

November 2020

St Mary's News

The magazine of the
Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin
A Registered Charity
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire



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From the Rector November 2020

Dear friends,

Last week found me on holiday, and with a little more time on my hands than is usual. And so I have picked up the recently published "The Rule of St Benedict", by Archbishop Rowan Williams, which is a nice short volume easily digested over a week's holiday.

St Benedict lived in the chaotic aftermath of the collapse of the Roman Empire in western Europe. It is hard to overstate the magnitude of this rupture in European history, as the stability and unity of the Empire, with its cultural and intellectual as well as military and economic resources, fragmented in the face of wave after wave of invasion from Germanic tribes. In the aftermath of this disaster, St Benedict began to draw up a rule of life for monks which would become the most influential in western Christendom, and is still broadly followed in Benedictine religious communities to this day. Guided by this rule, Benedictine houses spread all over western Europe, and became centres of learning and study, of hospitality and care for the sick and poor, of agriculture and the production of food and drink, and of course of prayer. The influence of the rule of St Benedict can be found in the Book of Common Prayer: the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, often known as Matins and Evensong, are a simplification of the ancient Benedictine pattern.

It might be said that the Benedictines are the least glamorous of the great religious orders: compared with the wild asceticism of the Desert Fathers, the simplicity of the Franciscans, the intellectual chops of the Dominicans, and the interiority of the Jesuits, the Benedictine rule might seem a little dull, a little prosaic. But in a way that is the point. St Benedict's rule is all about balance and stability. Eight hours of sleep, eight hours of prayer, eight hours of work (which could combine manual labour, acts of charity, and sacred reading). Everything in proportion.

Whilst there are few of us who could find eight hours to spare for prayer, the steady, solid principles of St Benedict may have something to offer us in our own troubling times. The men and women who gathered under the Benedictine rule through the turbulent years of the Middle Ages, through their patient and apparently rather plodding spirituality, provided stability and continuity, modelled love and care, and preserved traditions of study and learning which might otherwise have been lost, at the same time as spreading the gospel in such remote and turbulent places as our own damp islands. As we enter into the darkest months of the year under the growing shadow of Covid-19, combined with great economic and political uncertainty, we too need to cultivate the Benedictine virtues of patience, balance and stability to see these times through. It may be that thinking purposefully about how we use our time – what we assign to sleep, to work, to study and to prayer – not to mention social media and obsessive following of 24-hour news – could help us to feel more internally settled in these otherwise unsettling times, and perhaps better able to contribute to the wider good of our community.

With my prayers,

Fr Jeremy

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*Monday is the Rector's day off;
Friday is his study day.
He would appreciate being spared calls on these days except
in an emergency.*

Public worship at S. Mary's suspended

Church Opening

Public worship is currently suspended in both of our churches because of the new Covid-19 lockdown. St Mary's will be open for **Private Prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays from 11 am to 5 pm.**

For now we have to content ourselves with online worship. It is important to say that there can be no law against private prayer, bible reading, silence with God, or picking up the phone to check on a friend. I encourage you to do all of these things during lockdown. The Church of England [website](#) has Morning and Evening Prayer set out daily in both contemporary and traditional language, or simply dig out your own favourite prayer book.

Services from St Mary's will be uploaded to our website as before, but now with added organ from Sebastian. Our 9.30am service will usually be recorded and uploaded to Fr Jeremy's youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF0WRLKWtkgWJjZw_d4S6Mw/ .

The Parish Office

The Parish Office will be **closed** for the 4 weeks of the current lockdown, please get in touch with Fr Jeremy directly with any requests or queries.

Calendar and Prayer Intentions for November 2020

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Sunday 1 | All Saints' Day | The Parish and People of God |
| Monday 2 | All Souls' Day | The departed |
| Tuesday 3 | Richard Hooker, Priest, Teacher of the Faith, 1600 | Christian apologists |
| Wednesday 4 | Feria | The fight against Covid-19 |
| Thursday 5 | Feria | Peace |
| Friday 6 | S. Leonard, Hermit, 6th Century | The Prison Service and all prisoners |
| Saturday 7 | S. Willibrord of York, Bishop, Apostle of Frisia, 739 | The Diocese in Europe |
| Sunday 8 | Remembrance Sunday | The Parish and People of God |
| Monday 9 | Margery Kempe, Mystic c.1440 | Prayerfulness |
| Tuesday 10 | S. Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461 | Christian unity |
| Wednesday 11 | S. Martin, Bishop of Tours, 397 | The Armed Forces |
| Thursday 12 | Feria | Our choir and organist |
| Friday 13 | Feria | Those who suffer |
| Saturday 14 | Feria | The departed |
| Sunday 15 | The Second Sunday before Advent | The Parish and People of God |
| Monday 16 | S. Margaret, Queen of Scotland, Philanthropist, 1093 | Henley Municipal Charities |
| Tuesday 17 | S. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200 | The Bishop and Diocese of Lincoln |
| Wednesday 18 | S. Elizabeth of Hungary, Princess of Thuringia, Philanthropist, 1231 | The John Hodges Trust |
| Thursday 19 | S. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680 | Religious Orders |
| Friday 20 | S. Edmund, King of the East Angles, Martyr, 870 | The Bishop and Diocese of S. Edmundsbury and Ipswich |
| Saturday 21 | Feria | Those who mourn |
| Sunday 22 | Christ the King | The Parish and People of God |
| Monday 23 | S. Clement, Bishop of Rome, Martyr, c.100 | The Bishop of Oxford |
| Tuesday 24 | Feria | Children in care |
| Wednesday 25 | S. Catherine of Alexandria, Martyr, 4th Century | The town of Henley-on-Thames |
| Thursday 26 | Feria | Local hospitals |
| Friday 27 | Feria | Those in need |
| Saturday 28 | Feria | Advent Hope |
| Sunday 29 | Advent Sunday | The Parish and People of God |
| Monday 30 | S. Andrew the Apostle | The people of Scotland |

Parish Giving Scheme

For his sermon on 26th July Father Jeremy took a text from Matthew 13 44-52:

Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is old and what is new.

There is a lot that is old that we treasure at St Mary's but we do not set our face against change and that includes new ways of giving. The goodbox is back in use and delivering donations and despite lockdown we have received £367 in donations this year. The Parish Giving Scheme was registered at the beginning of May and a mailshot sent out towards the end of the month. Our first significant report was received mid-July. This provides the following information:

- thirty people have already signed up to this way of giving;
- seventeen of these have agreed to the inflationary increase which will cut down the need to keep revisiting giving. You will be given 30 days notice of an inflationary increase and will be able to let the PGS know if you are unable to meet it.
- Eighteen of the people signed up do not currently give by standing order so this will cut down the amount of envelope giving and make life easier for Richard Fletcher our cashier. It also means that we are receiving support from people still unable to come to church and not giving by standing order.

We receive the monthly donations on 10th of the month and the gift aid on the next day thus giving us a considerable cashflow advantage since we normally receive gift aid for the year the following February.

If you have not already signed up you can do so by ringing 0333 002 1271 and someone from PGS (Parish Giving Scheme) will contact you to help you set a direct debit and gift aid. You may not get through straight away, but you can leave a message and they will get back to you. Our Parish Code is at the bottom of this article. Alternatively I have a copy of the mail shot which I can either scan and email to you or give you in hard copy. Don't be embarrassed to come forward if you have mislaid the original. I do that sort of thing all the time! If you are not coming to church, you can contact me on Henley 578998 or email kathryn.turner266@btinternet.com.

Parish code: 27062717

Gardening November 2020

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGcmLRXQO7gpyqs&cid=4BB3E8FC6A22EF1E&id=4BB3E8FC6A22EF1E%212674&parId=4BB3E8FC6A22EF1E%21141&o=OneUp>

Do not fear failure, but rather fear not trying : Roy T Bennett

Well here we are again. October, mid autumn and as usual a time for reflection and planning for the future. Looking back it has been the same as any gardening year. Some great successes, some great failures but always something to be learned. The runners were the major let down and it wasn't a good year for potatoes either but the onions, tomatoes, leeks and a whole mass of other veg were a great win. I grew thirty different vegetables and forty five different varieties. Herbs count as one. As we didn't have to grow for show dates I spent a lot more time on rotation and spreading things out so we have more later crops to take us through the winter and next spring without having to freeze, dry or pickle as much. This has saved a lot of work and time. I haven't particularly maximised the space through continuous growing as we don't need to and just use the beds once with the odd cash crop. It is still a pleasure to go down the garden to let the chickens out in the morning and pick a couple of tomatoes and

a fresh apple and sit in the orchard and munch before breakfast. Apart from the beds that are still full it is a case of preparing the ground for next year. I am a great believer in looking after the soil and autumn and winter are very important times. It's not a time to let the garden turn into a mud bath and bemoan the damp but a time to work with the seasons and capitalise on the softer soil and abundance of worms in the compost to be spread liberally around the beds. I always give the soil a light dressing of fertilizers along with the horse manure so the weather can wash it down into the lower depths. I am amazed that some gardeners wait until spring, plant their veg or flowers and then put a handful of fertilizer round it. By the time it gets down to the roots it is too late and the plant will have survived on it's own or died through malnutrition. Little and often is the best way to keep crops going. The best thing this year was undoubtedly our wild area and pond. It has been an unkempt dumping ground for old wood, hedge clippings and overgrown brambles for years and it is now clear and fully planted with wild flowers and wildlife habitats. It is something we have been meaning to do for a long time but now it is done and we love it. Any spot or corner can be made useful with a bit of effort and a strong nephew. This is my last contribution for this year but I am making one more video about doing the shows and the tricks of the show bench trade. In the meantime, keep safe, keep happy and pray foreach other.

Dave

Notices

Traidcraft

Our local Traidcraft representative, Pam Thompson, hasn't been able to visit St Mary's for a long time, but we can still support Traidcraft, especially as we look ahead to Christmas. Traidcraft are passionate about trade, social and environmental justice and advocate the importance of organic farming, sustainability, and transparency to the lives of growers and artisans around the world. Saving vanishing traditional skills from extinction, Traidcraft celebrate a world of creativity and culture through quality fair trade products; sustainable fashion, home and garden goods, and handmade, ethical, fair trade gifts and cards. Their groceries include a Great Taste Award winning range of Fairtrade tea, organic coffee, organic chocolate and even a delicious range of vegan chocolate. Please visit www.traidcraftshop.co.uk.

Our Traidcraft representative, Pam Thompson writes:

Hello everybody,

First of all, thank you as always for all your support of Traidcraft, and this is mainly to say that as stalls are impossible at the moment, I am very happy to deliver, in a socially distanced manner, and that as well as food I now have stocks of Christmas cards, advent calendars, and crafts for all your Christmas gift needs even though the shops are shut. You can view the range at www.traidcraftshop.co.uk or I have plenty of catalogues which I can drop off to you, or just give me a ring and I can explain what I have in, as I've got lots of stock from the previous catalogue too.

I realised with a bit of a shock this morning that it's only three weeks to Advent Sunday- hope to see lots of you soon, even if from a slight distance!

Very best wishes,

Pam Thompson

01628 483985 lady.pam@hotmail.co.uk

Food Bank

Although we cannot bring donations to church at this time, please continue to support the Food Bank. The supermarkets have donation points and you can also donate to NOMAD online: www.nomadhenley.co.uk. Thank you.

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen

You can join the midday prayers, Monday to Saturday, live on the Mothers Union Facebook page.

The Children's Society Collection Boxes

We are looking for someone new to take on The Children's Society Collection Boxes. The Society are a joy to work with, in a way that best suits the volunteers. Our thanks go to Inez Hemsley who has kindly been organising the boxes but would now like to stand down. People take a collection box home for a year, which can begin any time. Inez has been collecting the boxes back in during the autumn, so the money can be counted before Christmas. The congregation are good at returning them! If you are interested, please speak to Inez in church or call her on 576242.

Junior Church

St. Mary's offers a thriving Junior Church which, in normal times, meets regularly on Sunday mornings during the 9.30am Sung Eucharist. There is a wide age range, starting at about 3 years, up to 14 years. We were very happy when we were able return to worship after the first lockdown and worked out how Junior Church could work in a Covid safe way. Sadly, the new Covid restrictions imposed on Thursday 5th November mean that we are unable to hold normal church services again, including the Junior Church.

Whilst this is very disappointing news, it does give us an opportunity for reflection and to let you know about all our recent activities.

What have the children been enjoying? Our regular practice is to provide a short lesson, often based on the liturgy for the day, plus activities which give the children the chance for colouring, drawing and other sorts of 'graphics' or wordsearches, crosswords and written responses to questions on the text. The Leading of Junior Church is conducted on a Rota between Stephen Nichols, Sue Hockley and Terry Grouk, all of whom have completed the necessary safeguarding training and DBS record checks.

Over the past few months, we have celebrated:

- Harvest Festival with all the food and flowers, but also thinking about those who don't have plenty in their lives
- The sowing of the seeds parable, linking it to growing of the talents within us
- The Dedication Festival of the Church, thanking the family of people within the Church who make our worship possible
- The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, including the role of the Holy Spirit & the Angels in bringing to Mary the news that she was to have the baby Jesus
- How the Parables of Our Lord teach us how to live and that God sent Jesus to help us – The Forgiving King which explains that Jesus loves and forgives us and wants us to love and forgive others.
- The Story of the King's Son's Wedding Feast which tells us that we are all God's people – 'Many are called, but few are chosen'
- The differences between worldly things and heavenly things, when Jesus was asked whether or not people should pay taxes to Caesar

When the Children draw and colour in pictures or words, they often place these on display on the glass crèche wall at the back of church. We now have an amazing collection of pictures and prayers on view. Occasionally, the Children also help lead the congregation in prayer by contributing to intercessions. Their perspective is always refreshing and greatly enjoyed by the congregation.

Each Junior Church session starts with reading a short prayer, written by the Children. Given that the season of Advent is nearly upon us, the Children have looked again at their prayer and have re-written it, as below

Our Junior Church Prayer

To Almighty God,

Thank you for this Church, Its building, but especially its people.

Thank you for this opportunity to be together with others in peace & harmony and for the friendships which we can enjoy.

Help us concentrate on hearing about and learning about the word of God.

Forgive us when we make any mistakes.

Help us to live our lives in the right direction.

Amen

We had planned for the children to make their own Advent Wreaths on Advent Sunday as in previous years, but as church will now be closed, we are making COVID safe packs for each child to make their wreath at home. We are asking them to send in photos of their completed wreaths, so look out for them in the December issue of the Parish Magazine

New children are always warmly welcomed. Some of the present Junior Church also sing as members of the Junior Choir- Melody Makers. They can also join in the Youth Club on Sunday evenings for ages 7 to 18. Sadly, our Choir and Youth Club are also currently suspended, but we look forward to all these activities being restarted again in the future.

By Stephen Nichols, Sue Hockley and Terry Grouk

Henley in Days Past from Norman Topsom

AN OTTER AT WORK.

On Sunday, several anglers saw a fine otter working near Marsh Lock. The remains of a number of good fish have been found on the banks recently, which pointed to the presence of one or more of these "poachers" in the reach.

A GOOD SWIMMER.

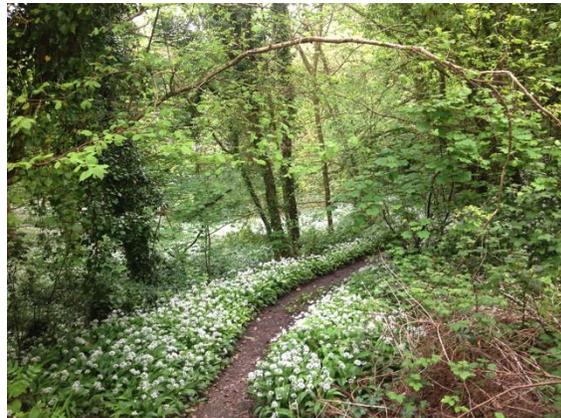
An interesting story of the splendid swimming abilities of a hare is to hand. A few days ago a hare was seen in the river opposite Phyllis Court Club. A lady in a Canadian canoe went to "assist" it and succeeded in getting it aboard. She then landed it on the Club grounds, but it became frightened owing to the presence of visitors and pluckily plunged into the water again. After being rescued a second time and landed, the hare took to the water a third time, and this time was it was got out. Finally it was liberated on the opposite bank and made off at top speed.

News from Liz and Brian Brent

Life in Mumbles during lockdown

Self isolation started for us a week before the national announcement under instruction from our son-in-law, a doctor, who declared that our age made us particularly vulnerablewe were anxious to try and help in some way and heard about the need for sewing masks, scrubs and scrub bags. Brian, still the engineer, serviced the machine, and we turned the dining room into a 'sweat shop'. Neighbours contributed sheets, curtain linings, elastic and anything else that could be turned into something that the NHS needed. We contacted an organisation that was set up in Swansea (and still continues) and now has over 300 volunteers sewing, with well organised distributions of materials and collections of finished products. We are still doing some sewing, but not as frantically as in the spring.

In these early times of lockdown we were unable to access grocery delivery as we had not done so previously here, but two younger neighbours were immediately on the doorstep offering to do things for us and other neighbours offered to share their food deliveries. Our first delivery was 5 weeks into lockdown, from Waitrose (although there is no Waitrose within 40 miles of us) as I had ordered some turkeys from the Henley branch whilst living there. We now get regular deliveries from the Cardiff branch and we have not been to a food shop since March.



We also made good use of the wild garlic (see photo) growing profusely in the woods behind the house, making soup and using it as a substitute for spinach! Brian's daughter was concerned that we were eating 'grass' at the time and so organised a regular fresh vegetable delivery for us which kept us going until deliveries started.

As spring arrived the garden needed attention. By now we were receiving Dave Croton's wonderful videos which inspired us to make room in our garden for vegetable growing. We made raised beds with surplus wood left from the house building and planted broad and runner beans as well as Brian's favourite gem squash. Plants were shared with neighbours and tomatoes, lettuce, leeks and courgettes made an appearance. A grassy border had already been dug up the previous year and plant catalogues were pored over and plants duly bought online to fill this rather large area with summer colour. We have been very pleased with the outcome and we have had a continuous succession of plants in flower there since early spring as well as the vegetables elsewhere.

We planted four fruit trees when we first moved here – apple, pear, plum and fig. They have done well but we have tasted two of the pears only and none of the other fruit..... the local squirrels and foxes seem to think that the fruit is to provide for them!



Soon after the beginning of lockdown we heard that one of the Mumbles Ministry Area churches (there are three in the group) had decided to do virtual services on Youtube. We were asked to join the virtual choir – and after learning how to use the technology which was new to us - have been singing for it ever since! It involves being sent the words and music for hymns and anthems as well as the organ accompaniment online. This we listen to through earphones whilst recording our own voice part onto a phone. Individual voices are then put together and the result is a choir! (although we might not always be totally together!) You can see/hear these services if you wish by looking up

Virtually St Peter's on Youtube or <https://youtu.be/cEAdKANMXTQ>

Most of the services are filmed in St Peter's church but occasionally they use the church we attend – All Saints. A recent service celebrated the Lifeboats Window at All Saints as it is the Lifeboats church and every year has a special Christmas Lifeboats service which is so well attended there has been standing room only. The All Saints service on November 1st was also filmed from our own All Saints church. Liz has had another opportunity to sing virtually with ex members of the Aberystwyth University Madrigal choir of which she was a member whilst a student there a very long time ago. This was more tricky as she had to film herself as well. This is also on Youtube (see link below)

<https://youtu.be/FXyo3RIEY8g>

Liz was very pleased to be asked to read online for a virtual service at the church in Neath, a few miles away, where she grew up and her father had been the minister for his entire ministry.

Our other venture into technology has been the use of Zoom. Our weekly Welsh class moved onto it immediately and this was quickly followed by Brian being asked to do a talk on Oman for his Probus group. As Brian became confident in its use he set up meetings with various family groups. Liz received training in the same way on virtual Exam Appeals but with the change in results this has not been required!

At the end of July Brian celebrated his 80th birthday. There had been plans for family to join us from Australia, Spain and USA, but this was not possible with the pandemic so it was just family living in UK who joined us, but having to stay in an hotel and celebrate in a large gazebo outside.

Liz made a large cake depicting S Africa where Brian was born, Kenya where he grew up, Oman where he lived and worked for 10 years and the UK. The cake lasted through several other small celebratory gatherings of neighbours, other friends and the church choir – all held outside at a social distance. Thankfully we were very fortunate with the weather!



With our love and prayers

Liz and Brian (Brent)

HGVs in Henley

Some of you are very likely already aware of the new campaign to stop HGVs using Henley as a short cut. There are concerns about pollution, damage to the historic bridge, and the safety of other road-users. From a church point-of-view, heavy vehicles passing our ancient church, sometimes at considerable speed, cannot be doing our fragile fabric any good, and the noise is disruptive to our services, especially as we are now making greater use of the Jesus Chapel. Please consider whether you would like to sign the petition: <https://www.change.org/p/oxfordshire-county-council-traffic-regulation-order-to-ban-hgvs-who-short-cut-through-henley>. You might also consider writing to the local MP and our County Councillor.

Would you like to help a young, aspiring athlete studying Elite Sports at Henley?

The Henley College is looking for local families to host 16-18 year old male students taking the Elite Rugby Sports Programme on a term-time basis in the forthcoming academic year. Being a host family is a fantastic way to supplement your income whilst providing a really rewarding experience. You could be supporting a sports star of the future! If you are interested in this opportunity, please email gweb@henleycol.ac.uk or fphe@henleycol.ac.uk for more information.

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