



The Seeker

www.handleychurch.org.uk



October

2015

**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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Young Men in Hoodies

The Right Revd Dr Edward Condry, Bishop of Ramsbury

We say that conscience pricks. Well, I certainly feel very uneasy when I see the plight of those stranded in Calais.

Let's not call them "asylum seekers" or "illegal immigrants" as that just dehumanises them. These are real people with real human stories. The majority of them in Calais have escaped from war torn Syria, and have endured great hardships in their journeys as far as the Channel.

Of course I feel uneasy when I see TV footage of young men in hoodies lit by street lamps. I can too easily imagine that they threaten my way of life. Nevertheless, we have a long history of hospitality in this country. My own ancestors include Huguenot escapees from religious persecution in France, and Irish men and women forced to leave their country at the time of the potato famine. They found their home here.

I am not suggesting that we allow everyone and anyone to come here. However, Jesus asked us always to greet most especially those who are not like us. Those who unsettle our consciences. It is these people who are our neighbours. These people who we should not pass by. Our "neighbours" are not simply those who live next door.

These people who are human beings made, as St Paul said, in the image of the invisible God Himself. They deserve our compassion. So if we are not going to let every one in, then surely we should at least treat all people with respect and care. Razor wire and riot police are not part of giving Christian hospitality to strangers.

Support your local Church

The Church gets no funding from the government – if we want to have a church in our communities we have to do something about it ourselves. In fact, having a church is a bargain! For instance, it costs only about £5 an hour to keep St Mary's open. Please think about paying for an hour or two. After all, this is only the price of a coffee and cake in town. Yet you won't put on weight and it will last much longer!

The church is a presence and a place, offering time and space for celebration and mourning, song and quietness. It is your church. The most efficient way of giving financially is by Standing Order. These can be set up through your bank or building society. You know how much you are giving and we know how much we are getting. Importantly, if you are a UK taxpayer we can claim the tax back through gift aid: If you give £100 we actually get £125.

There are also gold and coloured envelopes that can make planning your giving easier. Gold envelopes are ideal for any one-off donations and are available in the church. For more regular giving, please ask for details of the coloured envelope scheme. You agree to give an amount of your choice regularly, which helps us plan our budget. In return you are given 52 envelopes (the colour varies from year to year) to help you plan your giving. Like the other methods of giving these can be gift aided.



**News items
and articles welcome!**
**Please drop them in to
the Vicarage, or email;**
ask@handleychurch.org.uk
Thanks!



Posada



On the last Sunday in November we send Mary and Joseph off on their journey around our villages as they begin their travels to Bethlehem. Yes, Christmas is coming! Come along on Sunday 29th November to wave them goodbye – and make sure they come to your house on the way!

Pray like no one is watching you

Imagine you see Jesus sitting close to you. In doing this you are putting your imagination at the service of your faith. Jesus isn't here in the way you are imagining him, but he certainly is here, and your imagination helps to make you aware of this. Now, speak to Jesus if no one is around, speak out in a soft voice Listen to what Jesus says to you in reply, or what you imagine him to say That is the difference between thinking and praying. When we think, we generally talk to ourselves. When we pray, we talk to God.

Anthony de Mello SJ, Sadhana pages 78-79



*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above,
so thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord
for all His love.*

At the Last Supper, the meal that Jesus shared with his friends the night before he died, Jesus took bread and wine and said, '*do this in remembrance of me.*' This quickly became the basic act of Christian worship. We still gather together to share the food that has been specially set apart and to remember Jesus. The name given to this act of worship has varied over the years and across different church traditions.

In the Church of England we tend to call it '*Holy Communion*', which reminds us of both the sacred nature of what we are doing and that we are in communion with God and each other. Another name in Protestant traditions is '*The Lord's Supper.*' This reminds us that every time we share bread and wine at the Lord's Table we are remembering that Jesus is the host and we are the guests.

The Roman Catholic tradition usually calls this '*Mass.*' This comes from the last words of the Latin service, which mean '*Go, this is the sending out*', and reminds us that sharing communion is not about us. Rather, it is to equip us for service in the world. The word '*Mass*' has also come to be associated with the offering of the bread and wine at the altar that reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

In the Eastern Tradition, the service is called '*Divine Liturgy*'. The word '*Liturgy*' means '*the work of the people*', and points out that this is not done by the priest and watched by the congregation. No, it is the offering of the whole Church all together. And '*divine*' means that this is God's work. Together we are standing on the threshold of heaven.

And finally, another name is '*Eucharist*'. This is simply the Greek word for '*Thanksgiving*'. If it wasn't in Greek it would be a really good name,

as it describes what Jesus was doing and what the church does every time we break bread together – thanking and praising God for his blessings and presence with us.

Not every church – or every service – includes Holy Communion, of course. But at this time of year, as we see the harvest, we are especially conscious of the beauty of the world God made.

We might also, perhaps, be aware of how fragile that beauty is, how easily it can be destroyed. Sometimes, people look at the world and say '*it's not fair.*' But let's be honest, when we say '*it's not fair*' we usually mean, '*it's not what I want*'. But if we look at what *really* isn't fair, why some people don't have enough, or live in danger – well, God wants to know the answer to that question as well!

We have far more than we need, and we all get far more than we deserve. We have done nothing to enjoy all the life God gives and all the good things around us. God created the world, and he trusts us to look after all of it – not just the bits we like or the bits we happen to live in, but to look after and share all of it.

We are responsible for each other. And so if there is a situation or a place where there are not enough of God's good gifts, he is trusting us to do something about it.

As I go around to our churches – St Andrew's, St Rumbold's and St Mary's – I am humbled by the thought that we have been sharing bread and wine on the same patch of God's earth for almost a thousand years. And we are still going strong today. We come together to give thanks as a community – a community to which all are called and welcome.

Your friend and vicar, Mel



Christmas Fayre – Saturday 28th November – from 2 pm

It is nearly time to start thinking about Christmas! Come to our Christmas Fayre in St Mary's church, Sixpenny Handley where there will be refreshments available as well as all the traditional Christmas stalls, great gifts and a few surprises. The fayre just gets better and better each year, so don't miss out!

A hundred years ago we were fighting the First World War. Men enlisted, or were called up, in their millions, and were sent to fight in places that many had never heard of before. They were soon caught up in appalling conditions – cold, wet, sticky mud; beating hot sun; no place for proper rest; endless violence. Those who refused to fight were badly treated; white feathers were given to those who did not join the army; those who ran away were shot for cowardice. Nearly everyone will have had a family member directly affected by the war.

Many countries became involved, countries far beyond Europe: after all, this was the first world war. Empires fell: the map of the world was redrawn. Animals and nature itself suffered too: horses were used in battles, pigeons carried messages; vast areas of land were turned into barren wastes.

And millions of letters were written home. Soldiers wanted to tell their families about the way the war was affecting them, yet they also didn't want to worry them. Censorship ensured that they didn't give away military secrets, and often they wished to protect their families from knowing just how awful their lives were. They wanted to express their love for those at home, and to keep alive hope that they would soon return.

Meanwhile, many women left at home were anxious for the safety of those they loved. Nevertheless expectations about women's roles changed, and many took on 'men's jobs'.

This was the first time that so many people had been mobilized. The authorities were shocked at both the physical and spiritual state of the nation. Surprisingly few people had links with church and so a Christian charity called Scripture Gift Mission took the challenge – pledging that every serviceman should have access to the words of the Bible.

They provided over 43 million Gospels and New Testaments to the troops. These pocketsize gospels were given out as men passed from training camps on their way to the front. Each copy included a commendation from Lord Roberts, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, well-known hymns, and what was called a 'decision form' where the owner could record their commitment to Jesus Christ.

Of course, these little books were greeted with mixed results. Many were thrown away. However, one soldier, with time on his hands, read and re-read his Bible. Despite never showing an interest in such things before, the words sunk in and he became a changed man. He sang the hymns to himself and he became known up and down the trenches as 'Singing Jim'. During a reconnaissance mission, a young soldier from his company was wounded between the trenches. A volunteer was asked for to bring him in, and Singing Jim stepped forward. He reached the man under cover of darkness, and began crawling home with his friend on his back. Then a flare burst overhead, revealing their position. A single sniper shot rang out and Singing Jim was killed.

In his pocket was a long letter to his wife about how he had come to know Christ, encouraging her to do the same. The wounded man offered to take it to England and deliver it in person, telling her how her husband had laid down his life for him. He was given the letter and he did indeed deliver it, but his company had one further request. While he was in England, could he pick up some copies of the book Singing Jim had been reading?

The War to End all Wars... didn't, of course. We know that wars continue today. The modern day soldier faces a very different battlefield to that of a hundred years ago, but the message remains the same.

Scripture Gift Mission – now called Lifewords – reprinted over half a million copies of the World War One Gospel last year. At our Remembrance Service we gave everyone a copy of this little book. It is more than a souvenir. I hope you have managed to read it and be touched by its message of hope.

A letter from a vicar to one of his parishioners in the trenches wrote, *Your mother always finishes any news about the war with the remark 'I wish it were all over' – a common remark, but she says it in such a tone that it resembles a prayer.*

Amid all the suffering of war is always the longing for peace, so that people can build homes safely and raise children in security, in communities where everyone is valued equally. Our task, as we commemorate the terrible events of a century ago, and more recent times, is to work for a world of peace, where all have a share of the resources, where people care for one another and where the Kingdom comes, *on earth as it is in heaven*, because love triumphs in the end.

We wear poppies every year to remember, but memories fade and now the living memories of the trenches have gone forever. We cannot imagine the ten million who died in the First World War, but it is ten million individual stories. And millions more since.

We are linked to those people. The link never breaks. We are all part of the company whose job it is to build peace, to build the world the way God wants it to be... *on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

Discover our open door policy...

Sometimes people say tell me they don't come to church because they would feel like hypocrites. Let me tell you a secret – the church is full of people like you. We all know we are not perfect. That is why we come to church!

Come and join us, even if only occasionally. You will be very welcome. And if you are worried about all the other hypocrites being in church – well, that is like worrying about unfit people being in a gym. That is what it is for!

This is the time of year when we start planning ahead – so why not think about a wedding or a christening? Please talk to the vicar. Perhaps you might start by coming along to our Harvest celebrations (there is always food involved!) and come to our Remembrance Day services. If you have small children, why not bring them along on the last Sunday of November as we send Mary and Joseph off on their journey to Christmas?



+ 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 alternate Thursdays at 7.15pm. Details from Mike on 01725 552 720.

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 Post Office Coffee Shop on the first Monday of the month 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 on alternate Thursdays for chat, laughter and biscuits, some talk around serious themes with a Roebuck steak on the first Tuesday of the month! Phone Paul Skinner (552 785).

☕ **Men's Group** — A beer and a chat usually on the last Tuesday 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 Autumn

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
Oct 4 th	HC	(10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	Harvest	#
Oct 11 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Oct 18 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Oct 25 th	MP		Informal	HC	#	HC
Nov 1 st	HC		Informal	All Souls	HC	#
Nov 8 th	10:50 Remembrance			Evensong	10:50 Rmbrn	#
Nov 15 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Nov 22 nd	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Nov 29 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#

HC

Holy Communion

MP

Morning Prayer

SofP

Songs of Praise

#

No service

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

Harvest Thanksgiving

You may still be in time to celebrate Harvest — at St Andrew's on Sunday 27th September at 6 pm, and at Pentridge on Sunday 4th October at 11.15 am. Both services are followed by refreshments — do come and celebrate the wonderful world around us, and stay for something to eat afterwards!

All Souls Service — Sunday 1st November — 6 pm

You are invited to come along to St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley for this gentle service as we pray together and remember before God those we love but see no longer. There will be a chance to have names of loved ones read out and to light a candle as we pray together. There will be coffee and biscuits afterwards.

October

See side panel for key to symbols

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

More Allsorts Concert

Our annual concert will be on Saturday 17th October in St Mary's church Sixpenny Handley, starting at 7.30pm. Come along for all sorts of entertainment — and a wonderful evening!

Turin Talk

Tarka King will give an illustrated talk about the famous Turin Shroud, in Pentridge Village Hall on Friday 16 October at 7.30 pm.

November

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 *	3 ◆	4	5 +	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					

Saturday 28th 2— 4 pm Sixpenny Handley Christmas Fayre