

# Connect

the magazine for Thatcham parish



**St Mary's & St Barnabas**

Issue 131 October 2021

Harvest is a time when we celebrate abundance and the rich fruitfulness of the earth. Amidst all the troubles of the last year and a half, the earth remains fruitful, and there is much for which we give thanks – and that is good and proper, and we need to be thankful and to notice the good things about us.

But we live in strange times – the labourers to bring in the harvest are few, we might say, and the Bible tells us: therefore pray. One of the ways I often pray is for the fair distribution of the Earth's rich resources. Though we live in a time of abundance, it feels rather the opposite – low fuel, fewer HGV numbers than we need, warnings of shortages over the next months and even Christmas. However little we have, though,



Vignesh Kumar - HARVEST

<https://www.absolutearts.com/painting-acrylic/acrylic-paintings-1.html>



The Church of England in Thatcham

most of us have much more than many in other countries. Even the COVID vaccine, which is abundantly available here, even for booster jabs, has hardly reached some countries. The logistical hurdles we face are all too common in less-developed countries.

So we perhaps have a chance to sharpen our prayer, and to make it less about ourselves, and to reach out in our imaginations to parts of the world which have less to be thankful about. Supporting the FoodBank and those in need on our own doorstep is one thing, being conscious of needs further away is quite another.

I think it was back in 2014 that a visitor from South Africa, representing our link Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman, told a Diocesan Conference about the local impacts of the changing climate. Since that speech, which had a wide impact, the Oxford Diocese has been leading the way in the Church of England – in challenging the way in which the Church invests its money and in encouraging us all to take climate change more seriously, even declaring a climate emergency, and inviting the national Church to do the same. It is these living links with other parts of the world through mission partners that we can learn so much about a life which is otherwise invisible to us.

One way of thinking about Climate Change is that it results from greed – of overestimating the Earth’s potential rather than being content with the abundance God has provided – of a few people, of rich countries, taking far more than their share, and far more than they should.

That prayer for the fair distribution of the Earth’s rich resources could be our harvest prayer this year. It might just mean being content with less than we are used to, and even being thankful for abundance when we have rather less. This simple prayer represents a change of gear towards simpler living, and being gloriously content with the enough we have.

This of course is just one prayer of many we pray. Many of our prayers are as dangerous as this one, especially when they have at heart the coming of God’s Kingdom at the expense of our personal desires. I wonder what is your favourite “dangerous prayer”? And should we be doing more “dangerous praying” in the face of God’s abundant generosity?

**Mark**

## Sarah & Mike's September Update

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### Dear friends,

Thank you so much for praying for us as we navigate our way through these strange times! We're praying for you all too! We've been meeting in gardens and parks for BBQs, walks and games as the weather has allowed, as well as welcoming people into our home and visiting people. International groups have started meeting indoors again, with various measures in place to keep people safe. We have really enjoyed meeting our international friends face to face again. It is definitely more enjoyable and fruitful than just meeting online, but we're aware it comes with a level of risk. We're very grateful to both be double jabbed and have flow tests at our disposal to keep us and those we're meeting safe. We're both using the flow tests regularly so we can open up our home and visit others safely.

The Ladies' English Conversation group has been meeting in our garden recently. Mint fresh from the garden has been a big hit - enjoyed mostly in black tea :) From next week, we'll be meeting in the church building for conversation over a cuppa, and perhaps some knitting if we can remember where we left off! It's great to come together and build community, enjoy fellowship and practise English in a safe environment. We also share life together as we stay in touch and meet during the week.

In our last update, we said we were grateful to have the world on our doorstep. To give you a flavour of what that means, over the last couple of months we've met face to face with people from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Jordan, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Bulgaria, Palestine, Turkey, Korea, Fiji and Brazil!

**Sarah**

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### Prayer & Praise Points

- Please continue to pray for our friend and her family as they transition from being

asylum seekers to refugees. They have now moved so are no longer in a house provided by the Home Office but they remain in Swansea. Please also continue to pray for her as she seeks truth.

- Please continue to pray for breakthrough in an extremely difficult situation regarding a family in hiding. Please pray for wisdom for all involved.
- Praise God that people are finding a place of safety in Swansea. Please pray for two guys who live near us. They have left their home countries as they were severely persecuted for their faith. Pray for wisdom for Mike and others in getting alongside them.
- Praise God that things are opening up. Please pray for wisdom and protection as we run face to face events again and welcome people into our home.



## This month's prayers

This month's prayers take the form of an Acrostic. **A-C-T-S**. I hope you find this helpful.

### **A** is for Adoration

Most Loving Heavenly Father, your name is above all names, Indeed, you are known by many names – Creator God, Holy God, Loving God, Listening God, Healing God, Living God. We praise you for who you are and for all you have done through Jesus your Son and our Saviour. You are Omnipotent (all powerful), Omniscient (all knowing), Omnipresent (all being).

Our hearts rejoice as we join with all the angels in heaven saying "Hallelujah!" to our Risen Lord.

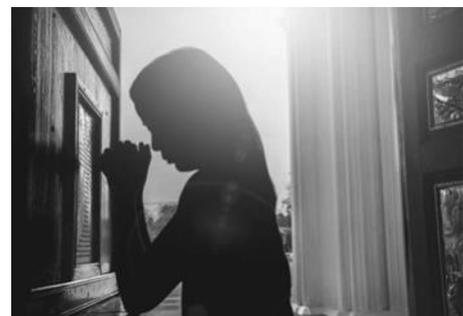


### **C** is for Confession

We come to you asking for forgiveness for all we have said and done that has either hurt you or others. We are sorry for those times when we should have said something to help others but didn't or not acted when we should have. Forgive us for trying to do things in our own strength and ignoring your prompting. We are sorry for

those times when we succumbed to fear and have doubted you and not put our trust in you. We are sorry when we choose you as a last resort.

Lord have mercy, forgive us, heal us and help to lead a new life in your service.



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E-mail: [sewtaylored4@gmail.com](mailto:sewtaylored4@gmail.com)

# 7 is for Thanksgiving

Forsaking the glory and majesty of heaven you came to Earth, was born of human flesh, lived among us and showed us how to live, You surrendered your life and then rose from the grave and are now seated at the right hand of your Father in Heaven

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. For all of that, we cannot thank you enough. And thank you for never leaving us or forsaking us, even if we think you have. Thank you for every blessing; family (both blood and church), friends, finances, food and faith.

And of course, for the greatest of all blessings, the promise of eternal life



# S is for Supplication

Lord, you already know what we need and when we need it. However, we do bring before you the things that concern us and can keep us awake at night with worry. Our concern for our loved ones, those who are ill or dying, those we know who are unemployed, struggle financially, those in abusive relationships, all who are addicted to alcohol or drugs, all who are homeless, all who won't eat today.



As we read these prayers from the comfort and security of our own home, may we be mindful that it is only by your grace and favour that we do not live in places that suffer war and civil disorder daily.

May we never take that for granted nor your amazing love, goodness and mercy so freely given us.

**Amen**

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## Who's Who in the Thatcham Team Ministry

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### Team Rector

Mark Bennet 867342

### Team Vicar - St. Barnabas

Nicola Hulks 864916

### Associate Clergy:

Marion Fontaine 861742

Brenda Harland 865064

Angela Brennan 07498 801479

### Parish Administrator

Ann Watts 864567

The Parish office is open Monday and Friday mornings, 9.30am to 1.00pm, answer phone at other times.

### Email:

office.stmarysthatcham@gmail.com

### Churchwardens

Paul Bullock 07867 361559

Colin Waters 07484 774086

Chris Watts 864567

### Future copies

**Connect** is published ten times a year and is available from St. Mary's and St. Barnabas Churches, Thatcham, or by post from the Parish Office, tel. 864567.

### Article Deadline

Please give articles for the **October** edition to Steve Rice (860431) or any of the clergy or churchwardens or email [julie@dunwell.org](mailto:julie@dunwell.org) by **15th September**.



## Services at St. Mary's Church

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### Sundays

8.00 am **Sunday Service**

10.00 am **Sunday Service**

9.45 am **Wednesdays**

6.30 pm **Sung Evensong**  
(1st Sundays only)

### Wednesdays

9.45 am **Holy Communion**

10.30 am **'ABC'** (Adults, Babies, Children)

### Every Weekday

9.30 am **Morning Prayer** (In the chapel)



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If you wear a hearing aid, switch to the 'T' position to benefit from the system

[www.stmarysthatcham.org.uk](http://www.stmarysthatcham.org.uk)

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## Services at St. Barnabas Church

(meeting in Thatcham Park School)

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**10.00 am Sunday Service**

[www.stbarnabasthatcham.weebly.com](http://www.stbarnabasthatcham.weebly.com)

Serving to Build Community



## For the Record...



### Baptism

- 12 Sep** Isabel Ellen Davis  
Oliver James Davis  
Jack Robert Wellman  
Henry Charles Franklin
- 18 Sep** Jasper Willem Brian Fourie
- 19 Sep** Ellie Frances Nell Moss  
Darcy Jane Diamond-Cole  
Jasmine Dorothy Elsmere  
Myles David Johnson  
Edward James Holley

### Weddings

- 9 Sep** Anthony Fleet and  
Stephanie Connor

### Funerals

- |               |                    |    |
|---------------|--------------------|----|
| <b>7 Sep</b>  | Marina Pullen      | 86 |
| <b>9 Sep</b>  | Michael Ward       | 78 |
| <b>10 Sep</b> | Stanley Baker      | 87 |
| <b>17 Sep</b> | Irene Rossi        | 84 |
| <b>23 Sep</b> | Sheila Fearne      | 66 |
| <b>22 Sep</b> | Eileen Bartholomew | 92 |
| <b>22 Sep</b> | Jennifer Harle     | 71 |
| <b>29 Sep</b> | Alison Mackintosh  | 60 |



## God provides us with what we need

Christian Aid Daily reading: 3 October 2021  
Andy Frost, Director of Share Jesus International

### Something to read

*Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*  
Matthew 6:31-33.

### Something to think about

Whenever I read this passage about these most basic needs – clothing, food and water, I am struck by the following questions:

What about those people in certain parts of the world who don't have these basics? What about the people who are naked through poverty? What about the people dying of drought and starvation?

It's important to remember the context here. Jesus wasn't preaching into a culture with welfare and benefit systems. He was speaking to an occupied people who were being taxed so heavily that many were living below the poverty line. To contextualise it today, it would be like Jesus preaching these words in poverty-stricken slums.

Being a follower of Jesus doesn't always mean that life will



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### **C A M E O**

(come and meet each other)

CAMEO is for anyone, lonely, bereaved, lives on their own, or would like to chat...

...every Monday

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St Mary's Church

Meeting Room

for a chat over a

cup of tea and

cake.



be easy or that everything will work out materially.

Jesus suffered and in following him we are promised difficult times. But whereas the pagans chase after material things, we are commanded to seek first God's kingdom. When we seek first the King, we discover His peace.

Despite horrific circumstances, throughout the ages Christians have known this peace that surpasses understanding.

Just think of Stephen in Acts as he is stoned to death and Paul as he is imprisoned for his faith. Jesus tells us that the Father knows our needs. Ultimately our needs are not met in material things but in Him, our Creator.

I still find this very difficult. I wish God would intervene miraculously more often but, as I have travelled and met people who have very little, I am reminded again and again that it is not what we have that brings us joy.

Instead it is knowing who we belong to. When we

seek first His kingdom, He provides us with all that we need, sometimes materially and sometimes just the joy and peace to carry on regardless.

### Something to do

Look back over the last week. How have you spent your time and money? Does the way in which you have spent these things reflect a seeking of the kingdom of God?

### Something to pray

Father,  
Today I choose to seek first Your Kingdom!  
No matter what my circumstances...  
I seek your ways  
I seek your vision  
I seek your plan  
I seek you.  
Amen.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/pray/daily-bible-readings/daily-reading-3-october>



**THATCHAM FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND LEISURE**

**Saturday 9th - Sunday 17th October**

Please support events at St Mary's

**Sat 9th - 10 am**  
Craft Fayre Contact Chris Druce to help with refreshments

**Sat 16 - 11.00am-12.30pm**  
Choral Workshop: Come and Sing with Watership Cantabile

**7.30pm**  
Concert: InCantanta

**Sun 17th - 7.00 pm**  
Concert: Cold Ash Brass  
A night at the Proms with West Berks Rock Choir

**TIME TO REMEMBER**

**Sunday 31st October 2021 at 4.00 pm**  
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(3rd Thursday each month)

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