

St. Saviour's Parish Church, Great Moor



The chancel with its stunning carved reredos at St. Peter's Berkhamsted, where Fr. Simon is Curate. Fr. Simon will preach and preside at St. Saviour's on Sunday 22nd October at 10.45 a.m.

Church Magazine - October 2017

Canon Diane writes:

Grief has come to so many people this year. There have been natural deaths and sudden and unexpected death and some loved ones have been murdered by terrorists in the most horrific and cruel way.

Those of our parish who have lost a loved one during the last twelve months will receive a personal invitation to the Memorial Service and the buffet tea afterwards. However, this is a service for anyone who has been bereaved at any time in their lives and there is an open invitation for you to the Afternoon Tea also.

Psalm 23 verse 4 says: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me". These words were written by a shepherd - David lived with suffering, pain and loss, yet he survived with his faith intact because he trusted the Shepherd and Healer of his soul.

We are all faced with the sober reality of death. Sometimes it comes suddenly and unexpectedly. At other times, death comes after a long illness, where the loved ones left behind have had time to come to terms with the inevitable and where the grieving began at the diagnosis. What we all have, in the light of death, is hope. Hope is found in our Good Shepherd - Jesus Christ.

He leads His flock through the dark valleys. We need not fear death; Jesus has assured us that He is right there with us, even in the valley of the shadow of death. He has already been there. He laid down His life for His sheep (that's us!). This familiar verse from the Shepherd's Psalm doesn't say that we will be led through the "valley of death" but the "valley of the shadow of death". The substance of death - the awful dread and fear and uncertainty - has been removed, and only the shadow remains.

God the Father can fully share our sorrow. Sometimes when death comes, people cry out in anger, "Where was God when my loved one died?" The answer - He was where He was when His Son was being killed. . . . and He understands the pain we feel - He's been there. He even accepts our anger. He understands our distress more than anyone ever could. He may feel far away, but He is with us, in every dark valley we go through.

He leads us from despair to renewed confidence in His care. He doesn't simply observe us from a distance; He is actively involved with the details of our lives. He leads us through the valley, because death is not the end of life. There is a life beyond the grave. Our Good Shepherd is preparing a place for us.

Death, for those who believe, is release from the pains, cares and sorrows of this world. In the meantime, while we live on this earth, the Shepherd is our source of strength. His hand guides and sustains us in our darkest hours.

The closing book of the Bible assures us, "the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be our Shepherd; He will lead us to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes." (Rev. 1:17)

The basis of our hope is in the fact that our Shepherd died and is alive. The raising of Christ is the promise of our resurrection, our reason for living and our hope in the midst of death.

When you've loved - and lost - someone

You can shed tears that they are gone
or you can smile because they have lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that they'll come back
or you can open your eyes and see all they've left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see them now
or you can be full of the love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
or you can be happy tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember them and only that they've gone
or you can cherish their memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
or you can do what they'd want:
smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

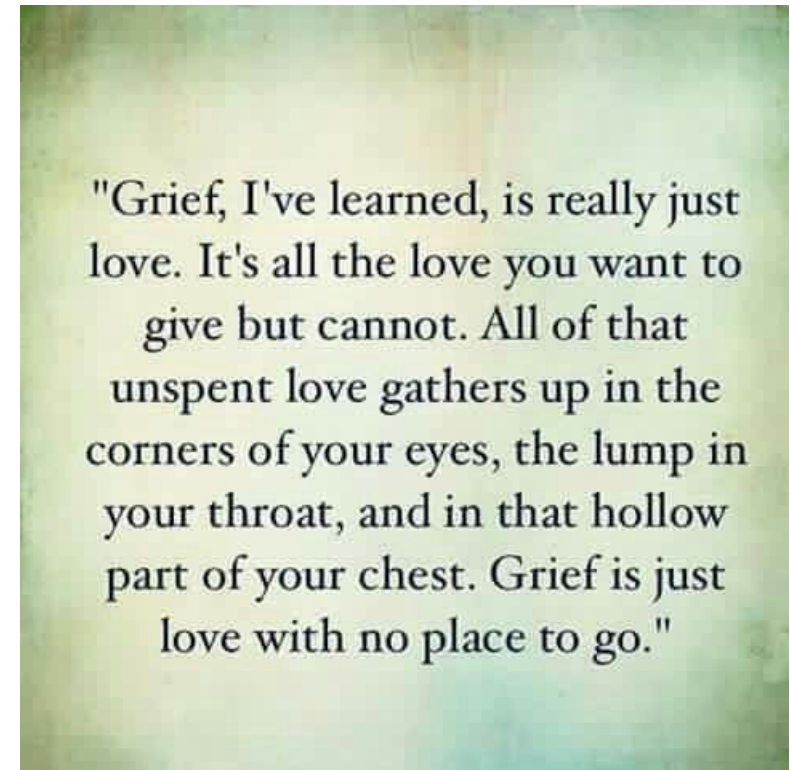


Memorial Service

Sunday 8th October 4 p.m.

followed by Afternoon Tea

This month sees our annual Memorial service, not only for those who have been bereaved in the last 12 months, but for those of us who have lost a loved one at any time in our lives.



Come, light a candle  and remember.

The prescription you can't get at the chemist...

As you get older, you should be given a dog on prescription. That is the unlikely finding of a recent study at Cambridge University and the University of East Anglia.



The researchers found that owning or walking a dog was one of the most effective ways to beat the usual slowing-down in later life. It seems that elderly people who own a dog are active for at least 30 minutes a day more than their counterparts with no dog.

And when it rains or is cold outside? No problem – for the study also found that older people with dogs were far less impacted by weather, and that they went ahead with walking – rain or shine, wet or dry. Overall, their physical activity even on miserable days was 20 per cent higher than those without pets.

The researchers confess: 'We were amazed to find that even on the coldest, wettest and darkest days, dog walkers were more physically active and spent less time sitting than did the non-dog owners on the long, sunny and warm days of summer.'

Thus, the team has suggested that dog ownership or community schemes for dog walking could be prescribed to older people by their GPs.

Last month's Harvest

Foodbank:

I was absolutely overwhelmed at your generosity in giving to the Foodbank - your kindness is becoming legendary. Gary (who collected the food) was also surprised and delighted at how many bags of groceries there were and has written to me asking me to thank you all SO VERY MUCH INDEED.

WaterAid:

And again, your response to the need to provide safe clean water to parts of the world where water is just a muddy ditch, was fantastic. Through your generous giving we were able to send £1,000 to WaterAid. Thank you all so very much indeed.

4th October St. Francis of Assisi – love for the Creation

St Francis (1181 - 1226) is surely one of the most attractive and best-loved of all the saints. But he began by being anything but a saint. Born the son of a wealthy cloth-merchant of Assisi, Francis' youth was spent in fast-living, parties and on fast horses as a leader of the young society of the town. Then he went to the war between Assisi and Perugia, and was taken prisoner for a year.

By the time of his release, Francis had changed. Perhaps his own suffering had awakened him to that of others. In any case, he abandoned warfare and partying and began to help the poor of his area. Then one day a voice which seemed to come from the crucifix in the small, semi-derelict church of Damiano Assisi 'Go and repair my house, which you see is falling down'.

This religious experience was a vital turning point in Francis' life: Jesus Christ became very real and immediate to him. His first action was to begin repairing the church, having sold some of his father's cloth to pay for materials. His father was not amused, in fact he was furious - until Francis renounced his inheritance and even his clothes by his dramatic stripping off in the public square of the town. The Bishop of Assisi provided him with simple garments, and Francis began his new life.

His inspiration was always religious, not social, and the object of his quest was always the Crucified Christ, not Lady Poverty for her own sake. Francis rebuilt San Samiano, and then travelled as a pilgrim. His compassion for the poor and lepers became famous. Soon disciples joined him, and they set up a communal life in simple wattle and daub huts. They went on occasional preaching tours. (Not until later did they become an Order whose theologians won fame in the Universities.)

In 1219 Francis visited the Holy Land, and his illusions about the Crusaders were shattered. He went on to seek out the Sultan, and tried to convert him. Back home, he found his Order was now 5,000 strong, and growing. Francis stepped down as head, but continued to preach and was immensely popular. He died after a prolonged illness at the age of 45, and was canonised in 1228.

Francis' close rapport with the animal creation was well known as was his love of nature conservation.

The 20th century witnessed a widespread revival of interest in Francis. Sadly, some films and books caricatured him as only a sentimental nature-lover or a hippie drop out from society. This ignores the real sternness of his character, and his all-pervasive love of God and identification with Christ's sufferings, which alone make sense of his life.



Christmas Fair

Saturday 18th November
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Donations for the following stalls will be greatly appreciated. Please can you let the Stall-holders have your gifts **well before the day so that items can be priced up**. Many thanks.

Bottles containing anything!	Ashley (MENSSA)
Kiddies Stocking Fillers & Jigsaws	Choir (Sylvia & Aly)
Chocolate and Sweets Tombola	Trisha
Plants	Pauline & Linda
Christmas Corner	Angela
Pet Stall	Sarah
Cakes, Preserves & Christmas Biscuits	Cathy & Sue (MU)
Raffle	Pam, Rena & Karin
Refreshments (Bacon Baps / Hotpot)	Glenys

Thanking you in anticipation of your much valued support.

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**Lester Amann considers St Luke, the beloved Physician & Historian**

We know a good doctor when we meet one! He or she will ask lots of questions and carefully observe how we are feeling. They will look and listen; administer tests and accurately recorded their findings.

Unlike the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark and John, Luke was not a disciple of Jesus. He was trained as a doctor, probably a Gentile and certainly an educated Greek. As Luke didn't know Jesus personally, he needed his interview skills as a physician to speak with people who knew Jesus. He listened to their stories and identified the truth from hearsay.

Luke's Gospel has a very human touch to it and begins with two detailed descriptions of the births of two important babies! He often writes about our Lord's encounters with individuals; men, women, children, the poor and the rich, the sick and the strong. He showed Christ's sympathy for people who were underprivileged, hurting and weak. Luke was a keen observer and wrote both as a careful historian and with the heart of a loving physician.

If we didn't have Luke's Gospel we would lack so much. For example, we wouldn't know about: the angels' and shepherds' visit at the birth of Jesus; the visit by the boy Jesus to the temple; the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son; the encounters of Jesus with Zacchaeus, and the two men on their walk to Emmaus.

Luke's tenderness is revealed with his emphasis on prayer, the Holy Spirit, the role of women in the ministry of Jesus and God's forgiveness of sins. He describes Jesus' compassion for the widow of Nain and our Lord's mercy to the dying thief on the cross.

Luke also wrote the Book of Acts. This is another trusted record about the beginnings of the early Church. Luke was a companion of Paul and was with him on many journeys. Without the Book of Acts, we would know very little about Paul's life and other followers of Christ including Barnabas, Silas and Timothy. Luke was a man not writing about distant historical figures or dramas, but about people he knew first-hand.

Luke wrote his Gospel so that there would be an accurate and an orderly account of the life, ministry and message of Jesus. He carefully researched his material and spoke to eye-witnesses. He listened to those who had been with Jesus and worked alongside leaders and workers of the fledgling church.

A physician identifies our need and helps us to get well. Luke saw our need to have Jesus as our heavenly Physician. Our eternal life and salvation can only be found through faith in Him.



## Why do Christians pray?

Jesus taught His followers to talk to God in the same way that He did – like a child speaks to an adoring father. When they pray, Christians sense that they are in the presence of God. They are seeking to come close to the maker and shaper of the world’s destiny. Christians lay open to God their deepest hope, happiness and anxiety. And they open themselves to God directing and changing them.

Those who take prayer to heart do not see it simply as a series of requests that God will change the world in the way they personally want. Rather it is an active way of participating in the working out of God’s plan for the world. Prayer can involve words, silence, reading, responding to art, or listening.

Christians look for answers to their prayers in a change to their own actions and attitudes, and are overjoyed when the result is something that they recognise to be a miraculous intervention by God.

But despite that, God undoubtedly registers and responds in some way to all kinds of prayer – even the desperate cry in an emergency of someone who has barely even thought about whether He exists.

A conversation with God of this kind takes many forms:

**Praising:** This involves a human being putting himself or herself in a place of appropriate humility in front of the God who is utterly holy, loving and just.

**Thanking:** This is a way of recognising that everything that gives value or joy to life is the gift of our Creator, not merely good fortune.

**Asking:** Prayers of this kind can be personal (such as begging for healing for a sick relative) or immense in scale (such as longing for the end of a war).

**Seeking forgiveness:** This involves confession of something wrong (either personal or as part of a worldwide injustice) and a recognition that God has mercy on those who regret what they have done and seek to change.

**Looking for guidance:** Prayer frequently asks God for direction, or seeks understanding in the face of the mysteries involved in being alive.

## Bishops’ concern over benefits freeze

Bishops are now so concerned about the effect of poverty on children that they are supporting calls for the Government to end the benefits freeze. They recently spoke out after the publication of a report by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) which warned that a combination of rising prices and a freeze on benefits – and even cuts – is leaving many families simply unable to meet the costs of caring for their children.

The report, Cost of a Child in 2017, estimates that families in which both parents work full-time on the National Living Wage are 13 per cent (or £59 per week) short of what they need in order to give their children a minimum living standard. Single parents working full-time on the same wage are 18 per cent short. Couples and single parents not in work face a shortfall of more than 40 per cent.

Voicing her concern, the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt. Rev. Rachel Treweek, said: ‘We know that the first years of life are the most critical for the life chances of every child.’

## Continued concern over gambling machines

Several bishops in the Church of England are thinking about gambling machines this month. That is because this autumn the long-awaited review of how the Government should best regulate gambling machines is due out.

It was in October 2016 that the Government agreed to review how fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) operated. It came amid growing concern that the machine – that allows gamblers to place bets of up to £100 every 20 seconds – was ruining the lives of gambling addicts, and had even led to suicides.

The Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith, said: ‘I’m convinced that this form of betting urgently needs regulating. Clergy and congregations are providing frontline support for a great many vulnerable people who are at risk of gambling-related harm, and whose lives are blighted by the prevalence of FOBTs on our high streets.’

## Homelessness:

### a growing problem

Homelessness could rise by more than a quarter over the next ten years. The number of rough-sleepers could rise by 76 per cent, from 9,100 to 16,000.

Those are the conclusions of a recent study Homelessness Projections: Core homelessness in Great Britain, produced for the charity Crisis. The report also warns that at any one time across Britain in 2016, 160,000 households were experiencing 'core homelessness', from 'sofa-surfing' (over 68,000), to staying in hostels, shelter and refuges (over 42,000) to being placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation (over 19,000) to rough sleeping, staying in a car or tent, or squatting (unknown). Overall, the scale of core homelessness had increased by 33 per cent since 2011.

Now the Homelessness Reduction Bill, passed this year, will require local authorities in England to do more to prevent homelessness. Certainly, the Government is investing £550 million in tackling homelessness by 2020. Meanwhile, the Crisis report predicts that, if welfare cuts were cancelled, homelessness could be reduced by 33 per cent by 2036.

The executive director of the Church Urban Fund, Paul Hackwood, highlighted the work of churches in responding to homelessness, including the Together programme, which provides night shelters and emergency provision.

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'Stories and Musings' by Spencer Rogers

The 'Parable of the Talents' has produced yet another excellent literary work! Spencer's booklet, which can be bought for £5, with all proceeds going to church funds, is available to buy. If you would like a copy, do please ask Spencer, Sylvia or the vicar. Thank you.

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Canon David Winter doesn't mind growing old...

## The Twilight Years



It's Autumn once again, or as the Americans call it, 'the Fall', the time when Summer's leaves die and drop to the ground, leaving the trees bare until Spring. There is something about Autumn that speaks of transition: from sun and holidays to mists and long nights: Keats's 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'. It's not Winter, but it is Winter's herald. When the nights grow longer, we know it's not far away.

I suppose for all those reasons we also often associate Autumn with the twilight of life. Once our working days are done, and we've enjoyed the early years of active retirement, many people then enjoy (and I do mean 'enjoy'!) the twilight years of reflection, memories, and family, without the pressure of needing to 'justify' themselves or 'prove' anything. There's a wonderful verse in Psalm 92 which captures the feeling perfectly: 'In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap'.

So, older readers of these words, Spring-time green and 'full of sap', enjoy your Autumn. And younger readers, don't dread the future arrival of those twilight years. You may find they're a lot more rewarding than you expected.

## Desert Island Discs by Erin Woollaston?



The Vicar asked the following questions:

1. How would you cope as a solitary castaway on a desert island?
2. Choose four pieces of music or hymns you would want to take with you, and one CD and please give a sentence of explanation for each.
3. What luxury item would you choose?

I am not sure I would enjoy being on a desert island. I don't cope very well at all in hot environments – I very easily suffer from heatstroke and burn within 15 minutes in the UK, so goodness knows what would happen to me in tropical climes! However, I would enjoy the peace and some time to be alone with my thoughts.

I found choosing four pieces of music very difficult to write about, not least because I love all sorts of music and don't really have a favourite style or artist. I associate music with memories so I think I would like to take pieces with me that remind me of happy moments in my life.

My first piece of music reminds me of very happy times – it is Elgar's **Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 (Land of Hope and Glory)**. My grandparents were very musical and instilled in me a love of music and theatre from a young age. Every August they would take me (along with my sister and cousins) to Ragley Hall in Warwickshire for the outdoor Last Night of the Proms concert. We would excitedly pack the camping chairs, candles and Nan's delicious picnic and we would arrive early to get a good spot near to the stage! The orchestra always performed this song, and just hearing it now takes me back to those happy times appreciating classical music with my incredible grandparents, whom I miss every single day.

A meaningful hymn for me is **Jerusalem**. I went to a girls' school and we always sang this on the very last day of term before the summer holidays. I'm not sure where this tradition

came from, but the hymn always gives me a feeling of accomplishment, of having achieved a successful year before moving onto new things. It also reminds me of my wedding!

Purely for some easy listening, I would choose **Love is a Verb by John Mayer**. This was actually my first dance at my wedding but it also reminds me of the time when we had just moved into our new house. It is relaxing and smooth, and the sound of Mayer's voice takes me back to that time when we were settling into our first home.

I'm sure my husband Joe will tell you that he is the world's biggest fan of **Bruce Springsteen** – and by extension, I have also grown to like his music! It is hard to choose just one song but I would choose my favourite, **Rosalita**. This music reminds me of the time we went to see Springsteen perform live at the Etihad Stadium. It was the night before Joe was best man at his best friend's wedding, so we set off for North Yorkshire straight after the concert. I think we sang all the way up the M62!

I am a big fan of musical theatre so I would simply have to take something that reminded me of all those fantastic times I have spent in theatres with family and friends. It almost seems impossible to choose just one song! So that would probably be my CD – **a mixture of all my musical theatre favourites** for me to sing along to, from Joseph, Les Mis, Miss Saigon, Phantom of the Opera... to name but a few!

My luxury item would definitely be sun-cream to protect my delicate skin from the tropical rays!

