

Dear friends,

Sunday morning at St. Peter's was quite emotional, surrounded by the beautiful creations in memory of Janet Parrish, a good collection taken for Exmouth foodbank, a light and energetic harvest celebration, and over 100 people at the 10am service enjoying our morning worship. This is the first time since before the pandemic that we have broken the 100+ landmark and together with the 8am communion service 120 people broke bread together. The friendly crowded coffee time went on for ages and together with the recent happenings at All Saints and St. Michael's I wrote about last week the RMC is in good heart indeed. Green shoots are everywhere!

On the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, a member of the congregation asked about the names of the Angels mentioned in the Bible actually mean which I'd shared with the Wednesday communion congregation, so I further share what I sent to her.

Michael - "who is like God" (Revelation)

Gabriel - "the strength of God" (Luke's gospel)

Raphael - "the healing of God" (Tobit in the Apocrypha)

Uriel - "the light of God" (2 Esdras also in the Apocrypha)

All bear the ending "El" which is the name of the ancient Canaanite creator God that the Jews adopted into their own religion as in the name of their people Israel – which means "struggle with God".

For reference, the Apocryphal books while not forming part of reformed protestant Bibles are accepted as having the full status of holy scripture by the catholic and Orthodox churches. Anglicans as ever tread a line somewhere in the middle!

Congratulations To my wife Louise who has succeeded in winning a two and a half million-pound grant for Exeter University, for her project researching the care of people recovering from Delirium. We had an early start last Thursday as Louise was interviewed on BBC radio Devon. By the way, Louise's name for professional reasons is her maiden name so it's Professor Louise Allan! Here is her interview that [starts at 1.35.00](#) and lasts about five minutes should you desire to hear it. [Breakfast on BBC Radio Devon - with Gordon Sparks \(30/09/2021\) - BBC Sounds](#)

I am a very proud husband!

Sunday 10th October – 19th after Trinity – Proper 23

Colin Randall will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's, and I will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's and then presiding at the choral evensong service at 6pm that evening.

Amos 5: 6-7, 10-16. The question about the nature of divine judgement is explored but never convincingly answered. We must remember that the Israelites had no concept of life after death so all judgement necessarily happened in this life. This was written sometime before the annihilation of Israel by the Assyrians in 722BC. The greatest wrong was the corruption of Justice and there is a heartfelt call for people to repent and learn to love justice. But can one be led to love ones neighbour under threat of retribution?

Hebrews 4: 12-16. God's word is living and active, piercing and is more discerning than anything human beings can conceive. The inevitability of Judgement "to whom we must render an account" renders us all vulnerable and is to most people a terrifying prospect, but this section ends with us all having a great high priest, completely understanding of our flaws and deficiencies, interceding on our behalf before the throne of God. God's judgement never stands without God's mercy.

Mark 10: 17-31. Nothing causes more embarrassment to middle class Christians than passages like this one. But at its heart it is a call to singleness of mind and devotion to the kingdom of God. People with money and possessions have been essential to the life of the church from the very beginning. Money and possessions are a competing interest for this young man. Also be in mind that it is not money per se that is the problem, it is *the love* of money. Like all of the gospel message it is about becoming less self-centred and more God-centred. And at the end of the day, whatever was deficient about this young man, Jesus nevertheless looked upon him with love (verse 21). Jesus loves us and wants his love and discerning word for us to get us to further re-align our lives towards the kingdom of God.

Calling all the young at heart! We have been contacted by the headmaster of St. Peter's school saying that the year 6 children are asking if the youth club could be re-started in the Peter Hall. They are very

Keen! You don't have to be from the St. Peter's congregation of course. You need to have a heart for children and be able to allow them to let off some steam (They are not at school after all) while maintaining a safe environment and exuding a calm authority. Previous experience of working with children would of course be a definite advantage.

Thank you to David and Sabina (and Tom and Mary) for a lovely dinner last Friday night. I met David and Sabina once, ten years ago, when I was taking a break from Bucharest and sojourning in Skopje, Macedonia at my priest friend John's house and through my emails we have been in electronic contact ever since. David last met Tom and Mary three years ago in Albania (where Tom was working in anti-corruption). Three disparate couples brought together by Christianity and the wonders of modern communication. David and Sabina now live and work in Accra, Ghana but passing through Exeter decided to get us all together and a wonderful time was had by all. I know David will be reading this so a big thank you for the wonderful company, the meal and for the gift of Ghanaian chocolate!

Thought for the day

Our Archdeacon, Andrew Beane spoke about "the way forward" last Tuesday evening and I think most people were comforted by the commitment of the Diocese to find us a permanent colleague for me in the RMC (whether that be another priest of some description or a curate) and for the real gratitude that the Diocese has for our extremely generous giving to the Diocese that helps to provide a Christian presence in less well-off areas of Devon. We are one of the bigger, most successful of the mission communities in the county, in both people and financial giving and we continue to be so generous out of our collegiate Christian duty to places that would otherwise have no ministry at all whether that be in rural North Devon or inner-city Plymouth. The story of the rich young man comes to mind that provides our gospel story [this Sunday](#) in determining our priorities.

Speaking of priorities, what kind of minister and on what basis they are employed is something that we have to determine for ourselves as a community. Do you remember we had an awayday in Sidmouth soon after I arrived here? I think this is the time to have another one but this time it will be a much more focussed affair with the result of the day having a direct influence on how we are manned in the future. Until then though, we are doing pretty well with our wonderful and committed band of retired priests. Keep praying for God's guidance, which I think you must all be doing anyway

because, to be honest, there are so many green shoots appearing across the RMC that its beginning to look like a lawn.

Britain's favourite hymns as voted by the public organised by the programme "songs of praise".

1. Jerusalem (And did those feet)
2. How Great Thou Art
3. In Christ Alone
4. Dear Lord and Father Mankind
5. Abide With Me
6. I Vow To Thee My Country
7. Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah/Redeemer
8. Amazing Grace
9. Be Still for the Presence of the Lord
10. I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I am, Lord)

The Prayer for Today is apparently Scottish in origin.

**God bless our church and parish,
And prosper all our attempts to be faithful
And to draw others to you,
For Jesus Christ's sake.**

Love and peace,
Martin

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