



The Seeker

www.handleychurch.org.uk



Feb 2016

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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Rev Dr Michael Foster
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*St Mary's with
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Mary Ferguson 552 222
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Licensed Lay Minister

John Cullingford 516 453

Lay Pastoral Assistants

Lydia Carter 552 720
Margaret Durrant 552 608
Margaret Jones 552 358
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(Area code 01725)

Lent Soup Lunches – from February 17th

Come and enjoy two varieties of delicious homemade soup with homemade bread, followed by tea or coffee in St Mary's Church, Sixpenny Handley.

The meal will be served at 1.00pm but you are welcome to come from 12.30 for a cup of tea and a chat. The lunches run every Wednesday until March 16th



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, as well as any updates from previous years. The main aim is to 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 – Film Club!

We are trying something completely different this year. Come along to St Mary's at 7 o'clock on Mondays during Lent for our Film Club. We shall begin with *'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'*, the story of four children discovering the wonderful land of Narnia. We hope future presentations will include *'Shadowlands'*, *'Chariots of Fire'* and *'The Miracle Maker'*. There is no charge, and there will be coffee and biscuits and a chance to discuss what we are watching. Please phone the vicarage for more details – or just turn up on Monday 15th February!

Please Remember this Forgotten Crisis

It's a humanitarian crisis that has reached its third anniversary, but you could be forgiven for not knowing about it. There's little mainstream media coverage of the plight of the people of the Central African Republic (CAR), one of Africa's poorest nations.

Hundreds of thousands of its citizens remain far from home after fleeing fighting which erupted in December 2012 and plunged CAR into a spiral of violence. Please pray for the work of charities such as Tearfund, who remain committed to helping those caught up in this crisis. To combat disease, they are trying to meet basic needs by improving water supplies, sanitation and hygiene awareness of tens of thousands of people, as well as help people improve their livelihoods and their ability to grow their own food.

Thank You – to everyone who has responded with clothes and bedding for Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq (IDPs – another form of refugee). At the time of writing we are collecting a lot and will deliver it to the collection centre. Remember that there are always lots of ways we can help people who are less fortunate than ourselves.



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
Clara Sims, Terry Lawley, Sheila Bradley, Urte David, Victor Orman and Erik Vaughan

Baptisms took place of
Ruby Warner, Millie Davies

Renewal of wedding vows
Tracy and Paul Rimen

Remember – We are here for you. If you would like to give your child a good start in life, talk to the vicar about a christening. If you are getting married, you can get married in your local church if you live in the parish or have some other link. And if a loved one dies, please talk to the vicar about how the church may be able to help. Contact Mel for more information.

A Shedload of Stuff...

The metal shed in St Mary's churchyard is in need of replacement. If you can help please get in touch.



Lent starts early this year. After your pancakes on February 9th, Ash Wednesday is the time to start preparing for Easter.

Given the great fuss that is made of Christmas, perhaps it is not surprising that less is made of Easter. All those presents and decorations that (at least nominally) celebrate the arrival of baby Jesus stand in strong contrast to what happens to him at Easter. Hot cross buns and a few chocolate eggs do not compensate for the very different tone of the story about death on a cross!

And Lent is (famously) a time to give things up. Ask anyone about Lent and they will know two things; pancakes and giving things up. But giving up is often about giving up something trivial – like sugar in coffee, or trying to lose a bit of weight. Things you should really do all the time anyway.

People sometimes tell me what they are giving up and expect me to be impressed. Now, it is good to give up sugar and it is good to lose a little weight. The problem is that this is only *part* of what Lent is about. In doing these things it is so easy to look in the wrong direction – into ourselves rather than out to others and up to God.

So let us try to use this Lent to prepare ourselves and to redress the balance. Let's use it as time for a new and closer look at the way we live our

lives for others, looking at our lives through the eyes of God. It is a time to make sure we are caring for others as well as ourselves. And it is a time for prayer.

Unfashionable words like *repentance* and *reconciliation* are at the heart of Lent. To go into Lent giving up something is only of value if it is part of a change of heart – perhaps the money saved can be used to help people who are less fortunate than ourselves, and the action supported by increased efforts at prayer.

Or we might choose, this Lent, to *take something on*. You might think about coming along to the Lent Course, or exploring some form of daily prayer, if you don't have one already – the website 'Sacred Space' might be a good place to start.

It might mean more practical service, maybe more effective witness, or possibly the offering of previously unused gifts – and part of that may even (dare I say it) include contributing financially to the projects we have going on here in St Mary's, St Andrew's and St Rumbold's.

Lent is about giving something *back*. Mervyn Peake, who wrote the Gormenghast novels, said '*to have lived at all is miracle enough.*' Lent prepares us for Easter, and only Easter makes sense of life. And death. Lent reminds us that we do not earn our place in heaven: Jesus has already done that. And we do not earn God's love. Love cannot be earned. All we can do is respond to the love that is already there. And eat chocolate! Have a lovely Easter.

Your friend and vicar, Mel

As Sure as Eggs is Chocolate

It is not long before we will be buying Easter Eggs – crème eggs have been in Styles since before Christmas! – so remember to look out for the Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance logos on the chocolate you buy, to help people less fortunate than ourselves and make sure no child labour was used in the production of the food we buy. And don't forget the Real Easter Egg, fairly traded and with the only egg to tell the Easter story, produced by the Meaningful Chocolate Company.



The Surprise of Easter

Mel Durrant

People are surprised by Jesus. Yes, we may be able to understand something of Jesus' suffering on the cross, awful as it is. Just turn the news on in the evening and there is someone suffering horribly, somewhere in the world. But the Resurrection is beyond us. We cannot get our heads around it.

And it seems to have always been like this. In the Bible's telling of the story, people always have difficulty in recognizing the risen Jesus. It is like he is no longer their dead friend; he is almost a living stranger. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, the Resurrection turns all our expectations upside down – dead people, after all, usually stay dead!

We celebrate Easter for 40 days, all the way to Ascension Day, sometimes called Whitsun, White Sunday. This is the day when we think of Jesus going back to heaven in bodily form. And for all this time we remember Jesus, risen from the dead, with his friends and followers, helping and teaching them to spread the Good News of God's love, and preparing them for the time when God will be with them in a different way, with them in the Holy Spirit. Easter is big and dangerous stuff.

Sometimes our understanding of God can be a little like the child at breakfast asking his father if God is everywhere.

'Of course,' says the father.

'Is God in this room?'

'Without doubt.'

'On this table?'

'Er, yes.'

'In this empty cup?' persists the boy.

'Well, if you put it like that, yes.'

The boy covers the cup with his hand.

'Gotha!' he cries triumphantly.

This is not what it is about! Instead, the last verse of the song 'Lord of the Dance' puts it well.

They cut me down and I leapt up high.

I am the dance that'll never, never die.

I'll live in you if you live in me.

I Am the Lord of the Dance, said He!

It is difficult stuff. On the other hand, it is also so easy to take the Bible story for granted; we know that Easter follows Good Friday as morning follows night. But those who were there did not know what was coming next, and we need to hear their stunned wonder. The challenge, then as now, is to hear the story as true and life-changing.

The dead body of Jesus has not been stolen or resuscitated; Jesus was transformed. And there is a new relationship with God. Now the world now makes sense.

The Resurrection transforms a weeping woman, Mary Magdalene into a dynamic evangelist. Later it will turn a Doubting Thomas into a great missionary, a humiliated fisherman into a great church leader, and a persecutor of Christians into a great evangelist. This is the transforming power of News as Good as it gets.

The Resurrection comes at the end of all four Gospels, of course. But they do not end with an *'they all lived happily ever after.'* No, Easter Sunday was just the beginning. The story goes on and on. And it is now about us. We are part of the Easter Revolution. We can hear the story for ourselves. After all, today is the first day of the rest of our lives...

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Happy Birthday to Us!

by Catherine Kyte of The Mothers' Union

I was talking to someone recently about plans for a family celebration. 'Oh yes,' she said, 'take every opportunity to celebrate! We should celebrate everything we can.' And she's right. It is good to mark and honour achievements; it raises our spirits and gives us a boost to carry on in our lives – and it's always good to have an excuse for a party!

This year we are marking 140 years of The Mothers' Union – and we have a lot to celebrate. From small beginnings when one woman, grandmother Mary Sumner, brought together the mothers of her village to begin to support them in their family life, we've grown into a global membership of over four million members who are sharing God's love practically as they support families and communities in their particular context.

Throughout 2016 we're going to take every opportunity to celebrate the faithfulness of God to us over the years. We'll honour the faithful witness of members, past and present; and we'll strengthen our determination to be a relevant influence for good in the 21st century as we continue to trust in God for our future.

A longer version of this article is in Families First Magazine, the MU magazine, copies of which are available in St Mary's Church.



Lee Abbey 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. We are planning a trip over the weekend of 25-26th June. 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 very 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 alternate Thursdays at 7.15pm. Details from Mike on 01725 552 720.

Come and meet friends

*** 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 at 7.30pm. 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 Mary (552 041) for details.

Join us for our Spring and Easter services

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's Sixpenny Handley <small>Informal service includes children's time</small>			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	9.30am	11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am	
Feb 7 th	HC	10.30am	Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Feb 14 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Feb 21 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Feb 28 th	MP		Inf + HC	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 6 th	Mothers' Sunday		10am	Evensong	HC	#
Mar 13 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Mar 20 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Mar 27 th	Easter Sunday		9.30am	#	HC	#

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

Make a Mothers' Day – 6th March

Join us for our annual (and very special) service at 10 o'clock on Mothers' Day. 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 organisations such as 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.

10th February

Holy Communion and Ashing 6.00pm St Mary's



The Easter Story

Thurs 24th March, 6 pm Holy Communion, St Andrew's



Good Friday 11 am The Story of the Cross, Handley
25th March 2 pm Quiet Time, Pentridge
6 pm Readings and Hymns, Handley

February

See side panel for key to symbols

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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7 L	8	9	10 HC	11 T ☼	12	13
14	15 ☼	16	17 ☪	18	19	20
21	22 ☼	23 ☕	24 * ☪	25 T	26	27
28	29 ☼					

Sun 7th 1.00pm Church Lunch – details on weekly notice sheet

March

Updated weekly on our website

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

- ☪ Lent Soup Lunches at St Mary's – 12.30pm
- ☼ Lent Course Film Club – 7.00pm at St Mary's