

The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

When we are faced by problems as vast as those in the World today, there seems to be two ways in which people react. Some become so full of anxiety and fear that they become casualties themselves, others just shut themselves off with, "well, there's nothing we can do about it, so why worry".

As Christians we believe that with Christ before us we can tackle any problem, but he has to be central to each life if we are to be instruments of his peace and life-giving health. Being central means thinking about God first not last. When we have a problem is it God we go to first or do we toss and turn, lose sleep, spend endless hours trying to work out what to do? Or, when we are overjoyed at some wonderful piece of news, is it to God we turn first - to give thanks?

It isn't that God needs our praise and thanksgiving, but that we need to be grateful, to feel gratitude in order to be healthy, happy people.

When we are grateful we become more aware of other blessings and that makes us more positive people. As some of us get away for the first time in many months, let us appreciate God's beautiful world and the different people and places which we will encounter.

Giving praise to God is like sunshine breaking through dark clouds - it warms both ourselves and others. In fact, like sunshine, it can cover a large area. Praise makes us see straight.

We forget who God is, God is omnipotent, omniscient, all wise, He is King of Kings, He is Lord of Lords, He is our great God, Creator of the Universe.

We need to look up to Him, not down at our problems and worries. So let us go forward with hope, joy and thanksgiving in our hearts and I hope all of you who have the chance of a break will come back refreshed and rested.

With all good wishes
Andrew

THANKING GOD FOR OUR BLESSINGS

Our winter barley ripened quickly this year, and soon the combine harvesters were rolling here on the Northumberland / Scottish Border.

As the first trailer load of grain came into the shed, I ran my hands through the golden grains, offering a short prayer of thankfulness as I savoured the smell of fresh cut barley. It was a good harvest.



I've often reflected on the Old Testament festival of the First fruits, where the Israelites offered the very first sheaf of the spring harvest to God (Leviticus 23:9-14). I think this act required great faith, as they trusted God for a fruitful harvest to come, something that was far from certain, given their utter dependence on the weather.

I'm not sure about you, but I'm always up for giving thanks *after* the event. I'll sing 'Come ye thankful people come' and rejoice that "all is safely gathered in", but am I able to trust with anticipation for what is *yet to come*?

The festival of the Firstfruits reminded God's people that everything they had came from Him. I am reminded that I must learn (and relearn) to trust in God, who has proven His faithfulness to me, over and over again.

Perhaps right now as a church community or an individual you're waiting for a certain event, standing on the cusp of a new initiative, praying for a certain outcome or anticipating a long-held vision becoming reality. Let's all keep trusting that whatever the challenge, however things turn out, irrespective of what we anticipate, God is going before us and has secured the Firstfruits of an even greater harvest through Jesus, as He rose from the dead.

Just as the grain offering to God in the Old Testament anticipated a harvest to come, Paul reminds us that Jesus' victory anticipates an even greater bodily resurrection and eternal peace (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

As we continue our journey with Jesus through the challenges of each day, let's do so with a deepening faith and trust. In the meantime, bring on the harvest – I'll see you on the other side!

Alistair Birkett, Director of Rural Ministries for Scotland and Northern England.

LET JESUS CHRIST FIND YOU

Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.' John 14:1-6

We come to church regularly to meet God. But actually, God comes to meet us. He comes to us personally though His Word; and in Holy Communion, Jesus arrives under cover of bread and wine, saying 'this is My body; this is My blood'.

The whole Bible is the story of God searching for us, not the other way round. It begins with Adam and Eve running away and hiding, and that's how it continues to this day. But it ends with a dramatic vision of reunion.

In the meantime, humanity is invited to stop, turn round, and face God who is in pursuit. 'Turning round' is what 'repentance' means.

Becoming a Christian is letting Christ find us; being a Christian is becoming an apprentice in His workforce.

Not long before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His apprentices about His death – and theirs. "I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."

When we contemplate dying, it may seem like a journey into the dark. But we will not go alone. Never alone. As we

reach out into the darkness, Christ is reaching out to us. Just as He has been reaching out to us throughout our lives, so He is there to grasp us as we breathe our last. "I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."

For the disciple, death is a union – a reunion with Christ. It's the most natural thing in the world. So, we pray that at our end, we may reach out into the darkness, to find we are grasped by the One who has already prepared a place for us.

The Ven. John Barton

In praise of motorway services



What have you got in common with the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Eric Clapton? You have all visited the Watford Gap Services on your way up or down the M1.

Back in the early 1960s, the M1 transformed the way that bands could travel, and visiting the service station was an integral part of their trip. In the 60 or so years since motorway services opened, they have also become part of life for tens of millions of us.

Motorway services not only provide a much-needed break from the road, they are also a great place for people-watching. All sizes, shapes and varieties of people can be

found in one. As one journalist put it: "a motorway service station is the ultimate human zoo."

Not everyone used motorway services back in the 1960s. Many people just pulled over onto the hard shoulder and unpacked a picnic. There was even the true story of the family who pulled their car onto the central reservation of the motorway to have lunch – and survived to tell the tale. Motorway services also confused people. One distraught couple, heading north, reported their car had been stolen. The police found they had crossed the pedestrian bridge, and then could not find their car in the south-bound car park.

Today there are 111 service stations in the UK. The law states that they must not be more than 28 miles apart, or 30 minutes of travelling time. By law, they must provide two hours of free parking, free toilets, and a free play area for children.

The first two motorway services were Watford Gap and Newport Pagnell, both of which opened in early November 1959, along with the M1.

Ride+Stride 2021: *for churches*

This annual event to support Dorset Historic Churches will take place on Saturday 11th September. Last year, despite a pandemic, the event exceeded all expectations and the total raised was £112,500 - an all time record.

Please support our participants from Transfiguration at a time when all churches will have suffered financially: few collections, few fees from weddings, no fetes and fewer visitors. If you would like to join us this year please contact the number below.

Graham Luker 01202 723305



THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

MARY (8th September)

In both eastern and western Churches, Mary has always been held as pre-eminent among all the saints. The unique, extraordinary privilege of being the mother of the One who was both God and Man, makes her worthy of special honour. Thomas Aquinas believed she was due *hyperdulia*, or a veneration that exceeds that of other saints, but is at the same time infinitely below the adoration, or *latria*, due to God alone.

The gospels of Matthew and Luke give Mary most mention. Luke even tells the story of Jesus' infancy from Mary's point of view. Her Song, or *Magnificat* appears in Luke 1:46-55.

The virginal conception of Christ is clearly stated in the gospels. But after Jesus' birth, Mary fades quietly into the background. During Jesus' public life, she is mentioned only occasionally, as at the wedding at Cana. She reappears at the foot of the Cross (John's Gospel), and is given into John's care. In the early chapters of Acts, Mary is with the Apostles, and received the Holy Spirit along with them on Whitsunday. But her role was not the active one of teaching and preaching.



Mary's significance grew with the centuries. By the fifth century she was called *Theotokos*, The Mother of God, and from the seventh century onwards, she was given four festivals: the Presentation in the Temple (2nd February), the Annunciation (25th March), the Assumption (15th August) and her Nativity (8th September).

Marian devotion has played an enormous role in the church down the years. Mary has been the object of countless prayers, accredited with performing many miracles, and the subject of thousands of artistic endeavours. She has had hundreds of chapels or parish churches named after her. During the Reformation many images of Mary were destroyed. The Second Vatican Council 1962 made an extended statement on her, stressing her complete dependence on her Son, and regarding her as a model of the Church.

Principal Marian shrines of today include Lourdes (France), Fatima (Portugal), Walsingham (England), Loreto (Italy), Czesochowa (Poland) and Guadalupe (Mexico).

Friends of Salisbury Cathedral – Secret Gardens of the Close and Green Fair

The Friends of Salisbury Cathedral's *Secret Gardens of the Close* event returns in September and this year there's a new attraction.

The event, which enables the public to visit gardens in Salisbury Cathedral Close that are normally hidden from view, will include a green fair comprising a dozen stalls with an eco-friendly theme.

Secret Gardens of the Close & Green Fair takes place on Sunday September 12 from 1pm to 5pm.

As well as touring some of the larger gardens in the Close and De Vaux Place, visitors can enjoy tea and cake on the lawn of South Canonry, the home of the Bishop of Salisbury.

The green fair stalls include Harnham Water Meadows Trust, Plantlife and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, whose representatives will be explaining what they do and how the public can get involved.

Salisbury Florilegium Society will be hosting an exhibition of members' botanical paintings in the Medieval Hall and musical entertainment will be provided by recorder group Close Consort, whose members will be playing in a number of the gardens.

Friends' chairman Duncan Glass said: "The Friends are very much looking forward to holding our *Secret Gardens of the Close* afternoon following the disappointment of having to cancel last year due to the Covid-19 restrictions. "The green fair will enhance this popular event and we look forward to welcoming everyone to our flagship event."

Tickets for *Secret Gardens of the Close & Green Fair* are £10 (under-16s free), and are available at the event. For more details, contact the Friends' office on 01722 555190.

TO MAKE YOU SMILE

A preacher went into the pulpit one Sunday morning wearing a pair of new bifocals. The reading portion of the glasses improved his vision considerably, but the top portion of the glasses didn't work so well. In fact, he was experiencing dizziness every time he looked through them. Finally, he apologised to the congregation. "I hope you will excuse my continually removing my glasses," he said. "You see, when I look down, I can see fine, but when I look at you, it makes me feel sick."



SEPTEMBER

CALENDAR FOR

Wed 1 10.30 am
 Fri 3 10.30 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*
Coffee Morning in hall

TRINITY 14

Sun 5 8.00 am
 10.30 am
 1.30 pm
 6.00 pm

Holy Communion
 Parish Communion
 Wedding of Matthew Bennett
 and Claire Hill
 Evening Prayer

Wed 8 10.30 am
 Thurs 9 5.00 pm
 Fri 10 11.00 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*
 PCC Meeting
 Mums and Toddlers

TRINITY 15

Sun 12 8.00 am
 10.30 am

Holy Communion
 Matins

Wed 15 10.30 am
 Fri 17 10.30 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*
Coffee Morning in hall

HARVEST

Sun 19 8.00 am
 10.30 am

Holy Communion
 Harvest Family Communion

Tues 21 10.00 am
 Wed 22 10.30 am

Craft Group *in hall*
 Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*

Thurs 23 3.30 pm
Fri 24 11.00 am

Magazine collation
Mums and Toddlers

TRINITY 17

Sun 26 8.00 am
 10.30 am
Wed 29 10.30 am

Fri 1 10.30 am

Holy Communion
Matins
Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*

Coffee Morning in hall

TRINITY 18

Sun 3 8.00 am
 10.30 am
 6.00 pm

Holy Communion
Parish Communion
Evening Prayer

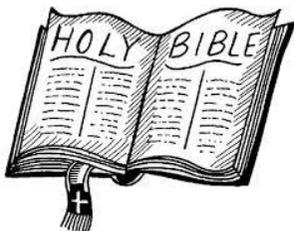
SUMMER FETE

A big thank you to everyone who organised stalls, refreshments, parking, setting up and taking down and generally clearing everything away at the end of a very long day. As well as raising money it is good to see so many people who are willing to support the church. The weather was a little unpredictable, but at least people were able to make it to the fete and we raised a magnificent £5,200. Given the uncertainty raised by the COVID pandemic it was wonderful that the fete was still able to go ahead as planned.



HARVEST SUPPER

We have decided that we will not have the Harvest Supper this year due to continued uncertainty over the COVID pandemic.



SUNDAY READINGS **IN SEPTEMBER**

Sunday 5th September: Trinity 14

OLD TESTAMENT: Proverbs 22.1-9,22-23

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Rich and poor have that in common.

NEW TESTAMENT: James 2. 1-10

The second chapter of James offers a far-reaching treatment of the life of faith. For James faith is what is operative in a person's life. People act on the basis of what they believe to be true.

GOSPEL: Matthew 7.24-end

The wise and foolish builders. Everyone who hears the words of Jesus and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

Sunday 12th September: Trinity 15

OLD TESTAMENT: Proverbs 1.20-33

This is the first time that wisdom, personified as a woman, speaks in the book of Proverbs. Wisdom is available to everyone who will hear, but not everyone will be bothered to listen.

NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 8.27-end

Peter declares his belief that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus speaks to his disciples about his suffering and death.

Sunday 19th September: Harvest

OLD TESTAMENT: Deuteronomy 8.1-10

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised.

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 9.6-end

Generosity encouraged whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will benefit greatly.

GOSPEL: Mark 4.1-9

The parable of the sower and the four sorts of ground that the seed falls into.

Sunday 26th September: Trinity 17

OLD TESTAMENT: Esther 7.1-10,9.20-22

The book of Esther is a story, and these brief passages from chapters 7 and 9 deal only with the climax and the ending, so to understand the passage you really need to read the whole book of Esther.

NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 9.38-end

In this passage Jesus states that whoever is not against us is for us, which is slightly different from other passages in the New Testament. It also notes that we must not put a stumbling block before others.

FLYING BISHOP

The new Bishop wanted a bird's eye view of his new diocese, so he had an idea. He rang his local airfield to charter a flight, and was told that a twin-engine plane would be waiting for him. Arriving at the airfield, the bishop spotted a plane warming up outside a hangar. He jumped in, slammed the door shut, and shouted, "Let's go!"



At once the pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind and took off. Once in the air, the bishop spent several minutes enjoying the views, and

looking for local landmarks. Finally, he instructed the pilot, "Fly down the valley now and make low passes so I can take pictures of some of the best of the old parish churches."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm the new bishop," he replied happily, adjusting his camera, "and I want some good aerial views of my diocese."

The pilot was silent for a moment. Finally he stammered, "So, what you're telling me, is, you're NOT my flight instructor?"

CLIMATE SUNDAY

Sunday 5th September is being designated Climate Sunday, ahead of the UN's climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow during November. How should we approach the challenge of climate change?

We have damaged God's creation: God delights in His creation: 'God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.' (Genesis 1:31). However, we have damaged this world and impacted people, created in His image. The burning of oil or gas and cutting down forests is increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. The global average temperature could increase by 1.5°C in 2030, resulting in significant damage to our planet. Already, increasing temperatures are melting ice caps, raising sea-levels, changing rainfall patterns and creating extreme climate events. It's the 70% of the world's poorest population who are being impacted most!

Hope is found in Jesus: He has an intimate knowledge of the workings of creation. *'For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.'* (Colossians 1:16,17). Our hope for the future lies in what Jesus has done and continues to do in the world. He is the one who sustains creation and will bring everything to completion.

An invitation to respond: Simple everyday actions can help to sustain our planet, including recycling of waste, energy saving and changes in our lifestyle and diet to help the planet. We can fix our eyes on Jesus, as we pray for our world for our world leaders, gathering in Glasgow, asking that they may reach a good agreement for the future of our world.

Canon Paul Hardingham

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

This month we are looking at the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20). It's the story of a farmer who sowed his seed in different type of soils. These represent the different responses of the heart to God's Word (v15-20):

1) The hard heart: 'like seed along the path...as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.' (15). Some people, when they hear the message, get distracted eg social media, work or

relationships. Personal priorities prevent them from hearing God.

2) *The shallow heart: 'like seed sown on rocky places...since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.'* (16,17). These are the people whose heart isn't open to the message. When things become uncomfortable or discouraging, they are ready to quit.

3) *The crowded heart: 'like seed sown among thorns...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.'* (18,19). This soil is most relevant for us today. People crave status, comfort, security and personal desires alongside the things of God. It's a heart that is worried about life getting out of control!

4) *The open heart: 'like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop – some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.'* (20). This represents the open heart that listens and accepts Jesus's word, and is ready to follow Him however difficult things become.

What kind of soil is our heart? Are we hard, shallow, crowded or open? Do we have a heart of faith to follow Jesus in every aspect of our lives?

Canon Paul Hardingham

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES CONTD.

XXI. OF THE AUTHORITY OF GENERAL COUNCILS

GENERAL Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

The 'General Councils' of the church refers to the 'ecumenical councils' which were called, particularly in the early period of the Church, to resolve dispute and to rule definitively about certain aspects of theology and the ordering of the church. There is much dispute about which councils are recognised as 'general councils' and which are not, with the Roman Catholic church recognising a number of councils after the great schism between the East and West churches. To complicate matters, Protestantism has generally recognised four councils, fewer than either the Orthodox or the Roman Churches, they are, in order:
325 The First Council of Nicaea. This is probably the most famous council, and concerned itself with repudiating Arianism, a heresy of Christianity which claimed that Christ was not God, but rather a created thing. This council gives its name to the Nicene Creed.

381 The First Council of Constantinople. This council is primarily known for its revision of the Nicene Creed to include more detail about the Holy Spirit.

431 The Council of Ephesus. This council ruled that it was proper to call the Virgin Mary *Theotokos* – 'God-bearer' and thus repudiated the heresy known as Nestorianism.

451 The Council of Chalcedon. This council continued to explore some of the issues from the previous council, and adopted the creed of Chalcedon which defined the relationship between Christ's humanity and his divinity – the 'hypostatic union'

However, whilst these are recognised as councils that produced truthful doctrine, this is not because they were unable to err, but rather because it is recognised that the conclusions they came to are supported by the bible.

XXII. OF PURGATORY

THE Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping, and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

This article deals with a number of different ‘Romish’ doctrines – not just that of Purgatory. These doctrines are dismissed as having ‘no warranty’ of Scripture – they do not stand upon biblical evidence but instead are inventions. Purgatory is the idea that there is an intermediate state after death and before heaven in which we undergo cleansing of our sins, a doctrine which cannot be found in the bible. Indeed, the cleansing of our sins (Justification) is undertaken not after death, but during our lives as we grow in faith. Pardons are linked to this- there was a system of pardons in place, technically called indulgences, which allowed people to buy less time in Purgatory either by making donations or by undertaking certain actions such as pilgrimages. Finally, the adoration of images and relics, along with the invocation of Saints was all frowned upon.

XXIII. OF MINISTERING IN THE CONGREGATION

IT is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same.

And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

This article is reasonably self-explanatory, concerning, as it does, the practicalities of ensuring that only those who are expressly permitted to do so can preach and minister the sacraments (i.e. undertake the role of a priest)

Those ‘men who have public authority given unto them’ are usually the Bishops, from whom all authority in the parish ultimately flows.

XXIV. OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTANDETH

IT is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have publick Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.

This was, of course, one of the important issues of the reformation – and one of the trigger points of much repression. The Roman Catholic church had, up to the reformation and beyond, conducted almost all of its services in Latin, and

certainly all of its daily offices and ‘Mass’ services. But this was not the original language of the Church – if anything that would have been Greek – and the custom of the early church was, in any case, to preach and teach in the vernacular – we know of a number of early missionaries whose principle fame was to translate the Gospels into different languages and to reach different people.

The Church of England turned away from Latin services, and offered all its services in English – the very first part of the prayer book to be translated by Thomas Cranmer was, as it happens, the litany still found in the BCP.

MOVING ON

We congratulate Tom on his appointment as Rector of Burwash, Burwash Weald and Etchingam in the Diocese of Chichester. Tom doesn't have a date for his licensing yet, but it's likely to be sometime in November. We wish Tom, Sarah and Freddie all the best as they prepare for their move and I'm sure your prayers would be very much appreciated.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Weddings

14th August

Charles Dempster and Alexandra
Symington

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sunday 5 th September	Jette Fletcher
Sunday 12 th September	Grace Martin
Sunday 19 th September	Sue Draper (Harvest)
Sunday 26 th September	Sue Draper



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

The deadline for the October issue of the
Church Magazine is
Friday 17th September