



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



Oct 2018

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

Who's who?

Vicar

Revd Canon Richard Hancock
The Vicarage
Sixpenny Handley
01725 552 182

Curates

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

Churchwardens

St Mary's with
Gussage St Andrew

Chris Stokes 552 672
Sue Curtis 552 397

St Rumbold's, Pentridge

Mary Ferguson 552 222
Jane King 552 231



New man at the top of the hill

By the time you read this our new priest in Charge, Richard Hancock, will have been inducted at a special service on September 24th at St Mary's. Hopefully you've already met him. If not he can be found every Sunday in the big stone building with the clock at the top of the hill.

The Revd Canon Richard Hancock. TSSF

New Rural Field Officer & Priest in Charge of Sixpenny Handley, Pentridge and Gussage St Andrew.



Richard is married to Kate who is a teacher. They have two boys, Alex, who is reading English at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge and Ben who is in his second year training to be a Chef now at Wiltshire College.

Prior to his ordination in 1997 Richard studied Photography at Berkshire College of Art and Design and then worked as a Freelance Professional Photographer. He spent two years as a Full-Time Youth and Children's Officer in the Riverside Team Ministry in the Oxford Diocese prior to his training for ministry at both Lincoln Theological College, then after its closure at Westcott House, Cambridge. He served his curacy in the urban parish of St Peter's Didcot but rural ministry has always been his passion. After his curacy he became Priest in Charge of Shrivenham with Watchfield and Bourton and played a key role in the formation of the Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice, becoming Incumbent in 2002, consisting of seven rural parishes where he has served for eighteen years. He also served as an Officiating Chaplain to the Military [OCM] at the Defence Academy Shrivenham.

Within the Oxford Diocese he has served as Area Dean of the Vale of the White Horse Deanery for seven years, has been a member of the Board of Mission and one of the Diocesan Missions Team. He has also been a pioneer in developing Prayer Space projects in rural schools and an advisor on the Rural Education Advisory Group. In 2012 he was made an Honorary Canon of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford and more recently has been made a Canon Emeritus. Richard is also a life professed member of the Third Order of the Society of St Francis TSSF.

His hobbies include photography, attending eccentric vintage events, cooking and fan of Real Ale. He's a self-confessed petrol head attending track days in his Caterham 7 and more recently MX5 and has achieved a 9.46 second lap time around the Nurburgring.

Richard has a passion for life, people and God's Mission and is looking forward to taking up this new challenge and working alongside people in the benefice and Dorset to help build the rural church and community life.



**News items
and articles welcome!**

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

Thanks!



FROM THE REGISTERS



The baptisms took place of

Daisy Wildman
Charlie and Theo Day

The wedding took place of

Tom and Rosetta Lancaster

The funerals took place of

Robin Budden,
Ronald Carter
Norman Clarke
Molly Pearson
Marion Tozer

Thinking of switching?

If you take out insurance with Ecclesiastical.com — a church of your choice gets £130 as a celebration of the insurance company's 130th anniversary.

You don't have to be a connected with the church to use the firm or take advantage of this offer and help your local community.

In full colour

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



My Last 'Dear friends...'

Mel Durrant

Two people are eyeing up the cake. One of them cuts it in two, so that there is one big piece and one small piece. The other person reaches out and takes the big piece.

The first says, 'If I'd been you, I would have taken the smaller piece and been thankful.' The second one looks at him and says, 'What's the problem, then? You've got the smaller piece; be thankful!'

How good are you at being thankful? So often today we are encouraged *not* to be thankful for what we have, but to want *more*: More money, more food, more stuff – and *then* be thankful. Until the next cake comes along, of course.

We aren't warned about prosperity very often. Yet, when we read what the Bible has to say about money and possessions, it sounds as though it is radioactive – something that can do a great deal of good if used in the right way, but something we have to be extremely careful about to avoid being poisoned! Wealth is a blessing, but we have to be careful it doesn't become a curse.

*We plough the fields and scatter the
good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered by
God's almighty hand...*

We live in one of the most prosperous times and societies that has ever existed. In just one lifetime our 'standard of living' has increased beyond recognition. I remember when we had two radiators in our house, one upstairs and one downstairs, and my parents were proud we had central heating – and I was told not to complain about the ice on the inside of my bedroom window. My grandparents had outside loos.

And it goes on and on. Today, microwaves, computers, smart phones have all become part of the normal expectations of most of us. I am not saying don't have these things. Use them. Enjoy them. Nonetheless, from a spiritual point of view, not all is well with our modern way of life.

The danger is that we can get so comfortable that we lose all sense of where everything comes from. And there is also the fact that not everyone shares in our wealth. The gap between the rich and the poor, the haves and have-nots is getting alarmingly bigger – in the world and in our country.

So what can we do? Well, speaking from thousands of years ago in the Old Testament, Moses gives us ways for dealing with it. Moses

tell us, quite simply, to 'Remember' (Deuteronomy 8:7-18).

And we still need to do this. It is why we celebrate Harvest, and soon it will be All Souls, Remembrance, then Christmas and on to Easter again. It is important to remember, to tell the story, to tell our story, together. Indeed, 're-mem-ber' means to put things back together. It is the opposite of 'dis-mem-ber'.

Moses was talking to the Israelites, just before they entered the Promised Land. He tells them to remember the backbreaking conditions of the past, when they were slaves in Egypt. He also tells them to remember the good things: how God set them free, how God provided for them when times were tough. "Remember how you depended on God day by day", he is saying, "and how God came through for you".

And that brings us to Moses' second way of dealing with prosperity; 'Praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.' In other words, thank God for all the blessings you have received.

I'm sure you know some people who never seem to have learned how to say thank you. Indeed, our culture seems to have developed complaint into an art form. But evidence shows that people who make thankfulness a habit tend to be happier and enjoy their lives much more. And if we are unhappy, a habit of thankfulness might just have the power to change our hearts and the way we look at the world.

While I was writing this article, I came across this question; *What if you woke up today with only the blessings you thanked God for yesterday?*

Think of the old chorus: "Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done". I know we tend to laugh at this sort of old-fashioned verse – but I challenge all of us to do just that. Today, count our blessings, name them one by one. Then do it again tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that. I

think you will be surprised at how many blessings we all have. So, however big your slice of cake is, remember to say *thank you...* Amen.



HARVEST

Mel Durrant

Harvest Festival feels like it is one of the oldest and most traditional British festivals. In fact, today's church celebrations only began in earnest in Victorian times, when the Reverend Robert Stephen Hawker invited his parishioners to a special harvest thanksgiving service at the church in Morwenstow, Cornwall in 1843.

Early English settlers took the idea of harvest thanksgiving to North America. "Thanksgiving" was first celebrated by in 1621. They invited native Americans to a harvest feast at the Plymouth Plantation to celebrate a successful crop. Turkey wasn't on the menu initially – instead the feast included goose, lobster, fish and deer.

There are links with Michaelmas Day – also known as the feast of Saint Michael. This celebrates the end of the harvest on 29th September. Historians say this originated in the fifth century when the cult of St Michael spread through Christianity in the West. During the Middle Ages Michaelmas became a religious feast, and people ate geese, which they believed would bring financial protection for the coming year.

Harvest festivals are held around the world from Australia to Sweden to India. In China the mid-autumn celebration is also known as the Moon festival. This custom probably harks back to ancient times and the moon is still considered a symbol of harmony and abundance. Families gather to eat traditional moon cakes. Celebrations and food nearly always go together.

You may just still be in time to celebrate Harvest – at Pentridge on Sunday 30th September at 11.15am and St Mary's on 7th October at 9.30am. All of them are followed by bread, cheese and cider refreshments – do come and celebrate the wonderful world around us, and stay for something to eat afterwards!

Support your local church

The church is a presence and a place, offering time and space for celebration and mourning, song and quietness. It is your church. Remember that we get 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! 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!

Please think about setting up a standing order to support the church at the heart of our community.

If you shop online, you can raise money at no cost to you by shopping through the website www.easfundraising.org.uk. After all, what we do with our money says everything about who we are. As we start to think about Christmas, let's remember that our God is a giving God. He gives us life and his giving is renewed daily. In giving to others we have the opportunity to reflect something of God's nature.

Prayer Corner

We all need to take time out from our daily chores. We know that our bodies need a rest, our minds and spirits need refreshment.

Lord God, you have created the universe and have blessed humanity and made us stewards of the earth.

We pray for your world, that we may share and conserve its resources, and live in reverence for the creation and in harmony with one another.

You have given us a rich land,
a land of streams and springs,
wheat and barley, oil and honey.

We have made a world of suffering and sorrow. We pray for those who bear the weight of affliction, that they may come to share the life of wholeness and plenty.

In Christ you call us to a new way of life, loving our neighbours before ourselves.

Help us to treat with care and respect the world as it is as we live in hope and anticipation of the world as it will be when your kingdom comes and your will is done.

God of the Harvest, Gardener Supreme, you place us at the centre of your world. Feed us, equip us and, having provided for us, help us to look to a fruitfulness of lives in service to you and others.

God of the harvest, feed us, prune us, harvest us, that our lives might bring glory to you.

St Mary's Teddy Bears

All pre-school children and their carers are invited for a drink and a biscuit, a good natter and a play in the church.

There is no charge and you don't need to come to church at other times – we just love seeing you!

Come along for as long as you can between 10.30 and noon and make your Thursdays brighter.

Runs every Thursday during school terms.





+ 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

L Church Lunch

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

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.

☕ Men's Group – A beer and a chat to finish off 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 2.30pm. Details from Mary (552 041).

SUNDAY SERVICES	Gussage St Andrew	St Rumbold's Pentridge	St Mary's Sixpenny Handley	
	9.30am	11.15am	9.30am	6.00pm
Oct 7 th	#	HC	Harvest HC	Evensong
Oct 14 th	HC	#	Informal	Evensong
Oct 21 st	#	MP	HC	Evensong
Oct 28 th	MP	#	Informal	HC
Nov 4 th	#	HC	HC	All Souls
Nov 11 th	HC	Remembrance Services 10.50am		Evensong
Nov 18 th	#	MP	HC	Evensong
Nov 25 th	MP	#	Informal	Evensong

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.

All Souls Service

You are invited to come along to St Mary's, Sixpenny Handley at 6 pm on Sunday 4th November 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.

Remembrance Services

The red poppy is worn by millions of people every year. The British Legion reminds us what the red poppy is, and, very importantly, what it is not. It is not a symbol of death, or a sign of political support for war. It is not any reflection or support of political or religious beliefs. Nor is it red to reflect the colour of blood. No, poppies are red because that is their natural colour, and they are used because they are the first thing to grow and flower when land is disturbed. Poppies are worn by millions of people coming together, as a symbol of remembrance.

This year we come together to remember those who have suffered in war and conflict at our services in Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge on Remembrance Sunday 11th starting at 10.50 am. Please join us.

October

See side panel for key to symbols

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

November

See website for updates

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	

Saturday 1st December – Christmas Fayre!