



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



Apr 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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A Place of Comfort in Court

The Mothers' Union has opened a café in Salisbury Law Courts. The previous café was losing money and closed in 2014.

"This was a huge loss", says Andrew Wells, court chaplain, "Courts place great stress on defendants, victims, staff, families, and many others. There was nowhere for people to relax or for the team to take people, sometimes in real distress, for a chat and a cuppa."

Diocesan Mothers' Union President Rosie Stiven adds, "We agreed to run the café, which is staffed by volunteers, to help fulfil our vision of supporting families. The Bishop of Salisbury funded the equipment for the project. We need some more volunteers of any age or gender. If you can help, please contact Joanna Wood on 01722 333 402 or joanna.wood054@gmail.com."



Thanks

Over the five Wednesdays of Soup Lunches we enjoyed a lot of good food and company, and supported The Trussell Trust Shoebox Appeal, Samara's Aid, helping Internally Displaced Persons (refugees) in Iraq, ChildLink UK, supporting girls' education in India, Operation Uganda, providing education and opportunities to teenagers and young adults so they can contribute to their local community, and ChristianAid. Thank you to everyone who came and enjoyed the food, and to all the people who helped. See you again next year!



Waistcoat Festival

It is not long now to the Waistcoat Festival on May 21st. Be sure to come up to St Mary's for our famous cream teas, as well as all the usual (and unusual) stalls.



Teddy Bear Anniversary

Come along to our celebration of another year of Teddy Bears! On Sunday 22nd May the 11 o'clock Service will be celebrating our pre-school drop in (and we also have a Christening!). Come along for some stories, songs and cake!



The Queen's Birthday

Make a date for Sunday 12th June as we celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday with a Garden Party on the vicarage lawn. Come and enjoy tea, sandwiches and cakes as we have a good time and raise funds for the Little Pennies Preschool and St Mary's Church. And you may like to come in your Sunday best (as retro as possible!) to add to the atmosphere.



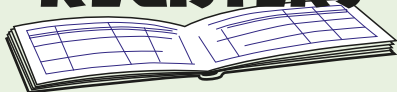


News items and articles welcome!

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

Thanks!

FROM THE REGISTERS



The baptism took place of Eleanor Florence Mitchell

The funerals took place of Cyd Rudd, Joan Clarke, Douglas Lucas and Adam Crick

No Chancel Tax here!

If you are buying or selling a house in Sixpenny Handley, remember that you do not have to pay for a search for Chancel Tax. This was an historic tax that might be payable by property built on land that was once owned by the church. This tax is out of date and cancelled. If you need written proof to go with your documents, please contact the church office.

In full colour

A full colour PDF of The Seeker is available from our website.



Forty days after Easter we shall celebrate Ascension Day. This is when we think about the resurrected Jesus returning to heaven in human bodily form. The thought of it still blows me away every year!

In the story of Jesus we are at the close of the Gospel. I say 'close' not 'end', for this is not an ending. Jesus goes back to heaven, but the Bible does not end. However, there is waiting. Waiting is part of the journey and forty days is a long time. There is something here for our impatient times. We always want things now – and it is so tempting to expect God to speed things up. But sometimes we just have to wait. Perhaps it is a little bit like a family finishing a large and complex jigsaw. Everybody puts in a bit, and until now they have not been able to see much. At last everything falls into place, and everyone sees the whole picture. We are at both the culmination of the story of Jesus, and the beginning of the rest of the story, the Early Church.

I'm always surprised how few paintings there are of the Ascension. Every other moment of Jesus life seems fair game for artists – his birth, childhood, ministry, death and resurrection, even bits that are not in the Bible. But then, on reflection, the pictures there are of the Ascension are usually pretty bad – perhaps just the feet of Jesus disappearing up into the sky, like he is wearing some sort of jetpack! I think from a very early date artists realized that it just doesn't work. We don't know what it looked like.

What matters is what happens. Jesus is returning to be with his Father – in human, bodily form! Perhaps we can better represent it in music, and indeed there are lots of hymns around the theme. You may know Christ Triumphant, *Crown Him with Many Crowns*, *Jesus Shall Reign* or *The Head that Once Was Crowned with Thorns*. They have a wonderful heavenly focus, bursting with triumphant delight and

hailing Jesus as Messiah, heavenly High Priest, homecoming Son.

But we hear little of this in the Bible accounts of Ascension Day. The significant thing is the earthly impact of the events described. We are at a moment of crisis. After all, Jesus is going – so what are his shaken, unreliable followers to do now?

Jesus makes it clear that they are to continue with faith, trust and patience, and God's Holy Spirit will come to them in time. The heavenly aspect of what has just happened will crop up later. When we reach Pentecost they will learn, in the most spectacular way, that God is actively present with his people. He is present by his Holy Spirit. But right now, things are difficult.

Asked what is the greatest thing in life, President John F. Kennedy is said to have replied: 'To take up a challenge'. As Jesus goes to heaven he says that his disciples are to be his witnesses. For the disciples this is perhaps the greatest challenge of all. They are to go out and tell people everywhere about Jesus and his teaching, and to move from their familiar, comfortable world into the unfamiliar and uncomfortable. The Greek word for witness also means martyr. Quite some challenge!

And, of course, that challenge comes down to us today. It means that we need to be ready to face difficulties, and need to be clear what we are doing, and what we believe. But we can all make the commitment to be a witness. We can decide to make the world a better place, to leave it in a better state that we find it. We may have to wait, but this is what Jesus calls us to do. This is our part in the never-ending story.

Your friend and vicar, Mel

Join us as we celebrate Ascension Day on Thursday 5th May at Gussage St Andrew, beginning at 6pm.

PENTECOST – The Power of the Holy Spirit

Paul Skinner

We use some words in church that can be curious and misleading if you are not used to them. We say that we believe in *'the Holy Ghost, the comforter'*. To many this sounds very spooky. In fact, *'ghost'* is the old English word for a spirit, and the *'Holy Ghost'* is not at all spooky or to be avoided. The Holy Spirit can best be defined as God at work, the powerful force of love available to us all.

But how about the word *'comforter'*? Children who play with toy soldiers know that they live in a castle or *fort* - a strong place. So in old English, a *comforter* was one who gave you strength. In the Bayeux tapestry, one of the captions reads, *'Bishop Odo comforts the lads'*. You would expect to see him giving the soldiers a pat on the back. In fact he is coming up behind them and prodding them with a spear. He is *comforting* them by putting strength into them and sending them forward to fight. This is what the Holy Spirit can do for us.

'Comforter' is the English translation of a Greek word *'Paraclete'*. It crops up in a few of our hymns. There is a story about a new convert having the doctrine of the Trinity explained to him, and getting confused when the Holy Spirit was spoken of as being a dove and was also the Paraclete. He exclaimed, *'Holy Father I understand. Holy Son I understand, But Holy Parakeet?'*

Actually the word *paraclete* means somebody called to your side, an *advocate* in a law court speaking for you. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray and to speak out for Christ when we are lost for words on our own.

Jesus warned that some of his disciples would have to defend themselves before king and governors. Today, we are more likely to have to defend ourselves against the scorn of those who think that Christianity is stupid rather than those who want to persecute us for our faith. Either way, we needn't worry that we won't know what to say, the Holy Spirit will come to our side as our advocate. We may stumble and appear inarticulate, but said with sincerity, the Holy Spirit will work through us and be more persuasive than we might expect.

The Holy Spirit is an experience. Often the only way to write about the Holy Spirit is to use a metaphor. The wind is used in the Bible to describe the Holy Spirit. St Luke describes the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as *'Suddenly from Heaven there came a sound like the rushing of a violent wind'*. Jesus also uses wind in his description of those who are born of the Spirit. It blows where it chooses, can't be seen and

goes no one knows where. In both Greek and Hebrew the same word *'wind'* also means breath and spirit. The Greek word is *pneuma* from which we have evolved the name for the powerful pneumatic drill and the tyres we put on our cars.

Elsewhere in the Bible we also have the description of the Holy Spirit being like tongues of fire and a peaceful dove. These are all attempts to describe the indescribable, and explain the inexplicable.

The image of the mighty wind shows that the Holy Spirit brings dynamic power, provided that we are ready to receive it. Without the help of the Spirit we are feeble or powerless. How often do we feel powerless to be kind to others, to influence others by kind words and caring behaviour? Then we can pray for the Holy Spirit's power to aid us in our endeavours. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit we can the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, and peace. The Holy Spirit will give us the power. Have faith and do not doubt it.

Prayer Time Together

Do you have a Quiet Time? St Mary's and St Rumbold's are open every day for prayer, and of course we can pray anywhere. Or you may like to have a private little prayer at home, and know that others are praying at the same time. If so, perhaps you can set aside a few minutes on Monday evenings at 9 o'clock. Use the prayers included here as well as your own, or just be quiet in the presence of God, knowing that you are sharing the time with others in our area.

If I have wounded some poor soul today
 If I have caused one foot to go astray
 If I have walked in my own willful way
 Dear Lord, forgive
 If I have uttered idol words in vain
 If I have turned aside from want or pain
 Lest I offend some other through the strain
 Dear Lord, forgive
 Forgive the sins I have confessed to Thee
 Forgive those secret sins I do not see
 Oh, guide me love me and my keeper be
 Dear Lord, forgive

as sung by Jim Reeves, Elvis Presley and others

In peace we will lie down and sleep;
 for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.
 Abide with us, Lord Jesus,
 for the night is at hand and the day is now past.
 As the night watch looks for the morning,
 so do we look for you, O Christ.
 The Lord bless us and watch over us;
 the Lord make his face shine upon us and be
 gracious to us;
 the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen.

Church of England Compline

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13 v1-2



Lee Abbey is a beautiful house and community on the rugged north Devon coastline. Visitors often comment that it is a *'thin place'*, in the sense that God is felt to be very near. It is a great place for families, as there are lots of things for different ages to do. We are planning a visit over the last weekend of June. Please have a look at the brochure, the website or talk to us 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 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 at 7.30pm. Details from David Lockyer (552 492).

☼ **Mothers' Union** – Tea, company and a good talk, usually every second Thursday of the month, from 2.45pm. Details from Mary (552 041).

Join us this Spring

SUNDAY SERVICES	St Mary's Sixpenny Handley Informal service includes children's time			St Rumbold's Pentridge	Gussage St Andrew	
	9.30am		11.00am	6.00pm	11.15am	9.30am
Apr 3 rd	HC	 (10.30am)	Informal	Evensong	HC	#
Apr 10 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
Apr 17 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
Apr 24 th	MP		Inf + HC	AGM	#	HC
May 1 st	HC		Informal	Evensong	HC	#
May 8 th	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
May 15 th	HC		Informal	Evensong	MP	#
May 22 nd	MP		Informal	Evensong	#	HC
May 29 th	HC		Inf + HC	Evensong	MP	#

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

Our Informal service is geared more towards families and includes activities for children.



Ascension Day – Thur 5th May

Join us for Holy Communion at 6:00pm, Gussage St Andrew.

Pentecost – Sunday 15th May

Join us as we celebrate Pentecost – the day we remember the Holy Spirit coming on the disciples, the birthday of the Church.

Annual Meetings

It is the time of year to hold our Annual Meetings. Join us at St Mary's on Sunday 24th April at 6pm (in place of the evening service) or at St Rumbold's on Wednesday 27th April at 7pm. Please come along to find out what it takes to run your local church and about the many ways you can get involved.

April

See side panel for key to symbols

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 *	5 ◆	6	7 +	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

Thu 14th 2.45pm Mothers' Union – Dementia Care

May

Updated weekly on our website

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 ◆	4	5 T HC +	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 ☕				

Thu 12th 2.45pm Mothers' Union – Children's Chance

▼ Even more open on Saturdays again!

Our Saturday afternoon drop-ins at St Mary's, start up again in May. If you are passing – or would like to have a chat with someone trained to listen – pop in for a cup of tea from 2.30pm (weddings permitting!) This is in addition to our Post Office café and the Walnut Tree drop-ins, when Paul or Mel will be available to chat, which continue throughout the year.