

Dear friends,

I have returned refreshed from my holiday and was greeted by a gift of a plaited Harvest loaf on our doorstep (Thanks Chris!) and a note that 90 people attended the Harvest festival service – the most yet since worship was allowed to re-start at St. Peter's. I hope All Saints and St. Michael's had a similar experience.

Later, Louise and I settled down to watch our **first filmed service** on YouTube – appropriately a Harvest service - and I felt so proud. It is so professionally produced and it deserves to be seen and I want to thank everyone involved – including the choir, Stephen, Tony, Sue, Anne and Lucinda which showed what we can do with a bit of teamwork. You can access the harvest festival service from the front page of our website where Lucinda has posted the link or directly here. It lasts 30 minutes so why not give it a listen and have a great sing-along with our choir. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwvgxN_wER4&feature=youtu.be

Sunday 18th October – Trinity 18 – Proper 23

This Sunday marks the return of **the 8am BCP service** at St. Peter's. I will be presiding at this service and also the **10am service at St. Peter's**. Rev. Chris Cant will preside at **All Saints at 9.30am and St. Michael's. at 11am.**

Isaiah 25: 1-9. A text rich in itself and with strong echoes in the New Testament which speaks of the salvation of God destroying even death itself. Death being the greatest thing that prevents us making sense of the world. Jews knew this day as “The day of the Lord” and is represented in both old (as here) and new testaments as a great feast or wedding banquet as in Jesus' parables in Matthew and Luke.

Philippians 4: 1-9. Peace is the keynote of this passage and it amounts to the same as the protective shield of salvation. Healing, peace, health, salvation are all synonyms of each other. It includes the famous injunction not to worry but to place all our cares and faith in God. If only we could all take this to heart – me very much included – how different the character of our community would be!

Matthew 22: 1-14. This parable recounts how the Jews (the original guests) rejected the gospel and were destroyed (possibly a reference to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD70) and then the people from the street (good and bad) representing us – the gentiles – were invited. The most perplexing thing is how one guest was upbraided for not having the correct wedding clothes. The generally accepted explanation for this is that the wedding clothes represent “doing” the will of our Father in heaven and not just giving lip service to faith. The point here is that this person was subject to God’s judgement not human judgement here on earth.

Dartmoor is absolutely wonderful and having walked 42 miles of it over six days on our first week’s holiday this townie is a born-again countryside lover.



Who are you lookin’ at mate? A Dartmoor pony on one of our walks

Of course, the new covid-19 restrictions disrupted our second week so we couldn't go to Birmingham and had to get out of Denbeighshire before their lockdown restrictions came into force but a great time was had nonetheless.

The Lighter side!

A Government information film on home Covid testing courtesy of John Bishop. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG3cf6d6Wvk>

Thought for the day

Everyday miracles - seeing the wonder in the everyday - is brought home to many people by the birth of a child. I remember holding my daughter Claire for the first time (I was the first to hold her) in Chatham hospital 30 years ago, knowing that nothing would ever be the same again. Experiencing wonder at the little miracles of life just grabs me from time to time. I found myself contemplating how my fingernails grew the other day (!), and at other times how the earth's gravity is so strong it can keep the whole planet together and a moon in orbit, yet I can defy it every time I raise a glass to my lips. All life is a miracle, yet possibly the greatest miracle of all is human consciousness. We were (apparently) all once just a primordial chemical soup, but at some point in the earth's history one part of this primordial chemical soup became self-aware and could actually know and contemplate the fact that we were all once just soup and could investigate our own beginnings and our ultimate end. I believe in miracles because I see them all the time, every day. Life is the ultimate miracle and mystery.

The Prayer for Today is by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

The Slow Work of God

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

**We are, quite naturally, impatient in everything to reach the end
Without delay.**

We should like to skip

The intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on

The way to something unknown,

Something new,

And yet it is the law of all progress

That it is made by passing through

Some stages of instability ---

And that it may take a very long time.

**And so I think it is with you.
Your ideas mature gradually ---
Let them grow,
Let them shape themselves,
Without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
As though you could be today
What time will make you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit
Gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
That his hand is leading you,
And accept the anxiety of
Feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.**

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J..

Love and peace,
Martin

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