dr Michael Foster
01258 830 764

Churchwardens

*St Mary's with
Gussage St Andrew*

Sheila Bradley 553 133
Roy Warner 552 787

St Rumbold's, Pentridge

Mary Ferguson 552 222
Jane King 552 231

Licenced Lay Minister

John Cullingford 516 453

Lay Pastorial Assistants

Lydia Carter 552 720
Margaret Durrant 552 608
Margaret Jones 552 358
Maureen Lockyer 552 492
Jean Mayne 552 692
David Salmons 552 721
Carole Wyatt 552 572

(Area code 01725)

Lent Soup Lunches

For 5 Wednesdays this year again in St Mary's Church

For £3.00 you can have two varieties of delicious homemade soup with homemade bread, followed by tea or coffee and homemade biscuits. The meal will be served at 1.00pm but you are welcome to come from 12.30 for a (free) cuppa and a chat. See back page for dates.

As well as good food and company there will be chance to find out a bit more about some of the charities supported by people in our villages. Pictures and information will be on display about each week's charity. The main aim is to give updates and raise awareness of the fantastic (and hard!) work done by so many people in our community. We would also like to give them some financial support, so each week there will be a small Bring and Buy table, which will also have a few homemade cakes and jams, and goods linked with that week's charity.

Transport can be provided, so please do come and bring a friend or neighbour. Phone 01725 552608 for more information or to offer help.



The Lent Course — Prayer Evening

The best form of spiritual exercise is to touch the floor regularly with your knees. This year's Lent Course is an adventure in Prayer. There are many different ways we can pray and no one way is better than any other. We shall explore meeting God through prayer together. Come along, if you are new to prayer or a mature Christian who wants to go deeper, and join us for an exciting evening.

Look out for details nearer the time. We shall meet on Mondays through Lent in St Mary's Church, beginning on 23rd February from 7.30 to 9pm for five weeks. There will be coffee and a lot of fun as well as time for some deep thought and prayer. The evangelist Billy Graham said, *Prayer is the rope that pulls God and man together. But, it doesn't pull God down to us: It pulls us up to Him.* And the Dutch writer Corrie Ten Boom tells us, *Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it.*

Teach us the secret of prayer –
when to speak and when to keep silent,
when to go on seeking and when to let go,
teach us how to pray.

Teach us the power of prayer –
its ability to challenge,
to encourage, to transform all life,
teach us how to pray.

Teach us the joy of prayer –
to express our worship,
discover your will, and hear your voice.
In the name of Christ. Amen

Nick Fawcett

adapted from Prayers For All Seasons; 1998

Come to JAZZ PRAISE!

at St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley
6pm Sunday 22nd February
for our first Jazz Praise.
Evensong with a difference!
Tea and coffee served from
5.30pm.





News items
and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!



FROM THE REGISTERS



The funerals took place of
Sheila Dias
Maurice Gulliver
Sonia Luckham
Sylvia Marskell
Avril Sherrington
Moireen Wyatt

It's a load of ...



... old shed!

The metal shed in St Mary's
churchyard is in need of
replacement. If you would like
to help with this, please have a
word with the churchwardens.

www.easyfundraising.org
Shop online and raise funds for

Sixpenny Handley Church

Just visit easyfundraising.org
and search for our church and
follow the simple steps to sign
up. Each time you shop online
you'll earn us a donation, just
by making an extra click!

£335 raised so far!



God is an Incurable Romantic. He uses romantic language to show how he feels about us. In The Song of Songs, which we sometimes hear at weddings, we read, *My beloved spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land."*

And what I love about the Song of Songs is that it is both about the love between a man and a woman, *and* a picture of the love that God has for us. God applauds our love, encourages our intimacy, and reminds us that *he* invented it! God loves us unreservedly. He gives himself completely in love, and invites us to do the same.

And it is not just *personal*, there is *community* as well. Jesus encourages us to play our part in quietly building community here and now. Love is about passing it on.

One of the things that got the early Church noticed was that when there were disasters like plague, war and famine, most people ran away. The Christians ran *towards*, to help in whatever way they could. It got Christians noticed. Look out today for the number of charities, schools, hospitals that have Christian roots. There are a lot of us about! It all comes back to making a difference, because that is what God calls us to do.

The story goes that Saint Valentine secretly married a soldier and his girl at a time when such marriages were banned, because it was thought that soldiers wouldn't fight to the death if they had a loved one relying on them. In the year 269 AD Valentine was caught and sentenced to death. The jailer's daughter was blind, and Valentine prayed for her and the girl was healed. The last words Valentine wrote were in a note to her. He signed it, *"from your Valentine."*

St Valentine had the right idea. He stood out and stood up for what was right. And Saint Valentine's Day in other countries is often seen as a celebration of a wider sort of love, not just romantic love like here. Cards are sent to wider members of the family, not just immediate partners.

We might say this is just yet another conspiracy from the greetings card and chocolate manufacturers – which in part I think it is – but perhaps we can extend the celebration as well. Tell someone you love them. And make the world a better place.

Your friend and vicar, Mel

Happy Valentine's Day

Q Why is lettuce the most loving vegetable?

A Because it's all heart.

Q Why did the banana go out with the prune?

A Because it couldn't get a date.

Q What did the boy bird sing to the girl bird on Valentine's Day?

A Let me call you Tweet Heart!

Q What did the boy octopus sing to the girl octopus?

A I wanna hold your hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand!

Q Do skunks celebrate Valentine's Day?

A Of course they do, they're very sentimental!

Many stories and legends have emerged out of the First World War. Perhaps the most remarkable of all is the story of the Christmas Truce. By the beginning of October 1914, both sides had dug in for the winter. The Daily Mail organised puddings for the soldiers' Christmas dinner. Cadbury's sent chocolate. Companies took orders for cigarettes, sweets and Christmas cards. In Germany, there was a campaign to send small Christmas trees to the front.

But there was no official truce. In fact there were truces: dozens of informal, spontaneous outbreaks of peace all along the front. Some of them lasted hours, some days. It started on Christmas Eve, as the German soldiers decorated their trees. The campaign had been very successful and they had lots of them, all along the parapets of their trenches. An English rifleman, Percy Jones, wrote that "The German trenches... were illuminated with hundreds of little lights." While British officers decided what to do, a cry came up: "Englishmen, don't shoot. You don't shoot, we don't shoot."

Then came the singing. Across no-man's-land came the sound of *Stille Nacht, Helige Nacht*. The British lines listened, sometimes cheered, and returned with carols of their own, with *God Save the King*, or one of the Army's many bawdy parodies of popular hymns. Sometimes there were solos, including one by a member of the Paris Opera, who stood on the parapet to sing for both sides. Many carols are known in both German and English, and in some places trenches traded verses or sang together. As a sense of goodwill developed over the evening, individual soldiers began to venture out. Arms raised, holding cigarettes or sweets as gifts, men cautiously approached the other side. Souvenirs were exchanged.

Come the morning, neither side could be sure the truce would continue. Sometimes painted signs were lifted up with offers of peace, or letters were tied to stones and thrown into the enemy trenches. But it still always took someone to start things. Up and down the line, someone had to do something very brave: to be first to stick their head above the parapet and walk towards the enemy. One such man was Chaplain Adams, who ignored his commanding officer and approached the German lines. He went on to organise joint burial ceremonies for the dead.

Once one man had dared, others followed and soon men were in no-man's-land talking, bartering for keepsakes, swapping rations. One group chased rabbits together. Another roasted a pig and lunch was served. A German soldier who had been in a circus performed juggling tricks.

It had been common for Germans to come over to Britain to work and some soldiers had family on the other side, and passed on Christmas cards. One British soldier was surprised to meet his German barber and had a haircut. And there were games – impromptu bike races, boxing matches, football.

It is the football that has gone down in legend, but there was no organised match. Instead, there are numerous accounts of hats and coats thrown down for goalposts. Sometimes there was a ball – one game used an empty ration tin. In some cases the Germans watched the English play, and in a few instances the sides played each other.

This was a grassroots truce with no official sanction, and it had to end. In one section, the opposing officers stood on the parapets of their respective trenches, bowed to each other and fired a pistol shot into the air to signal the end. In another, the German officer came over and explained that he had been ordered to fire, and could they please keep their heads down.

News of the truce was suppressed or watered down. The newspapers in Britain got hold of the story in January, but in Germany and France it went almost unreported. And because it was officially denied, some have questioned whether the truce really happened, but we have enough diaries and eyewitness accounts to know that it did. For one Christmas, entirely spontaneously, there really was peace on earth. Christmas genuinely was a season of goodwill. "I can scarcely credit what I have seen and done" wrote Sergeant Bob Lovell in his diary that night. "It has indeed been a wonderful day."

As you read this, we are now half way between Christmas and Easter. Half way between a dirty stable and a terrible cross. But this is where God is, in the midst of chaos and destruction. In Jesus, God steps right into the world.

Jesus tells us of our dangerous God in unexpected places. Perhaps we need to rediscover the wonderful defiance of the message of Immanuel, God with us. For God is grounded in the world. He is alongside all of us, in all the messiness of life. And all that follows offers the promise of more to come. Have a wonderful day!



We are planning a stay at Lee Abbey over the weekend 12-14th of June. It is a beautiful house and community, with its own wood, cliff and beach on the rugged north Devon coastline. Visitors often comment that God is felt to be very near. There are lots of things for different ages to do, and there is no pressure to attend any of the events. It is also a lot of fun. Two nights full board in this beautiful place with activities, teaching and worship (and lots of food!) is from £136 per person. Please have a look at the brochure, the website or talk to Margaret Durrant if you are interested in coming – but hurry, places are limited!



+ 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 a Thursday evening once a month, 7.15pm. Phone Mike on 01725 552 720 for details.

Come and meet friends

L Sunday Lunch

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

*** Drop into...** the Post Office Coffee Shop on the first Wednesday from about 11 o'clock, or The Walnut Tree on the last Wednesday, for a coffee and chat with the vicar or curate.

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.


◆ 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 Sunday!

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's 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 1 st	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Feb 8 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Feb 15 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Feb 22 nd	MP		Inf HC	Jazz Praise	#	HC
Mar 1 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Mar 8 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 15 th	Mothering Sunday 10am			Evensong	MP	#
Mar 22 nd	MP		Inf HC	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 29 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#

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

Ash Wednesday



18th February

Holy Communion and Ashing, 6.00pm, St Mary's

Make a Mothers' Day – 15th March

Join us for our annual (and very special) service on Mothers' Day at 10 o'clock. We can all show mothering love, and this is something to celebrate together as well as in our families.

Mums all over the world need our help and support. Through The Mothers' Union we can give ethical gifts and support their work helping some of the poorest communities around the world. Gifts range from just £4 to £100. If you would like to find out more about the work of Mothers' Union please visit their main website: www.mothersunion.org.

February

See side panel for key to symbols

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

Fri 6th 11.00am Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer

Wed 11th 7.30pm St Mary's PCC Meeting, Sixpenny Handley

Sun 22nd 6.00pm Jazz Praise with the Alec James quartet, St Mary's

Mon 23rd 7.30pm Lent Prayers, St Mary's

Wed 25th 12.30pm Lent Soup Lunches, St Mary's ☪

March

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	31				

☕ Lent Prayers – 7.30pm at St Mary's (9th at Parish Office)

☪ Lent Soup Lunches at St Mary's – every Wednesday 12.30pm