

Dear friends,

I am on holiday from the 21st September for a couple of weeks so Saturday's (19th) Soul food will be the last until we get back from exploring the delights of Dartmoor. It is encouraging that as I look out of the window the good weather has returned so I do hope it lasts though the weather on Dartmoor is notoriously changeable anyway.

Sunday 20th September – Trinity 15 – Proper 20

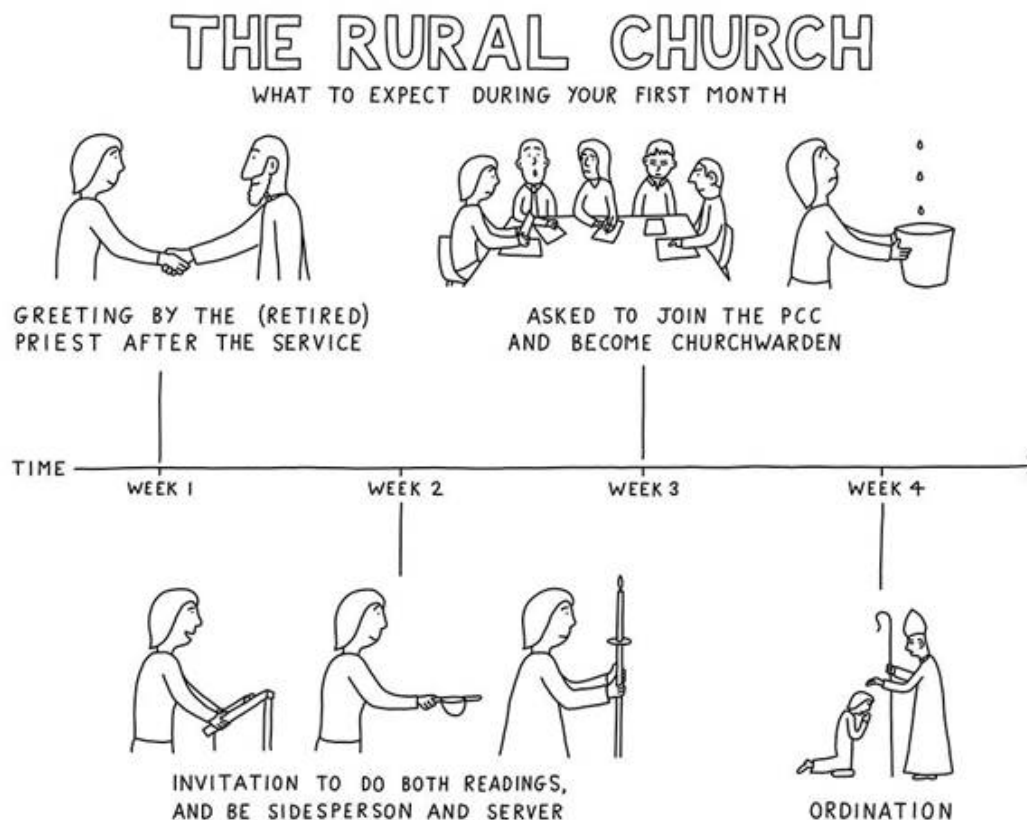
This Sunday I will be presiding again at All Saints at 9.30am and St. Michael's at 11am while at St. Peter's the Venerable Trevor Jones will be presiding as Karen is on holiday.

Jonah 3:10 – 4:11. Jonah is angry with God because he shows mercy to the people of Nineveh when they repent. Nineveh was the capital city of the hated Assyrian empire who had conquered Israel in 722BC and sent the people into exile. This exposes an all too human trait towards exclusivity that expects God to favour only them or their sect while everyone else is Damned. This natural human reaction exposes a basic insecurity, a desire to possess God for one's own benefit, so anyone outside your "club" becomes an unwelcome competitor.

Philippians 1: 21-30. Paul is writing this letter from a prison cell and his future fate is uncertain – will he live or die? Paul assures the recipients of this letter that whatever happens, neither option does he see as failure or loss because "living is Christ and dying is gain". But whatever happens, he wants them "to live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ". The gospel is freely given to human beings and this is our appropriate response.

Matthew 20: 1-16. The jealousy, nay anger, of people at the extent of God's generosity exhibited by Jonah (see above) is in some sense natural but ultimately groundless. This sense of natural justice is exhibited in this parable of Jesus by the labourers who had worked all day for their wages and got no more for their efforts than those who had just worked an hour. The point is that we all get the same – boundless love, mercy, and redemption – no matter when we respond.

The lighter side!



Musical interlude!

Paul Simon said he wrote “Bridge over troubled Water” after listening to gospel music. Whether you understand the Bridge as Christ or as a person being Christ to another person, it is a beautiful song. And Art Garfunkel has a beautiful voice. This rendition is from their seminal concert in Central Park in New York. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrcwRt6J32o&ab_channel=SimonGarfunkelVEVO

Thought for the day

I was invited by the artist John Washington, who leads the Budleigh Art Society to view his painting last week depicting “Roger Conant the peacemaker” which may end up being hung in East Budleigh church. Everyone has heard of Sir Walter Raleigh, born in East Budleigh whose statue stands at the corner of Vicarage and Yettington roads and whose painting also hangs in All Saints church but fewer people are aware of the fact

that East Budleigh is also the home village of yet another major player in American and therefore world history.

Roger Conant founded Salem Massachusetts amongst other places (infamous for the Salem witch trials) but Roger was no religious zealot. He was a peacemaker, first and foremost, and anti-slavery (notable for his time) and respected the native Americans. The scene depicted in the painting is a historical incident at Cape Ann, Massachusetts where Roger intervened and made peace between a group of “salters” originally from East Devon and an armed group of men under the leadership of a nasty piece of work called Captain Myles Standish, a short but thuggish and unpleasant character and military advisor to the Plymouth pilgrims who was trying to strongarm the salters who were using salt barrels as shields. The rifles were raised, and the salters were throwing rocks and other missiles, but Roger Conant stepped into the situation and calmed things down and made peace.

The painting is far from finished, but the premise is that eventually the painting can be exhibited in All Saints church. With all the furore about questionable artwork and sculpture glorifying people whose views we wouldn't necessarily share nowadays, I think we can view Roger Conant in a very favourable light.



The prayer for Today is a Celtic prayer for peace and serenity

**May the light of lights come
To my dark heart from thy place;
May the Spirit's wisdom come
To my heart's tablet from my saviour.
Be the peace of the Spirit mine this night.**

**Be the peace of the Son mine this night.
Be the peace of the Father mine this night.
The peace of all peace be mine this night,
Each morning and evening of my life.**

Love and peace,
Martin

Please note my new email address is vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk