

What is a churchyard for?

Until moving to Leek Wootton in 2008, I had not been a member of a church with a churchyard and had not really appreciated the joys, and frustrations, that they bring. Whilst they are undoubtedly places for burial and remembrance, there is much other richness to them. As ground where no fertiliser has been used, at least for many years, the diversity of plant and animal life can be great, often including distinctive trees as well as graves and boundary walls that have mosses, fern and lichens.

Cherishing Churchyards week is an initiative of Caring for God's Acre (www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk) and takes place on the first full week of June each year (this year 4th -12th June). Last year, during that week, I set up a trail around the churchyard to help people appreciate the different aspects and to pause, reflect and in some cases do something. People were encouraged to reflect on loved ones, those who had died in war and those who had planted trees and cared for the churchyard in the past. There were also opportunities to use sight, hearing, touch and smell to appreciate birds, trees, flowers, bees, clouds and many other aspects of creation, often with the focus of a bible passage.

In creating the trail, I explored more deeply all aspects of our wonderful churchyard and, as I praised God for that rich space, I prayed that others would experience more of their creator God in following it.

This year, the village Brownies, Beavers and Cubs have built a Bug Hotel. We hope many small creatures will soon take up residence. Also, I will be placing some books and leaflets in the church porch to encourage people to identify what they see.



I will be setting up an updated trail this year and anyone is welcome to come and visit All Saints Churchyard, Leek Wootton (CV35 7QZ) during Cherishing Churchyards Week, or perhaps you could spend some quality time in a churchyard near you.

Nicola Perryman



Prayer Diary

June 2016

Intentional Prayer

“You’re a shadow of your former self!” That’s what people have been saying to me since I lost around three stone last year. I don’t want to be smug – I just discovered the truth of ‘you are what you eat’ and so changing the balance of my diet (rather than just eating less) led to me losing a whole lot of weight and feeling much better and more energetic. What’s more I can see connections between the issues I’ve had with weight-loss and those I’ve had with prayer. I guess the most important of these is intentionality.

I find it easy to be a ‘prayer-snacker’, grabbing a bit of prayer here or there, especially a nice, sweet, easily digestible bit, but often miss out on the healthy, balanced ‘main meals’ of prayer. If prayer is food for the spirit, then we are very much what we pray. This isn’t about being better than anyone else or having earned spiritual bonus points; it’s simply about aspiring to be able to live a healthy spiritual life. There’s no room for smugness in prayer.

So, this month, I’d like to encourage everyone to be more intentional about how and when we pray. If you haven’t a regular pattern of prayer that really works for you, why not experiment either with a set order like the Daily Offices in Common Worship or something with a less rigid structure. For example reading a Bible passage (or news headlines – or, indeed, both) followed by a time of silent meditation might be the thing that brings prayer alive for you. There is a whole wealth of material in Christian book shops and online. It’s a question of finding something that encourages you to come back for more each day, and that is likely to be different for each individual. To be honest, I don’t think the form matters as much as the desire to set apart some quality time each day for God rather than squeezing it in when an opportunity arises. Let’s – each one of us – think about how and when we pray this June.

Archdeacon John Green



Focus on Kenilworth Deanery

In recent weeks I, together with the Deanery Treasurer, Chris Powell have had the privilege of talking to all our parishes about finance. Initially these discussions were held so that Mark Bratton and I might have better understanding of how challenging the 2017 Kenilworth Deanery share might be for our parishes.

Whilst an overall increase in the 2017 Deanery share of around 2% would appear to be achievable by most parishes, anything beyond this level will put severe pressure, particularly the smaller rural parishes who are already struggling to meet their commitments at the current level. In the case of Benefices with more than one church, their financial position is especially acute and probably unsustainable with the current model in the longer term.

But apart from the impact of the Deanery share, it was apparent that no parish was without it's difficulties. Most of which affected their financial position in one way or another.

The three larger parishes are St John, Kenilworth, St Nicholas, Kenilworth and Berkswell. St John is currently going through a period of reordering their church layout and is under some pressure financially, both to raise the funds for this project and to fund the extensive day to day activities of the church. St Nicholas is awaiting the appointment of a new incumbent, and the length of the interregnum has affected their finances of the church during 2015, and continues to do so in 2016. Whilst Berkswell have adequate reserves which generate income for the church, their "giving" remains insufficient to cover the increase of the incumbents and the day to day expenditure of the parish.

So what of the smaller parishes? Stoneleigh have a limited number of worshippers, and their reserves will shortly run out. Leek Wooton has some reserves, but there is already a decline in the number of committed givers. Meriden requires an increase in regular worshippers and voluntary giving if the church is to fund an incumbent. And finally, the five churches of the Hatton Benefice only cover 68% of the incumbent's costs at the moment. There are complex issues of sustainability in rural areas where church buildings are located at some distance from centres of population. Whilst finance is not everything, without sufficient funding all other aspects of ministry including mission are difficult if not impossible to achieve. I believe that it is incumbent upon all of us to consider what action is required to restore the financial strength of the Deanery. But first, let us pray about it.

Tom Walls – Lay Chair



Wait for the Lord

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!
(Psalm 27: 14)

Most of us probably do a lot of waiting in everyday life. We wait on traffic, the mail, medical appointments, public transport etc. It can be testing. We may even dread the times we have to spend waiting. When it comes to our relationship with God however, waiting is clearly essential. There are many calls in the Bible to wait faithfully on the Lord.

Yet it doesn't seem easy. I know that I struggle, for most of the reasons that we probably dislike waiting in everyday life anyway. The felt need for 'answers' and control, uncertainty, dependence on our own understanding and wisdom, discomfort, preference for our own expectations and so on.

As a young man I sensed a call from God to be a minister in the church. Although encouraged by others to explore this, it didn't come to anything at the time. I enjoyed a long and fulfilling career in social work and education, but over the years a nagging puzzlement about this apparently abortive call all those years ago kept me asking God "why?"

When in middle age I sensed the same call for ministry this time it led to my becoming a Reader. Subsequently I was able to complete a Master's Degree in Theology and Ministry as a retiree. All of this has opened vistas that were closed to me when younger. I have begun to glimpse in retrospect some of what it means to wait on God. I can also appreciate now that much of my past professional experience was effectively a preparation for Reader ministry now. God has been at work all along.

All prayer involves waiting on God. I find the daily practice of Contemplative Prayer a great help. Spending regular times still and silent before God *is* simply waiting on God, helping to infuse everyday life with a contemplative readiness to wait on Him. But of course *all prayer, whatever method, involves waiting*, resting in God's timing and trusting in Him not in one's own understanding, watching with expectancy whilst being prepared for unexpected answers and directions.

Perhaps the prophet Micah's confidence sums it up: *"But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me". (Micah 7:7)*

Peter Wright. Reader, St. Laurence Church Meriden



Fri 24

The Birth of
John the
Baptist

All Saints Leek Wootton. Clergy: Jim Perryman. Reader: Audrey Rowberry. We give thanks for the many families who came in May for Teddy Bear Parachuting from the Tower. June sees church and village together in celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday: please join us in praying that these links with the wider community will lead to open hearts for God.

Sat 25

June is SANDS awareness month. The stillbirth and neonatal charity (SANDS) wants to offer care not only for people who have lost babies after they were born, but for women who have miscarried too. We pray for God's comfort and hope for all families who are affected by the loss of a baby.

Sun 26

Fifth Sunday
after Trinity

Meriden and Packington, St Laurence. Clergy: Lynda Lilley. Reader: Peter Wright. We thank God for His renewal, refreshment and revival of the church community. We pray for the parish and ask God for His help to make His name known to all peoples.

Mon 27

St Nicholas' Primary School, Kenilworth. Headteacher: Louise Mohacsi. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
*Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 444

Tue 28

We pray for the finance and administration department of the diocese. We pray for the operations department of the diocese and for the DAC. We give thanks for each of these members of staff.
*Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c.200

Wed 29

Peter and Paul,
Apostles

We pray for the deacon candidates, who will be interviewed by Bishop John this morning, ahead of their ordination on Sunday. We also pray for the five deacon and eleven priest candidates who will begin their pre-ordination retreat this afternoon; that it will be a time of blessing and encouragement.

Thu 30

Stoneleigh and Ashow. Clergy: Sharon Goble. Reader: Audrey Rowberry. We thank God for those committed to praying regularly. Please pray for the Holiday Club from 1 - 7 August to engage better with young people and families and for both parishes finding fresh ways to serve their communities.

Cycle of Prayer - June 2016

With a focus on parishes and schools in Kenilworth Deanery

Wed 1

Ferncumbe Primary School, Hatton. Headteacher: Sally Morris. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
*Justin, Martyr at Rome, c.165

Thu 2

Kenilworth St John. Clergy: Andrew Attwood, John Armstrong. Readers: Anthony Manning, Val Whiteman, Phil Sowards, Ken Pollard. Please pray for us as we explore a new approach to discipleship by a move to Mission-Shaped Communities. Also pray for our growing Staff team (including a new Curate, Gail Philip) - that we would work well together.

Fri 3

We pray for all the young people in the Cathedral community, particularly the choristers, as they face exams but maintain their faithful commitment to helping lead worship.
*The Martyrs of Uganda, 1886 and 1978

Sat 4

Berkswell St John the Baptist. Clergy: Mark Bratton. Readers: Steve Bell, Richard Hollingdale. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Petroc, Abbot of Padstow, 6th century

Sun 5

Second Sunday
after Trinity

On World Environment Day we pray that God would help us to remember that the environment is home to all life, and that we must take up responsibility to ensure that all life is respected.
*Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyr, 754

Mon 6

The Ferncumbe Group. Clergy: Keith and Susan Mobberley. Readers: Kemble Everitt, Carol Tilley. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Ini Kopuria, Founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, 1945

Tue 7

We thank God for the Cathedral Chaplains and their faithful work. We pray for them as they engage with, and minister to, visitors to both the new Cathedral and the ruins of the old Cathedral.
We pray for the Diocesan Trustees who meet this afternoon.

Wed 8

We pray as the interviews conclude today for the post of Diocesan Secretary; for the candidates and those on the interview panel. We pray for guidance, wisdom and peace for all those involved in the process. We pray for the Parsonages Committee which meets this afternoon.
*Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Nonjuror, Hymn Writer, 1711

Thu 9

We pray for Bishop Christopher today as he addresses a Head Teachers' Conference for the Diocese of Winchester. We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).
*Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597
*Ephrem of Syria, Deacon, Hymn Writer, Teacher of the Faith, 373

Fri 10

Kenilworth St Nicholas and St Barnabas. Clergy: Interregnum. Readers: Anne Werrell, Heather Alford, Chris Haines. We thank God for the ministry of Revd. James Warren, our Temporary Associate Priest for 6 months following early retirement of Revd. Canon Richard Awre. Please pray for us to succeed very soon in recruiting a new vicar full of the Holy Spirit.

Sat 11

Barnabas the
Apostle

All Saints Primary School, Leek Wootton. Headteacher: Sue Patterson. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors. We pray for the Deanery Representatives at the Support Fund Meeting today.

Sun 12

Third Sunday
after Trinity

During national carers week many charities gather together to recognise the contribution carers make to local communities, lobby MPs and offer support and encouragement to carers. We pray for all those who give their time to care for others and ask for God's blessing on young people and children who are carers.

Mon 13

We pray for the staff who work to support Bishop Christopher and Bishop John and give thanks for them. We pray today for Bishop John as he takes part in an interfaith visit to Nuneaton. We thank God for this opportunity for dialogue and we pray for understanding, good communication and a willingness to work together.

Tue 14

Berkswell Primary School. Headteacher: Tracy Drew. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
*Richard Baxter, Puritan Divine, 1691

Wed 15

We pray for Bishop Christopher as he attends the House of Bishops' Standing Committee, and we pray for wisdom for the whole committee as they set the agendas for meetings of the House, represent the House in discussions with other denominations and deal with other matters on behalf of the House.
*Evelyn Underhill, Spiritual Writer, 1941

Thu 16

We pray for Richard Cooke, DDO and Principal of the Diocesan Training Partnership and for all members of the DTP team. We pray for the Bishop's Core and Extended Staff teams which meet today.
*Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253
*Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Philosopher, 1752

Fri 17

Burton Green Primary School. Headteacher: Sue Patterson. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
*Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Social Reformers, 1913 and 1936

Sat 18

We pray for Bishop John this morning as he attends a breakfast with, and leads a Bible study for, Self-Supporting Ministers in the diocese. We thank God for all our Self-Supporting Ministers in the diocese; for their many different roles and the vital ministries they offer.
*Bernard Mizeki, Apostle of the MaShona, Martyr, 1896

Sun 19

Fourth Sunday
after Trinity

Meriden Primary School. Headteacher: Lucy Winkler. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
*Sundar Singh of India, Sadhu (holy man), Evangelist, Teacher of the Faith

Mon 20

At the start of Refugee Week, we pray for all those who are separated from their loved ones and homeland; those who have fled persecution and are searching for peace and security. We pray, too, for the vital work of the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, and that we would find ways of supporting and welcoming refugees into our communities.

Tue 21

We pray for the Diocesan Board of Education, giving thanks for the director, Linda Wainscot and members of the whole team. We pray for members of the DBE and Multi-Academy Trust teams as they attend a conference run by The National Education Office this week. We pray for Diocesan Synod which meets today.

Wed 22

We thank God for all our clergy who have retired from regular ministry, but who continue to minister and serve in our parishes. We pray particularly for the retired clergy who will gather this evening for a garden party at Bishop's House; that all who attend would feel valued and celebrated.
*Alban, first Martyr of Britain, c.250

Thu 23

We pray for Coventry Cathedral's "Roots in Reconciliation" foundation course, taking place today and tomorrow. We pray that, as the participants explore the central themes of reconciliation, they would be able to reflect on how to adapt them for their community context.
*Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely, c.678