

Dear friends,

Passports – check

Tickets – check

Walking books – check

Scrabble set – check. (518 all - since you ask)

Passenger locator forms – check

Proof of being double jabbed – check

Laptop for filling passenger locator forms for re-entry to UK – check.

**There** will be no “soul food” for a couple of weeks as Louise and I are off to Malta and Gozo for a holiday, although as we leave on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> and fly back on a Saturday, we actually only miss one Sunday so I’ll be back for the services at All Saints and St. Michael’s on the 31<sup>st</sup> October which of course is All Saints day and East Budleigh’s patronal festival! You don’t get rid of me that easily.

**The Flower festival at St. Peter’s** donation buckets were emptied last Friday and a magnificent £1,250 has been collected for Cancer research. Congratulations to everyone involved!

**In another** magnificent showing the Friends of All Saints East Budleigh raised £530 for the upkeep of the churchyard at a wonderful Wine tasting event. A good time was had by all and the wines were donated at cost price by James at Findlay wines.

**The first** Dinner club for two years went brilliantly. A great crowd enjoyed good company and good food in a very relaxed atmosphere. Our Archdeacon Andrew Beane couldn’t be there so at the last minute Chris and Jo Cant stepped in and provided a very funny and interesting account of how they met and eventually married. They were both missionaries in Pakistan!

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October – 20 after Trinity –  
Proper 24**

I am presiding at both services at St. Peter’s and Reverend Margaret Scrivener is presiding at All Saints (where there is also a baptism) and Reverend Chris Cant is presiding at St. Michael’s.

**Isaiah 53: 4-12.** This final and sublime of the “servant songs” and its rich poetic language has always exerted a powerful pull on the imagination. Christians believe that the suffering servant finds its ultimate embodiment in Jesus. The power of vicarious suffering, achieving forgiveness of sins and bestowing righteousness “for and on our behalf” finds its final vindication in the resurrection of Jesus.

**Hebrews 5: 1-10.** A high priest once and for all time “according to the order of Melchizedek” is how the author of Hebrews describes the priesthood of Jesus. He is far beyond a servant however and is called God’s Son. It is by allowing Jesus into our hearts by his Spirit that we have direct access to the Father through sharing in his priesthood. St. Paul described this state as living “in Christ”.

**Mark 10: 35-45.** Jesus describes his own ministry as being a servant of humanity, freeing us from slavery to sin and death and freeing us to have righteousness “reckoned to us” and having eternal life. Likewise, we are to be servants of the people and not to lord it over them. An antidote not only to an overt clericalism but all Christian notions of pride or specialness. All humans are in the same boat. As has often been said, sharing the gospel is like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

**Further** to Louise winning a research grant for Exeter University, we have been asked to arrange a night at St. Peter’s church to bring together university researchers and the Christian community. We will invite churches to partake from all the local deaneries of course. I will introduce and provide the prayers and Louise will be one of the speakers at this University outreach initiative. This evening will take place on February 9<sup>th</sup> next year, so a date for your diary.

## **Musical interlude!**

Peter Fung is a worship leader at All Saints Sidmouth who is in the process of re-locating to St. Michael’s Otterton where he and his wife Dilly have been made to feel very welcome and we intend to use his talents in the future to their best effect. Peter has sent us a recording he made with Jill Caporn, wife of the vicar of All Saints and I thought you’d like to hear an example of his work. “This is the air I breathe” – enjoy. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rf37ocy4gqn08g1/THIS%20IS%20THE%20AIR%20I%20BREATHE.mp4?dl=0>

## Thought for the day

Later today I will be attending a presentation ceremony at St. Peter's burial ground to receive the runners up prize as the best churchyard in Devon from the Campaign for the preservation of rural England (CPRE). I am used to the churchyard at All Saints East Budleigh receiving accolades like this, but in the case of St. Peter's burial ground I didn't even know that we had entered the competition!

When I received the phone call from the CPRE they wanted it all kept quiet so they could manage the publicity so I'm just jumping the gun by a few hours today. This all stems from Brian Shackleton's efforts to re-wild the churchyard, a project he trailed in church a couple of years ago if you remember. Brian is a bit poorly nowadays and the organising of the burial ground has passed to Melena MacClellan alongside the tending and digging and landscaping of Larry Sampson. As well as all our churches, our churchyards are a significant feature of our local communities and I know that St. Peter's school take the children there for nature and wildlife classes.

I was listening on the radio this morning to another of the "doom and gloom" features which form such a staple of our broadcasting media nowadays that lamented the fact that Britain is last in the G7 countries for its lack of biodiversity. We can be proud of the fact that our churchyards in the RMC are doing our bit to reverse that decline and conserve our natural habitats. If you are used to just walking through them without noticing or haven't visited before because the burial ground is detached from the church in the case of St. Peter's, try and make some time to take a look and have a few minutes of contemplation in any one of them. It will do your soul good.

## The Prayer for Today is by Gail A. Ricciuti

**For all things bright and beautiful  
For all things dark and mysterious and lovely,  
For all things green and growing and strong,  
For all things weak and struggling to push life up through rocky earth,  
For all human faces, hearts, minds and hands which surround us.  
And for all nonhuman minds and hearts, paws and claws, fins and wings,  
For this life and the life of the world,  
For all you have laid before us O God,  
We lay our thankful hearts before you,  
In Christ's name.**

Love and peace,  
Martin

Please note my new email address is [vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk](mailto:vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk)