

Dear friends,

This is turning out to be a bumper year for fruit of all kinds. Our Quince tree, after a barren year, this year is laden, so we are trying out all kinds of Quince recipes to get through them, as well as giving them away to friends and neighbours. Plums, apples, pears, and our favourite – figs are abundant so we are not skimping on our five a day.

The worship at St. Peter's was wonderful with so many positive comments from all directions and I hope this was the same at All Saints but unfortunately at St. Michael's Otterton we had a visit from a disruptive presence who made everyone very uneasy. We have history with this person both at Otterton and St. Peter's. His name is "Damon" I think but truthfully it would be better not to engage with him at all as his mission in life seems to be to disrupt, demean and belittle. He is obviously a very troubled soul so please Pray for him.

## Sunday 10th September – Trinity 14 – Proper 18

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's and I will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively. Then I will return to St. Peter's in the evening to preside at Choral Evensong at 6pm.

**Ezekiel 33: 7-11.** A "sentinel" is the NRSV's attempt at a gender-neutral translation of "watchman" and a watchman is someone who mans the battlements and warns people of any trouble coming so they can prepare for it. This is a down-to-earth understanding of the role of a prophet. This piece conveys the fact that while God does indeed hate wickedness, he takes no delight in their destruction but wants to warn them and give them a chance to turn around their behaviour.

**Romans 13: 8-14.** Paul re-iterates the central teaching of Jesus that love is the fulfilling of the law. Also, because the absolute end, "the day of the Lord" was drawing nearer, in Paul's theology, Christians should use that as a spur to righteous living and turn our backs on wickedness.

**Matthew 18: 15-20.** Ecclesial unity has a very high priority because as stressed elsewhere we are "the body of Christ." There is the process of incremental escalation of disputes designed to keep them to a bare minimum, but the final arbiters are the church community itself and anything the whole community decides will be blessed in heaven. The value of intercessory prayer is amplified by a unified and cohesive church and the presence of God, in the form of the risen Jesus will be there.

**Recently** I commemorated 20 years of ordination but Canon Mike Williams, knocks that milestone into a cocked hat by celebrating 30 years of ordained ministry. Congratulations Mike and his nearest Sunday to that landmark is on the 1st October which this year is also our Harvest festival. Mike is presiding at St. Peter's that Sunday, and he will be at our Harvest Lunch that day in St. Peter's, for which Louise and I also look forward to joining you.

**The Harvest Lunch** on the 1st October at St. Peter's at 12.15/12.30 is buffet style and tickets are £10 and a bar will also be available. Tickets available from Christine Channon or Fran.

**Home Group taster session** on Thursday 21st September from 3pm – 4.30pm at Margaret and Peter Revell's house - no.7, Exmouth road, Budleigh Salterton. Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits when locations and times and frequencies will be discussed. All welcome – they will be ecumenical and will be using the book called “visions of Grace” by William Sykes, former chaplain of University college Oxford.

## **Thought for the day.**

After a miserable August weather-wise, things may have taken a turn with the sun shining and that puts a smile on everybody's face. To fully appreciate the sunshine and warm days one also has to experience the misery of grey leaden skies and drizzle. That is also true of life in general. To fully embrace and appreciate the warmth of family relationships, one is minded to compare those times to when they have sometimes gone sour. Once you have something to compare it to and you know how bad things can get, one appreciates the opposite. Light and shade, good and evil, are opposites that need each other – you know the one by knowing the other. By experiencing suffering and death, one appreciates good health and life. Knowing that they are both part of the rich tapestry of life helps us to gain perspective and gives us hope, that eventually light and life will win the day, no matter how dark the situation is in the present. This point of view is axiomatic to Christianity based on the experiences of Jesus Christ who had to endure terrible darkness that ended with crucifixion and then this darkness was turned to incredible joy on the third day. This triumph of light over darkness, of good over evil, is not just confined to Jesus Christ it is a template for how the whole universe works. As Jesus said “In this life you will have trouble but take heart, I have overcome the world” You might expect me at this point to

quote Profound Christian mystic Lady Julian of Norwich and so I won't disappoint. "In the end, all will be well and all manner of things will be well.

## The Prayer for Today

I opened a compendium of prayers randomly and alighted upon this one by Trevor Huddleston, a Mirfield Father and missionary who worked tirelessly against Apartheid. It is a prayer for national well-being which can be applied to any nation of course so I apply it to the United Kingdom.

**God bless the United Kingdom,  
Guard her peoples,  
Guide her leaders,  
And give peace,  
For Jesus Christ's sake  
Amen.**

Love and peace,  
Martin