

Dear friends,

This has been one hell of a week, and I don't know how many miles I have driven and how many road closures, diversions and roadworks we have negotiated. We've been to York and Buxton and Louise is currently in Loughborough and has to fly to the Hague when she's back from there on Wednesday. But we have attended a wedding, visited Louise's brother Andrew recovering from a stroke, and back in time to celebrate with All Saints church on their patronal festival, marked "All souls" with a very dignified service on Sunday at St. Peter's and on Monday I'll be hosting the children from Drakes school as we have the annual "Bun throwing" (!) from the tower of All Saints church for the children to collect (all properly wrapped).

The Bun throwing happens every year as close to All saint's day as practical. The origins of this are steeped in history but the distribution of cakes from the church to mark festivals was once very common. Whatever the history, the children are all very excited every year as you might expect, and it is a novel act of community engagement.

Sunday 10th November – Remembrance Sunday

As has become traditional, I will be at All Saints church in the morning at the 9.30 service so I can then preside at the war memorial in the village at 11am. Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at both service in the morning at St. Peter's and Jean Burrows will preside at St. Michael's. I will then preside at the war memorial in Budleigh Salterton at 2pm and then at the RBL service of remembrance assembling at 2.45 in St. Peter's.

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10. Jonah was commissioned by God to go and preach to the people of Ninevah that they should repent. And to everyone's surprise – they did. This really annoyed Jonah and it is a disturbing trait amongst many that we like to see people punished and suffering for what we think they deserve. Luckily, God is far more merciful than us.

Hebrews 9: 24-28. A classic text that explains that Christ died for our sins and remains in the presence of God interceding for us, for eternity. Experiencing a true human life as Jesus, the eternal cosmic Christ, knows all our temptations, faults and flaws and is qualified to intercede for us at the right hand of God.

Mark 1: 14-20. Jesus, first and foremost wants us to repent, just as the people of Ninevah did many centuries before. The word translated as "Repent" in English is

Metanoia and carries the meaning of a total transformation of mind soul and body – to turn one’s life around – and see the world not from our own egocentric point of view, but from God’s point of view.

Choral Evensong. Just a gentle reminder that choral evensong this month has been moved from the 10th November to the 17th November to accommodate the presence of the new Bishop of Exeter Mike Harrison who will preach that evening.

Thought for the Day

Now back from our Nepalese holiday we now have a two-month slot before going on a three-month long Sabbatical. I’ve never had a Sabbatical in 22 years’ service in the church so I am going to relish this opportunity to unwind, and deepen and broaden my spiritual horizons. Before the Sabbatical of course, this two-month long time period seems like the busiest in the church’s calendar and I have already mentioned All Saints and All Souls and then Remembrance Sunday and before you know it, it is Advent and then Christmas. I have said before that we can only run this mission community with the help of the many dedicated retired priests that lend their unstinting support and I am extremely grateful to them. However busy the time may be, we’ll cover everything as well as we possibly can do and endeavour to make every service a time of hope, sustenance and fuel for life’s journey. This may be jumping the gun a little but while I will be away from January to the end of March all essential services will be covered (and Fran has done a marvellous job making sure that this happens as seamlessly as possible) and while I am away, as the senior retired priest I am leaving Archdeacon Trevor Jones in charge so, as a wise head he will have the final word on any contentious issue. Trevor has accepted that charge and will hold the baton until we return. My head is feeling a bit frazzled at the moment but working together we’ll negotiate the near future with forbearance and hope in our hearts.

The Prayer for Today is by one of the first theologians and great thinkers in Christendom. I like to consider him an inspiration to me still. Origin circa 185 – 254.

Let us have clean hearts ready inside us for the Lord Jesus, so that he will be glad to come in, gratefully accepting the hospitality of those worlds, our hearts. He whose glory and power will endure throughout the ages. Amen.

Love and peace,
Martin