

Dear friends,

Congratulations to Stephen Blyth (18yrs old) of St. Peter's who was confirmed by Bishop Nick Mckinnel at Holy Trinity Exmouth last Wednesday!

Congratulations to Stacey James, our new churchwarden at St. Michael's, who has been selected to train for Licenced Lay Ministry (LLM) starting this September. This is a two-year course.

Congratulations to Anne Radcliffe, our other churchwarden of St. Michael's Otterton who received the British Empire Medal in the King's honours list this weekend for services to the people of Otterton. Anne was presented with a bunch of flowers, cards and a celebratory cake at coffee after the service – our own little thank you to everything Anne has done and continues to do at St. Michael's church.

Sunday morning at All Saints felt special. The sun was shining, the hymns were joyous (the second hymn played on our brand-new electric piano) and there was a larger than usual congregation. Coming hot on the heels of the excellent scarecrow festival and the songs of praise last Sunday I think all three churches can be said to be in good spirits.

My mobile phone died last Thursday so I was effectively "off-grid" until we'd returned from Sheffield where we visited Louise's brother Andrew at his rehabilitation centre. Life is hard for Andrew, coming to terms with his new physical reality but despite inevitable down periods he has incredible reserves of inner strength. He really appreciates the fact that he is being prayed for by our three churches and his daughter Katy's church in Buxton. I eventually (well Louise did actually) get my new phone up and running. It took hours re-setting passwords but all is now OK.

Note: There will be no email next week because we are on holiday

Sunday 23rd June – Trinity 4 – (Proper 7)

The Rev'd Colin Randall is presiding at both services at St. Peter's and Rev'd Jean Burrows is presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

Job 38: 1-11. God's reply to Job is the highlight of the book of Job and he speaks out of the whirlwind. It must be noted that all human speculation probing the meaning and injustices of life are described as "darkening counsel by words without knowledge".

The point is that humans are not able to see things from God's standpoint, and they wouldn't be able to make any sense of the reality even if they could. We are a tiny speck in an immeasurable universe, but God deals compassionately with us despite our inhumanity to each other.

2 Corinthians 6: 1-13. Paul is having to defend his ministry throughout this letter. Here he describes our joint Christian ministry as working together with Christ. Christ is present and active in all Christian ministry (regardless of whether one is ordained or not). He then lists a catalogue of observations and paradoxes that opens himself up to his audience and expresses his love for them. He finally appeals for understanding and generosity towards him could be expressed by generations of Christian ministers down through the ages.

Mark 4: 35-41. In the sea or water generally and in stormy weather, they all symbolise the storms and chaos of life. Jesus having authority over an actual storm is a metaphor for him having authority over life's ups and downs more generally. Jesus is the "author of peace and lover of concord" and provides a calm centre when all seems to be dissolving around us. In this respect the calming of the storm is similar in meaning to Jesus walking on the water and Peter doing the same until his doubts caused him to start sinking.

The annual RMC vicarage garden party is upon us again and this year we have avoided Wimbledon ladies' finals day (Hurrah)!

Saturday 20th July from 3pm.

Bring and share food and drink but as usual we will provide a seedbed of wine and nibbles.

Hopefully the sun will shine so bring a rug or something to sit on. We don't have many joint events where people from St. Peter's, St. Michael's and All Saints can mingle and chat so this is a great opportunity to relax together.

Thought for the Day

Being without your mobile phone is a modern trauma that even a couple of decades ago would have seemed unthinkable. But the mobile phone is such an essential facet of modern life it has become indispensable. My life, my contacts, my diary, my bank accounts, texts, news, directions, are all on that little oblong device in your pocket. Even my senior railcard is on an app on my phone so even though I had proof that I had purchased one, coming back from Sheffield we had a sticky situation, because I couldn't show it to the ticket inspector as my phone was broken. We had an interesting

exchange with the guy in the Vodaphone shop about Elon Musk who was asked if he thought that robotic cyborgs were a part of our future. He replied that they were a part of our present. "Look around" he said, "Everyone has an electronic appendage glued to their hands already".

Our dependence is certainly changing the way we do things, and remember things, and it affects our confidence to do certain things. I now can't remember any phone numbers because I don't have to. I wouldn't dream of taking a long journey without Sat Nav but not so long ago that is what we all did all the time. I think that church is one of the last refuges of one-on-one connection unmediated by electronics or screens. The more life becomes more digital the more I react against any intrusion of modernity into the sacred space of church. I think that is what the young call "keeping it real".

The Prayer for Today is taken from psalm 143.

**Teach me the way I should go
Teach me to do thy will
For thou art my God.
Let thy good spirit lead me
On a level path.**

Love and peace,
Martin