

Dear friends,

Harvest celebrations were the common denominator of this weekend with Harvest services in all three churches and Drakes and Otterton schools having their harvest services in church on Monday.

There has been so much food gathered and distributed to the food bank – a process started by St. Peter's school Harvest a week ago – it has turned what was (when I was younger) a nice symbolic thing to do into something that is also of huge practical significance.



The school gather at the front to offer their produce at All Saints

Ian Blackwell gave a wonderful talk on Friday evening in All Saints church about the life and times of Roger Conant. If you are unaware of that name, Roger Conant, is another famous son of East Budleigh from about the same era as Walter Raleigh and the church now has a painting of a scene from Roger's life called "Blessed are the peacemakers" on the wall of the church to compliment the one of Sir Walt's which is already there. The talk raised £457 gross and a big thank you to everyone involved.

Sunday 9th October – Trinity 17 – Proper 23

I will be presiding at the 8am and 10am at St. Peter's. I will also be back for Choral evensong at 6pm. Mike Williams will preside at All saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

2 Kings 5: 1-3, 7-15. In a throwaway line at the start, this story begins by saying that it was the God of Israel that had given the King of Aram victory over the Israelites. The message of the story appears to be that you shouldn't be high and mighty and demand personal treatment and also that a remedy doesn't have to be complicated to work. As long as God is in it – that is enough. Don't despise the God of small things!

2 Timothy 2: 8-15. Short terse statements enjoining us to keep close to Christ Crucified (as a branch to the vine). The author is warning the community to keep walking on the straight path no matter what. The centrality of the belief that Jesus had been raised from the dead is what we need to cling to and to stop wrangling over "words" – secondary issues that are mere opinion.

Luke 17: 11-19. The theme of this acted parable is gratitude. Ten were healed but only one showed any gratitude. And this one was a Samaritan who had a historic enmity towards mainstream Judaism. That so few were grateful is indicative of the reality of humanity perhaps but the fact that the one who showed gratitude was this outsider is a constant feature of the gospel and a foretaste of the universal application of the Jesus message of salvation way beyond the Jews to include all humanity.

Training session for intercessors

We intend to hold a one-off training session for people who currently lead the prayers and those who may have considered having a go but would appreciate a little training first. Leading public prayer is not quite the same as private prayer with a few rules and conventions to consider because of the vast range of people, personalities, spiritualities and points of view in any congregation. We'll settled on the 29th October at 10am in the Peter Hall and will last about an hour or an hour and a half and all current intercessors and future ones(!) are welcome to attend.

Thought for the day

You don't know how much you rely on something (or someone) until it isn't there. Our fridge broke down and trying to get it fixed/replaced has been a bit of a trial. In the meantime, you learn to adapt as best you can within the constraints of the situation, buying less perishable stuff, freezing everything you can until needed, buying daily rather than a big weekly shop. Adapting to a different situation is hard but you need to do it. When a fridge breaks down or when life itself breaks down

Adapting to when a person dies or is incapacitated in some way is a similarly traumatic transition to a place where everything you took for granted is not there anymore and you need to learn and change. You might not want to, you may find it hard, but change you must.

Resistance to change is something we all have to a greater or lesser degree. Resistance to what cannot be changed is a major source of added trauma and suffering that can lead to embitterment but will be helped by abandoning yourself to whatever God (and the future) holds for you.

Facing the future with an accepting though nevertheless broken heart and grasping opportunities and help whenever they are presented and putting yourself consciously back in life's slipstream is the best way to make that transition from your past to your future situation.

Submission to God's will is one way of putting it. Letting go and letting God is another way. I can get so tense when a situation seems irredeemable, so churned up when I can't achieve the result I wanted but then (usually in extremis) I realise that not everything is down to me. Trust people around you

to do a good job and trust that God is in the situation I am worried about already, working away unseen like the proverbial leaven. A bit of prayer (as I say, sometimes in extremis), a bit of awareness of the gulf in capability between me and God, and do your level best, and you can still be disappointed but you will be clear that you couldn't have done any more and the result is probably the one God wanted all along, marching in step to some unseen cosmic plan.

The Prayer for Today is William Barclay's Humility Prayer

"O Father, give us the humility which realizes its ignorance, admits its mistakes, recognizes its need, welcomes advice, accepts rebuke. Help us always to praise rather than to criticize, to sympathize rather than to discourage, to build rather than to destroy, and to think of people at their best rather than at their worst. This we ask for thy name's sake."

Love and peace,
Martin