



St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



Parish Room Bookings:

Sabina Harvey

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November 2015

Church enquiries to:

Revd Jonathan Gordon

01442 871547

Light in the Darkness

A few weeks ago there was a prayer vigil in St Mary's. It was very simple and in the space and quiet of the church people came in and lit a candle and offered their own prayers for refugees. In late September a meeting was held at St Peter's in Berkhamsted to discuss the situation and a commitment was made to support financially the work of the aid agencies and to encourage the council to consider offering a safe haven to a number of refugee families. The main impetus for action in the local community has come from the grassroots. A Facebook page: "Berkhamsted for Refugees" has been set up that outlines the imaginative ways that local people have responded to the crisis. There have been collections of clothing and supplies, a scheme to use old laptops to be passed onto refugee families enabling them to contact home. It represents a timely reminder of the power of compassion and concern for people irrespective of faith and background.

I was reading a book (Timothy Radcliffe: What is the Point of Being a Christian?) a few weeks ago in which the author describes how in times of crisis the task of the church is not to give into fatalism. The sense that nothing can change or we have to accept things as they are. We do not have to adjust to the idea that war and poverty are inevitable or that the only response to violent actions is more violence. There are many people of all faith backgrounds who work together to build up a sense of common humanity rather dividing over their differences. Maybe it a sense that love, peace and compassion are simply attractive and it is better to build up rather than tear down. A local response to the refugee situation in the grand scale of things is a small gesture, but in the Bible small is beautiful. It is through small signs that in the words of the book "speak our hope that we open windows for God's transforming grace in the world."

Through the month of November we move closer to Advent and prepare for the Christmas celebrations. The dark evenings and shorter days are rich with symbolism. As a church we celebrate the message of eternity that the light shines in the darkness. Christians hope for eternity, but eternity starts now. My favourite quote from Radcliffe's book expresses this conviction: "Eternity begins whenever we share God's life. It breaks in whenever we overcome hatred with love. Hope means daring to let God's eternity break through the clouds now. To be hopeful is to live in this very present moment in which something can happen." Something always can and does happen. But it not preordained that it has to be bad.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

Meet the Team

Have you ever wondered

who it is that cuts the grass
Or cleans the brass.
Who spends hours
Arranging flowers.

Have you ever wondered
Who is on the PCC
Who it is that makes the tea?
Who makes cakes
and big tray bakes?

Have you ever wondered
Who makes the bells ring,
Or leads the choir to sing
who teaches Sunday school
for children big and small?

If you have ever wondered
Who we are and what we do
Come along and meet the crew
Saturday November 21st 6pm
In the **Parish Room** for wine &
nibbles

And a bit of a natter
Everyone welcome.

Remembrance Sunday,
November 8th: A Service of
Remembrance will be held at
10.00am at St Mary's and the
preacher will be
the Rt. Rev Michael
Beasley, the Bishop
of Hertford.



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This Month in



The *Bucks Herald* of 15th November 1902 contained a short article under the heading of "Unseasonal Fruit". It stated that Mr William Randall, the Sexton of St Mary's church, had picked half-a peck, about 4½ litres, of Victoria plumbs, on the 6th November from a tree in his garden whilst others were still not yet ripe.

At that time, William Randall ran a market garden in a two acre walled garden leased from the Diocese of St Albans behind the village school. It contained three large greenhouses, flower and vegetable beds, and fruit trees. The site of his market garden now forms the school playground / church car park.

William Randall was born in 1850, the son of James Randall, a gardener's assistant and Sexton at St Mary's church who lived at No6 New Road. After leaving school, William followed his father into the gardening profession. In April 1875, William married Rosetta Talbot at St Mary's church. Rosetta was the daughter of a nearby lockkeeper on the Grand Junction Canal. They went on to have seven children.

Over the years, William went on to build up his successful market garden business and was a founder member of the Berkhamsted Co-operative Society.

As well as earning a living from his market garden business, in 1892 William took over his father, James', role as Sexton at St Mary's; James Randall had been the Sexton there for the previous 20 years.

Apart from running his market garden, his work with the Berkhamsted Co-operative Society and his role as Sexton, William also founded and ran the first men's recreation room in Northchurch in the family home in New Road. He was also a keen bellringer.

In 1907, William Randall retired as President of the Berkhamsted Co-operative Society and was presented with an illuminated address, which read:

November 1902

"Mr William Randall, we the members of the Berkhamsted Co-operative Society Limited, desire to present you, on resignation of the Presidency, with a small token of our deep gratitude and affectionate regard. You were amongst the first founders of the Society and have been President for 20 years. Your unselfishness, your fearless uprightness, your patient forbearance have combined to triumph over many difficulties. We know that, come what may, we shall never have a wiser or a better President. We unite in the earnest and sincere prayer that you may enjoy, through all the closing years of life to a long deferred end, the happy knowledge that you, by your advice and example, have bestowed lasting benefit on your fellow men. January 1907"

A few years later William's health began to decline and he died in 1912. He was buried in St Mary's churchyard on 2nd September, his son, John, who had taken over as Sexton, digging his father's grave. John Randall also took over the running of the market garden business. The following year his fellow parishioners and friends raised enough money for a new stained glass window in St Mary's church. The inscription reads, "To the Glory of God and in memory of William Randall, 20 years Sexton of This Church, A Devout Christian and Faithful Friend, this Window is dedicated by his Fellow Parishioners and Friends. AD MCMXIII".

Richard North

The Editor was delighted to receive a charming poem in the post, modestly accompanied by a slip of paper with

'If the Editor thinks suitable, for inclusion in a future Newsletter.'

Re-created below as submitted. Thank you very much, Miss Tiggy. Hedgehog and his production team: his daughter and his grandson, were delighted with it.

Ode To Hedgehog

For many years we've read your scripts
Of tales of days gone by.
Of Northchurch folk and Northchurch ways;
Of how and where and why.

But now we wish you well, Dear Friend,
Be sure to find your nest.
Put down your pen and pause awhile.
Enjoy your well earned rest!

Miss Tiggy

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God the Creator

How do we come to exist and live on a wonderful planet? Some say things just happened magically, but I believe that a Supreme Being – God – started it all. I find myself compelled to believe that the creatures in the woodland (and in the zoo) were all in some way created by God. The deer, rabbits and foxes in Ashridge Park and the trees with their billions of leaves speak of some such Being.

Early in the Bible we read of God creating everything by His WORD of command. That WORD was embodied in a human being – Jesus. We look at him and begin to understand what God's character is like. Jesus is God's WORD seen through a human being who was perfect in his reflection of God, and is called in John, chapter 1: 'the WORD made flesh'. At the same time, he exhibited humans as they were meant by God to be.

The Bible gives a variety of angles on this God and the 'WORD made flesh'. We are not left in total ignorance about God and His Son.

A lifetime is insufficient to absorb all the wonders of God, but we can learn enough to know that God longs for us to make some progress in becoming like Him and His Son, Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit which comes from God to help us make some of this progress. If we read a little of the Bible every day, we will become aware of a divine influence which will give real meaning to our lives, in spite of the many puzzles which may confront us as we read. In the end, when God is 'all in all' (everything in everybody), believers will have a relationship with the Father and the Son which at present we can hardly imagine.

Edgar Wille

The St Mary's Northchurch Flower Guild

I'm sure you all notice there are fresh flowers in the Church every week in two pedestals behind the Altar and in the Lady Chapel. Festivals in the Church year, i.e. Easter, Harvest and Christmas call for a special effort and we decorate the window-sills, the porch and anywhere else we can place flowers AND WE LOVE DOING IT! We can, if required, supply and arrange flowers for weddings, blessings, christenings, funerals and flowers for special days of remembrance, a loves ones' birthday or an anniversary.

The Flower Guild is a small group of ladies (sadly no men, but they would, of course be most welcome!) and we have been "doing" the Church flowers for longer than some of us care to remember. We rely on extra help at busy times and often the people who kindly offer to help find they enjoy it and become one of the team. You do not need experience, as a block of wet "Oasis" is very forgiving and there is always someone around to offer a little help if you are not sure where to start. We always make newcomers very welcome and Fred is great at making tea and coffee with biscuits provided by wife Kathy.

It would be a shame not to have fresh flowers in St Mary's (artificial ones would just not be the same!), but we need new helpers to "grow" (sorry!) into flower arrangers and we also need donations to help provide the flowers each week, and any donations you are able to make are very gratefully received – our donations box is near the choir table.

If you are interested in joining our team, please telephone me, Jo Birch on 01442 864596 or speak to any of the committee members (there is a list of names in the porch).

Denise Rouse

Bells with 'L' Plates

Those readers who live within earshot of the bells will have heard some solo bongs each week, sometimes before the regular Monday practice time, and sometimes late afternoon midweek. Less than 3 months ago, Roger and Simone had never been in a bell tower, never seen the majestic silence of a peal of bells, and hadn't a clue how ringing 'worked'. Now they are on the verge of joining in with the other ringers.

Did it take you 3 months to learn to kick a ball? Or swing a

tennis racquet or a cricket bat? Of course not, you just did it. Bellringing isn't like anything you have ever done before or been something you could watch. (If you've seen bellringing in TV adverts, I can assure you it is not as stupid or dangerous as that!)

Roger and Simone don't have to learn the notes on an instrument or to read music. But they do have to co-ordinate both hands, to listen and to interpret what they hear, and be able to make their bell ring faster or slower – yes, with half a ton on the end of their rope! When they start ringing with the others, that's when their fun really starts.

Valerie Clark, Tower Captain

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Forthcoming Events at the Way Inn

The Festival of Light starts off the Advent season this year in Berkhamsted on Sunday 29th November, starting at 3.30 pm. We invite you to The Way Inn to hear David Russell and Jane Gonzalez talking about the journey leading to Christmas and all that Christmas offers us. Refreshments will be available from 7.00pm each evening and served in the Bookshop area.

- 'Leading the way to Christmas' Tuesday 24th November Talk by David Russell - Minister at Northchurch Baptist Church.
- 'Something Special for Christmas' Tuesday 1st December Talk by Jane Gonzalez - member of St Mary and St Joseph Catholic Church, Boxmoor.

Both talks will start at 7.30pm with refreshments at 7.00pm onwards. It's a chance to come into our shop and see what we offer. Entrance is from the Bookshop door at the back of the Post Office.

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St Mary's Primary School News: October 2015



St Mary's School have had a busy month. Our Year 6 children have been to the fire stations at Hemel Hempstead and St Albans where they learnt about fire safety. The children thoroughly enjoyed their visit where they carried out team building exercises and were given a good insight into how a fire station worked. They felt the anticipation that the firemen could be called to an incident at any time. Thank you to Steve from Red Watch who answered all their questions.

Year 3 visited Berkhamsted Castle where the children had guided tours of the Motte and Bailey castle by local historians. They found out when and why the castle was built and were given a good idea of what it used to look like. The children's favourite part of the trip was pretending to be enemies, Normans and Anglo-Saxons and then shouting at each other from the top of the Motte and beyond the moat. They then walked down Castle Street and Berkhamsted High Street looking at the historical buildings.

Year 2 visited St Albans Cathedral as part of their R.E. topic on 'Signs and Symbols'. They walked around the Cathedral looking for Christian symbols. The children were able to show their learning by discussing what some of the symbols, such as the cross, candle and water represent. Some had the opportunity to dress up to tell the story of Alban, and others got to dress as a Bishop. The guides from the Education Centre commented on how well behaved and engaged the children were.

Our MacMillan Coffee Morning raised a staggering £418.08. Thank you to everyone who helped organise this event and to everyone who attended.

We had our Harvest Service in Church and after speaking with the children we have decided to build a wall of hope in School to help the children in Uganda. The children have each been given a brick to decorate and write prayers or words of hope. All monies raised will go to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal to help disabled children and their families in South West Uganda.

Our Prospective Parent Tour dates are:

Reception Prospective Parent Tours

Monday 9th November at 11.00 a.m.

Wednesday 25th November at 11.00 a.m.

Reception and Nursery Prospective Parent Tour

Friday 8th January at 11.00 a.m.

Nursery Prospective Parent Tours

Tuesday 2nd February at 9.30 a.m.

Thursday 3rd March at 9.30 a.m.

We are still urgently seeking someone to take on the paid position of school crossing patrol. The hours are 8.30–9.00 am and 3.05–3.40 pm term time only. The uniform and training is provided by Herts County Council. If you would like more information, please contact Mrs Young in the School Office on 01442 389040.

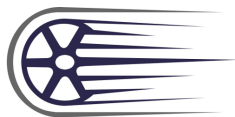
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Sunday Services at St Mary's



1st November

All Saints Day

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist
6.00pm Service of Remembrance

8th November

Remembrance Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Service of Remembrance
6.00pm Evening Prayer

15th November *Second Sunday before Advent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)
6.00pm Evening Prayer

22nd November

Christ the King

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)
6.00pm Evening Prayer

29th November

Advent Sunday

Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)
6.00pm Advent Carol Service

Children's Society Boxes

Thank you to everyone who has a collection box. Please could they be returned before Christmas to Charlotte and Gareth for counting? Boxes can be left on the choir pew in front of the organ or ring 866141 if you would like us to collect the box from you. Many thanks.
Charlotte and Gareth Pritchard

Contacts for the Newsletter

Distribution to Valerie Clark, 862613

Advertising & editorial by email to the Editor
Mrs Jill Hipson cjhipson@bopenworld.com
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Full list in church and at Tesco's*

Collection points: Waitrose, Way Inn & St Mary's Church

Help! Wanted: Volunteer Delivery Person

Can you deliver the Newsletter in Cobb Road and Ridgeway? We can deliver the bundle of Newsletters to your home—no need to come into church to pick it up. If you can help, please ring Valerie Clark on 862613.

The Monday Club

November 2nd "Driving Miss Daisy"
A film. NB Starts at 1.30pm.

November 16th Games.

November 30th Outing to the "World's End" nursery and shopping outlet. Coach departs at 10.00am from Mandelyns.

For more information please contact:

Joan Downhill on 865821 or
Barbara Lloyd on 865059.

**All church enquiries to:
Rev'd Jonathan Gordon
St Mary's Church**

E-mail: revjagordon@googlemail.com
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**Parish Room Bookings:
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Please visit our website www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk