



The Seeker

handleychurch.org.uk



#1 2021

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

Curate

Rev Paul Skinner
01725 552 785

Churchwardens

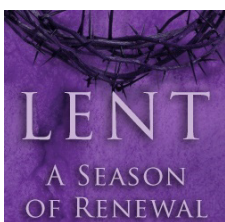
St Mary's with
Gussage St Andrew

Sue Curtis 552 397

St Rumbold's, Pentridge

Mary Ferguson 552 222

Jane King 552 231



Wednesday
evenings
7 — 8:30pm
24th March
to 31st April

Lent online!

Join us over ZOOM

We will be exploring a range of topics looking at our pilgrim journey and how the Christian faith can help us on our way.

Church Services for February and March

We are regularly reviewing what is possible and safe with regard to public worship. It is hoped that with the effect of the lock down and the roll out of the COVID vaccine that it will be possible to resume public worship in the coming months. The time table below is based on public worship being safe to resume in February. A decision will be made at the end of January. However things can change unexpectedly and if it is not safe to hold public worship services will continue online at 10am on Sundays. However both St Mary's Handley and St Rumbold's Pentridge remain open for private prayer and reflection.

February

Sunday 7th February — two before Lent

10am Holy Communion, St Rumbold's

Sunday 14th [Feast of St Valentine]

10am Morning Worship, St Mary's (tbc)

Wednesday 17th — Ash Wednesday

7pm Holy Communion with Ashing, St Mary's

Sunday 21st — Lent 1

10am Said Matins BCP, St Rumbold's

Sunday 28th — Lent 2

10am Said Holy Communion, St Mary's

March

Sunday 7th — Lent 3

10am Holy Communion, St Rumbold's

Sunday 14th — Lent 4

10am Morning Worship, St Mary's

Sunday 21st — Lent 5 [Passiontide begins]

10am Said Matins, St Rumbold's

Sunday 28th — Palm Sunday [Holy Week]

Benefice Service with procession from the

Village Hall at 9:30am followed by

10am Family Service in St Mary's

[dependent on COVID restrictions at the time]

2021 by Another Road 'They left for their own country by another road.' Matthew 2:12b

I wonder what happened to the wise men. How were their lives shaped from that day when they left Bethlehem and returned to their own country by another road? How did seeing the longed for Messiah change the rest of their lives?

It was really encouraging in the Autumn to engage with clergy and laity from across the diocese to look back at what church life had been like in 2020. This time last year we would never have imagined or believed how the year would turn out, and yet amidst all the tragedy, the fear, the anxiety, the challenge, there have been many signs of hope, new life, creativity, energy, of discovering new ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our calling now is to go forward into this New Year, in the light of 2020, by another road. To take that which has been good, new and energising into our future, not just as the church, but also as individuals.



Bishop Karen

What may this look like? Well, for me my first three and a half years in this role meant spending a great deal of time indoors and in the car. My challenge therefore going forward is to consider how I continue to reduce my mileage and create space to take time to enjoy God's creation. It is about deciding how I utilise the many benefits of Zoom without spending most of the week in front of a screen. It is about continuing to bring clergy and County leaders together around common topics whilst paying attention to the needs of the local church.

January 2021 will also be like no other January we have ever had. Whilst still taking care, with the possibility of being vaccinated by the summer, our resolutions can be about the life post-Covid we wish to retain and the new possibilities we need to grasp. So, what will returning by another road mean for you? The Wise Men knew to avoid returning the way they had come. We need to learn that lesson too because the year 2020 will have taught us nothing if we go back the same way. **Bishop of Sherborne**



Please join us

**LIVE DAILY 10 am
BROADCASTS**

on Facebook or
watch later on YouTube
with this link:

[www.facebook.com/
St-Marys-Church-
Sixpenny-Handley-
558498850977107](https://www.facebook.com/St-Marys-Church-Sixpenny-Handley-558498850977107)

“Everyone has a purpose in life”

DIARY OF A COUNTRY PARSON

It's mid-January, a week into the third national lock down, and the deadline reminder for this article has flashed up on my PC. However my fingers feel like lead and my heart is very low on inspiration.

This time last year I was looking forward to a positive and exiting year ahead for our churches and community. Many of the new projects we had begun in 2019 were beginning to take off particularly our weekly Magnificafé. Our local community also had a packed calendar of festivals and events including a trip to Belgium with 1st Woodcutts Scouts, which was going to make 2020 a fantastic year. Little did we all know then what lay ahead of us.

Now in our third national lockdown and with COVID cases soaring many of us feel beaten into submission by this pandemic finding it very difficult to get motivated, save for another journey to the fridge.

This lassitude can be overwhelming, zapping our physical and mental energy. As a minister I find myself asking what is my purpose in all of this?

The beginning of February, the 2nd to be exact marks the Presentation of Christ in the Temple or Candlemas when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to give thanks for his birth. Things had not particularly gone to plan for them with the birth of their new child. A hasty marriage and journey to Bethlehem amongst other things. Little did they know that they would soon be fleeing to Egypt as refugees from a despot King who sought to murder this child for fear of losing his power base. Life is often not what we expect it to be.

The story of the presentation offers us three important lessons about life and God.

Firstly it teaches us the importance of placing our trust in God. Mary and Joseph were already learning this lesson in abundance. They had both said “yes” to God’s plan and were now on a journey like their ancestor Abraham, following a promise, but not quite sure where they might end up. Their encounter with Simeon and Anna in the temple serves as a reminder to them that God is with them and in control even though it may not seem like it at time. These two complete

strangers appear to be privy to God’s plan and offer both encouragement and a warning to the new parents.

Secondly it teaches us the importance of patience. Simeon and Anna have been waiting a lifetime for this moment. They have been in the temple daily hoping to see the promised Messiah and finally he is here. Over this pandemic we have all had to learn this hard lesson, often believing things were finally changing only to have our hopes dashed. How many times had Anna and Simeon heard the cry of a baby in the temple only to be disappointed, but they persevered because they believed and trusted that God would not let them down.

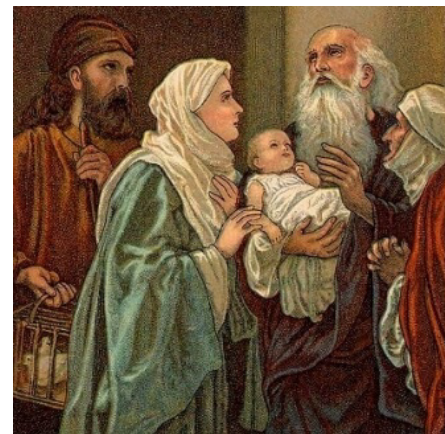
Thirdly and finally this story shows us that we all have a purpose in life no matter how small. Some will be big players on the stage of life like Mary who features all the way through the story and gets several mentions in the prequel. Others will have walk on parts but no less important and they move the story on. Simeon and Anna have only one specific thing to do but they are not idle. Even though in the whole scheme of things their part was very small, it was what they did while they waited that was equally important. Parents would have been bringing infants to the Temple daily and even though they weren’t the Messiah they were still children of God. Anna and Simeon would have known this, as the spirit of God dwelt within them. They would not have been the kind of people to ignore the other infants coming in and over time how many thousands of children and parents did they bless and encourage, some who may well have grown into Jesus’s first disciples. God has a purpose for us all and it can sometimes take a lifetime to be revealed to us, however what’s important is what we do while we are waiting for that moment. We can simply sit on the side-lines, wait and be frustrated or, like Simeon and Anna, can be active and expectant, bringing God’s blessing to those they encounter. We do not know what 2021 will bring but if we can trust in God, learn patience and realise we have a purpose, then it might not be as bad as we fear.

Blessings

Canon Richard Hancock

Luke 2.24-38

²⁴ At that time Jesus’ parents also offered their sacrifice for purification—“either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons” was the legal requirement. ²⁵ That day a man named Simeon, a Jerusalem resident, was in the Temple. He was a good man, very devout, filled with the Holy Spirit and constantly expecting the Messiah[e] to come soon. ²⁶ For the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen him—God’s anointed King. ²⁷ The Holy Spirit had impelled him to go to the Temple that day; and so, when Mary and Joseph arrived to present the baby Jesus to the Lord in obedience to the law, ²⁸ Simeon was there and took the child in his arms, praising God.



²⁹⁻³¹ “Lord,” he said, “now I can die content! For I have seen him as you promised me I would. I have seen the Saviour you have given to the world. ³² He is the Light that will shine upon the nations, and he will be the glory of your people Israel!”

³³ Joseph and Mary just stood there, marvelling at what was being said about Jesus.

³⁴⁻³⁵ Simeon blessed them but then said to Mary, “A sword shall pierce your soul, for this child shall be rejected by many in Israel, and this to their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy of many others. And the deepest thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed.”

³⁶⁻³⁷ Anna, a prophetess, was also there in the Temple that day. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the Jewish tribe of Asher, and was very old, for she had been a widow for eighty-four years following seven years of marriage. She never left the Temple but stayed there night and day, worshipping God by praying and often fasting.

³⁸ She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she also began thanking God and telling everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the Saviour[f] that the Messiah had finally arrived.

Christmas at St Mary's



Boxing Day — Woozel Hunt!

