

Reflecting on Shipston Deanery



In April I was privileged to have a profound spiritual experience. It was a long time coming and had long been a desire, but in April I finally had some wonderful views of a kingfisher. It was a glorious moment, but it wasn't only the kingfisher (which has been spoken of as a sign of the Spirit) that I found so inspiring, but the people in the hide with me. There was a strong sense of expectation, enthusiasm, and patience within the hide, and the hope I had was that we could be like that before church worship!

Shipston Deanery is probably the most rural deanery, and one of its joys is the sheer range of wildlife. Within the deanery I have seen red kites, foxes, stoats, badgers, herons, kestrels, (and so many others) and now a glimpse of a kingfisher! It is a lovely area to live and work in, certainly, but sometimes is criticised as being a 'bubble' and 'unreal.' I disagree. With agriculture, (which has many challenges) and with various issues and problems that face rural communities (probably the same as urban but often hidden) there are possibilities for the Gospel in its fullness.

Part of my journey was to take more notice of some of the Bible that is often skipped over. Psalm 148 speaks about how all creation, not even just birds and animals, worship God, and Colossians 1 speaks about how Christ was the creator and reconciler of "all things," and I know, in my mind, I used to interpret that to mean "some people!"

Perhaps the rural churches, as well as others, are to be prophetic in terms of our engagement in the natural world, and creation care. There are many challenges to our natural world – climate change, habitat destruction, decrease in many populations, and many more. These are not simply 'material' issues for a secular world while the church focuses on 'spiritual issues.' If we believe in God who is creator and saviour, then engagement and action isn't just desirable but essential.

Revd Chris Goble



Prayer Diary

November 2016

'And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him' (Col 3:17)

'...giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Eph 5:20)



Words which are not said often enough? So let me start by saying 'THANK YOU!' to those of you who are now reading this Prayer Diary and who faithfully pray for our Diocese. You are unsung heroes and heroines and your faithfulness in prayer is much appreciated!

It struck me in thinking about this month's introduction to the prayer diary just how much we in an affluent and relatively safe part of the world take for granted. I recall a visitor from a very poor area overseas remarking on how much pet food was on supermarket shelves in this country, when people in his part of the world were dying of starvation. If we have money in the bank, money in our wallet, and spare change somewhere around the house, we are among the richest 8% of the world's population. If we have a car, that puts us in the richest 7%. We can take too much for granted.

I had the privilege of being beside a parishioner dying of cancer in his bed, when he turned to look out of the window, and said, 'Isn't God good, Morris? Just look at the birds he has sent me to look at out of the window.' I had to turn my head and cry. This man in the utmost pain could still somehow thank God for the little pleasures of his life. I hope I can be so thankful when my time comes like that!

So, this month, let's try to give God and others more thanks than usual, and not take him, our situation, or others, for granted!



Morris Rodham
Archdeacon Missioner

Church Links



Living in a rural parish with a population of around 80 we can seem to be living in an idyllic bubble, not always realising the struggles that can face our brothers and sisters in the inner city and urban areas of our Diocese.

Here in Sutton-under-Brailes we are very privileged to have had a link with St. Catherine's Stoke Aldermoor since 2000.

The two congregations walk down to the lake. When we were planning a Christmas Tree Festival at Sutton (which told the story of our faith from Creation through to the Cross and Resurrection) we also wanted to show that we were not an inward looking church. All the money raised was to go to another parish in our Diocese and so our link with St. Catherine's was born.

St. Catherine's congregation visit us about twice a year. Especially wonderful is when they come over for lunch on Rogation Sunday and join the afternoon service which is conducted around the village stopping at an orchard, a stream and a farm where the farmer explains about his animals and crops.

One of St. Catherine's churchwardens recently said how wonderful it was for their young people to visit an ancient village church. She loved seeing the joy on their faces as they explored the village and ran and played on our village green.

We enjoy worshipping at St Catherine's and it was very special for two of us to be there at the Revd Buff Forbes Stone's licensing. We look forward to continuing the link between our two parishes.

Another wonderful connection from this link is that we got to know the Revd Cleophas Lunga their former vicar. When he returned to Zimbabwe to be Bishop of Matabeleland, Sutton helped to collect toys for his wife Soneni to run a Toy Library and we still continue to support their work. (I even took my first long haul flight to visit Matabeleland!)

So our link with St. Catherine's has led us to a link with Zimbabwe. We never know where God is leading us!

**Elisabeth Ashworth,
Joint Lay Chair of Shipston Deanery**

Retiring Reminisces

I arrived in the Deanery of Shipston in 1979, being inducted as Vicar of Brailes and Rector of Sutton under Brailes on February 28th. I had been curate of Stockton, but after a chat with the then Archdeacon of Warwick the previous October, a visit to the retiring incumbent and an hour or two with the churchwardens, I was offered the living within the month – simple!



Opening the fete in 1979.

Some of the older parishioners were wary of the long haired, bearded, guitar playing, motorbike riding 28 year old – but they soon realised that under the hairy exterior was a traditional and, I'm told, likeable chap. Numbers at the 11am services tripled in 12 months.

There were still many who remembered life before the war, when everybody knew everybody else. It seems incredible that the entire digital revolution has happened on my watch. In 1979, there were no domestic computers, no photocopiers, no answerphones, no mobiles, no satellite TV, and for some families a walk to the phone box to make a call.

The Deanery has altered. We now have 5 stipendiary and 4HD priests, down from 9 and 2. Sadly, 3 primary schools have closed – along with shops and other village amenities. Numbers at regular services in many churches have gone down significantly, but probably not to the same extent as urban areas. Contrasts between parishes are not so much "high or low" but "trad or mod." Many clergy have come and gone. The varied pressures of a multi parish benefice have proved too demanding for some. However, a living Christian faith is still clearly seen and our sturdy old churches are beacons of Christian faith, hope and love in our troubled times.

I have strived to serve God and his church; a church open to all and serving all parishioners, whether churchgoers or not, in times of both sorrow and of joy. I feel privileged to have worked in my parishes, sharing "the trivial round, the common task... a road to bring us daily nearer God."

May God bless us all.

Revd Nicholas Morgan

Thu 24 Tomorrow is 'Buy Nothing Day.' The developed countries take up only 20% of the earth - yet we use up over 80% of the planet's natural resources. This leads to environmental damage and an unfair wealth distribution. Tomorrow you need do just one thing: buy nothing! Please pray for this initiative.

Fri 25 Tomorrow a Confirmation Service will take place at Coventry Cathedral. We pray for the candidates being confirmed. Please pray that their faith will be broadened and deepened as they go out in the power of the Spirit.
*Catherine of Alexandria, Martyr, 4th century
*Isaac Watts, Hymn Writer, 1748

Sat 26 Brailes & Sutton, with Tysoe, Oxhill & Whatcote. Clergy: Nicholas Morgan, Martin Leaton, Jill Tucker, George Warner & Tom Moffatt. We give thanks for the ministry of Bill Rolfe and the ongoing life of the parishes. Please pray for a speedy appointment of a new incumbent after Nicholas' retirement in October. May the right person be called.

Sun 27 As Advent begins we pray: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay; give new courage to your people, who trust in your love. By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom on earth as in heaven, where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.
First Sunday of Advent

Mon 28 We thank God for all those who serve as clergy in the diocese. We pray for strength and energy, especially during this busy term. We remember those who are struggling in ministry and ask for God's blessing on them. We pray for Bishop Christopher as he delivers a lecture at the University of Warwick today as part of their Excellence in Education lecture series.

Tue 29 We pray for the annual meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops in the West Midlands and for Bishop Christopher and Bishop John who will be attending.
*Day of Intercession and Thanksgiving for the Missionary Work of the Church

Wed 30 On St Andrew's Day we pray for all those who like Andrew seek to be the fishers of men. We pray for missionary societies and all who respond to serve the church worldwide.
Andrew the Apostle
We pray for the Diocesan Finance Group which meets this morning.

Cycle of Prayer - November 2016

With a focus on parishes and schools in Shipston Deanery

Tue 1 We pray for Coventry East Deanery, and for Bishop Christopher as he spends the day with the clergy and laity there.
All Saints' Day
We also pray for God's protection on all those who will be enjoying bonfires and fireworks this week.

Wed 2 Today is National Stress Awareness Day, which aims to celebrate helping people beat stress. The theme this year is "Workforce Wellness - Your Prime Investment." We pray for all who are facing stress at work or in other environments.
*Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)

Thu 3 We thank God for those who serve on committees and working groups in parishes, deaneries and in the diocese.
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff team who meet today.
*Richard Hooker, Priest, Anglican Apologist, Teacher of the Faith, 1600
*Martin of Porres, Friar, 1639

Fri 4 Ilmington, Tredington and neighbouring parishes. Clergy: Chris Goble, Sarah Edmonds. Readers: Malcolm Davies, Anthony Nicholl, Roz Wakefield. We thank God for our relationship with schools, and our developing sense of being united. We pray for the future united vision for the benefice and the continual development of our spirituality and prayer.

Sat 5 Today the Project Bonhoeffer Trust will be hosting a conference on the theme of 'Faith and Frontiers' at Coventry Cathedral. We pray for the organisers, speakers and attendees of the conference.
We pray for Diocesan Synod which meets today.

Sun 6 Brailes Primary School. Headteacher: Heather Childs. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.
3rd Sunday before Advent
*Leonard, Hermit, 6th century
*William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1944

Mon 7 Stourdene Benefice. Clergy: John Horton. We give thanks for our monthly "Family Get Together" for young families and we pray for plans to start up a youth club in the new year and also the appointment of a new Rector for the Benefice.
*Willibrord of York, Bishop, Apostle of Frisia, 739

Tue 8

Ettington Primary School. Headteacher: D Johnson. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

We pray for the Bishop's Study Day which takes place today.

*The Saints and Martyrs of England

Wed 9

We pray for Linda Wainscot and all those who work with her at the Diocesan Board of Education as the annual DBE Headteachers Conference takes place today. We give thanks to God for all that the DBE do supporting, managing, caring for and inspiring schools in the diocese.

*Margery Kempe, Mystic, c.1440

Thu 10

Today Bishop Christopher will be conducting a service from the War Memorial Park during a BBC radio broadcast in memory of a Coventry soldier who died in the Battle of the Somme. In this season of remembrance we give thanks for those who serve or have served in the armed forces.

*Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461

Fri 11

We pray for Sarah Hills, Coventry Cathedral's Canon for Reconciliation Ministry, as she travels to Germany today for the German Community of the Cross of Nails board meeting.

*Martin, Bishop of Tours, c.397

Sat 12

South Warwickshire Seven. Clergy: Stuart Allen, Ben Dyson, Hugh Williams. Readers: Lesley Gubbins, Clare Wells, Sarah Jones, Elaine Hobday. We give thanks to God for the appointment of our new Pioneer Minister, the Rev Ben Dyson in October. Pray for Ben as he settles in and seeks new ways to share the gospel in our rural villages, especially amongst 20s-30s.

Sun 13

2nd Sunday
before Advent

"O God of truth and justice, we hold before you those men and women who have died in active service. As we honour their courage and cherish their memory, may we put our faith in your future; for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. Amen."

*Charles Simeon, Priest, Evangelical Divine, 1836

Mon 14

This is Anti-Bullying Week. The theme this year is 'Power for Good.' The aim is to help children and young people understand the ways in which they are powerful. We pray for all who are being bullied, and for initiatives that aim to prevent it.

*Samuel Seabury, first Anglican Bishop in North America, 1796

Tue 15

We pray for all those attending Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship and Mission modules. We thank God for those who are organising and facilitating these courses and pray that they would provide environments for rich learning and growth.

We pray for the Glebe Committee which meets this afternoon.

Wed 16

Ilmington Primary School. Headteacher: Carol Ryninks. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

*Margaret, Queen of Scotland, Philanthropist, Reformer of the Church, 1093

*Edmund Rich of Abingdon, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1240

Thu 17

November is Lung Cancer Awareness month. Pray for all who have been diagnosed, and all who are undergoing chemotherapy. Pray also for members of their families who surround and support them.

We pray for the Investment Sub-Committee which meets today.

*Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200

Fri 18

This is Alcohol Awareness Week. Issues with alcohol seem to be increasing, with more and more school children regularly drinking alcohol before they've reached adulthood. We pray for those whose lives are being damaged by drink, and for the impact this has on family and friends.

*Elizabeth of Hungary, Princess of Thuringia, Philanthropist, 1231

Sat 19

Newbold and Tredington Primary School. Headteacher: Sam Welsby. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

*Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680

*Mechtild, Béguine of Magdeburg, Mystic, 1280

Sun 20

Christ the King

We praise God for Christ the King! We reflect on Isaac Watt's hymn 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross.' We pray that we might be renewed in our love to God. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

*Edmund, King of the East Angles, Martyr, 870

*Priscilla Lydia Sellon, a Restorer of the Religious Life, 1876

Mon 21

Shipston on Stour with Tidmington, Honington and Idlicote. Clergy: Andrew Coleby, Jill Tucker, and Sarah Bourne. Reader: Alison Tomkinson. We thank God for the success of the ecumenical Holiday Club (for children) and Holiday at Home (for the over 60s) and our work in schools. Please pray for the benefice as Andrew moves on and there is a vacancy from January.

Tue 22

We pray for Bishop Christopher who is on duty at the House of Lords this week.

We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.

*Cecilia, Martyr at Rome, c.230

Wed 23

Tysoe Primary School. Headteacher: Jenny Coates. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

*Clement, Bishop of Rome, Martyr, c.100