

Dates for the Diary

19th May 2024 – St. Nicholas Church – APCM after the 4pm service.

During our time of vacancy, pray for:

Godly wisdom, insight and unity for the church councils and those assembling the paperwork required for the recruitment process.

God to be preparing the right person to come and further the ministry in our benefice.

Strength and inspiration for the wardens, ministry leaders and others involved in supporting the church through this time of vacancy.

A Prayer for Parishes in a time of Transition

Dear Lord, our God and Father,
in this time of transition
give us the eyes to see Your presence in our lives, ears to listen to Your will,
lips to speak Your words,
and hands to do Your work.
Grant us grace and go before us,
as we seek Your Holy Spirit's counsel,
as we live in community during this time,
and as we prepare for the arrival of a new priest in our midst.
We pray this through Jesus Christ,
and for the sake of His Kingdom,
in sure and certain hope of
Your promises to us.

Contact Details

We are in a period of interregnum, contact James in the office
Facebook@harnishchurch

Some of our Lay Ministers

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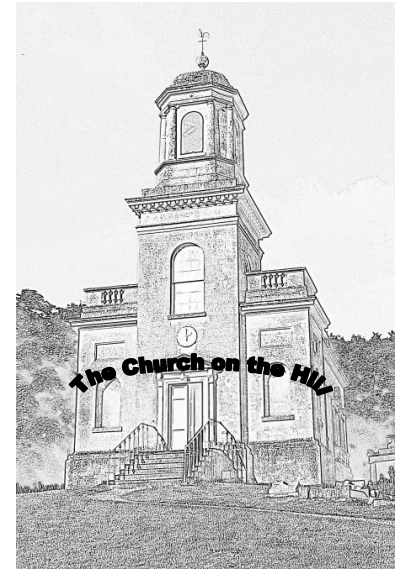
Greenways Group of Churches

St. Nicholas News May 2024

The Rt Rev Maurice Wood (1916-2007)

Bishop Maurice Wood prayer seems appropriate for Hardenhuish:

"Make us like a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hidden; so that men and women and children may find Christ as the light of the world, and his church as the family of the redeemed, and eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"



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| Sunday | 5th May | 4.00pm | Afternoon Praise |
| Sunday | 12th May | 4.00pm | Afternoon Praise with Communion |
| Sunday | 19th May | 4.00pm | Lectionary Reflections & APCM |
| Sunday | 26th May | 4.00pm | Afternoon Praise |

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Ministry Musings

Forgiveness – a topic not always easy to contemplate, but something which has given me food for thought recently. Over Lent this year I decided to reread a book I had first read many years ago: ‘God’s Springtime’ by Joyce Huggett. As so often happens when we return to reading matter something ‘new’ struck me forcefully amongst the daily readings. It concerned forgiving, and it gave me a new perspective on just how vital forgiveness is to our wellbeing.

The author points to the biblical record of some of Jesus’ last words as He hung on the cross. She refers to the way in which Jesus asks His Father to forgive those who are driving the nails into His hands and feet. Despite the terrible pain He is in He says “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” That in itself shows remarkable selfless consideration for those carrying out this awful form of execution, but of course we have read these moving words year after year on or around Good Friday so it’s easy to overlook them or simply think of them as being typical of Christ.

Ms. Huggett continues with further explanation, quoting Canon Peter Green from whom we learn that the Greek word ‘to forgive’ is *aphesis*, which means to set someone free or to ‘loosen the grip on’ someone or something. This gives the request to the Father God a much deeper meaning. It’s not simply Jesus pointing out that His torturers don’t understand the enormity of their actions. He asks that they should be freed from the bonds of evil. Canon Peter goes on to explain that this is the word that Jesus used when He called Lazarus from his tomb, and invites his friends to loose him, to set him free from the grave clothes wrapped around his body. Life has been restored to him, but he is still tied down by the cloths used to wrap him in. when removed he is effectively released from the chains of death.

It seems that Jesus uses the same word whilst He is being crucified. He suggests that our Lord is pleading with His Father to set His torturers free, to release them from their sins and to free them into a full relationship with the God who created them.

Joyce Huggett goes on point out that if to forgive is to ‘let go’ of hurts, to refuse to forgive means to cling to, to hang onto those hurts. This set me thinking about our world, reflecting on how any ‘hurt’ can grow and fester until it takes on mammoth proportions. This ‘clinging’ can infiltrate our whole being, and we can see how it leads into a dark pit of aching injury, influencing every aspect of relationship with others. How sad is that!

We should be impressed by the courage and kindness of some people such as Gordon Wilson who publicly forgave those responsible for killing his nurse daughter, Marie, during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He was determined to free himself from the burden of bitterness and resentment which would have dominated his life following his awful loss, and instead poured his energy into acting as a Peace Campaigner. But this degree of forgiveness is not often seen.

It seems there are far more folk who carry their grievance permanently with them, unable to let it go. This suggests that forgiveness is as important to the one *offering* forgiveness as it is to the one receiving it. Long-held grudges can lead to family feuds, and possibly even wars. Perhaps you know people who nurse such a grievance, something which colours their entire life, maybe even developing into hatred and violence. There are people who blame others for missed opportunities, failed relationships etc, when clearly it was their own responsibility. The idea is so firmly established in their hearts and minds that they cannot let go of it, their resentment making them blind to the truth of the situation. Perceived hurts can be as destructive as ‘genuine’ injuries / offences, and sometimes the ‘offender’ is blissfully unaware of having upset someone!

There are those, of course, who blame themselves for ‘mistakes’ which again they cannot let go of – cannot forgive themselves for their involvement. This too can be equally destructive, binding them to situations which they cannot free themselves from. Perhaps they know that had they taken a different course of action things would have been different. They simply cannot forgive themselves and free themselves from the underlying guilt.

Sometimes we are simply unaware of the resentments which hold us. We think we have forgotten or put aside old disagreements, but they are still lurking at the back of our minds. This is when I find this idea concerning forgiveness gives a deeper meaning to the words of the Lord's Prayer: *Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.*

We sometimes ask God to forgive our 'sins' not realizing just how much we need that forgiveness and the freedom it offers. True forgiveness is a two-way action, if you see what I mean. If we truly forgive we loosen ourselves from the bonds of grudges and resentment, whilst wiping the slate clean and removing the burden of sin from the one who has offended us. It also equips us to accept forgiveness ourselves, and willingly receive a similar freedom. A wonderful gift from our loving, forgiving Lord God!

A prayer

Help us, Lord, to grasp something more of your love for us, to gladly receive your forgiveness, and to learn to truly forgive others just as you forgive us and set us free from our burdens of sin. Thank you, Lord, for your redeeming love and mercy. Amen

Barbara

A Prayer for the King

Father of mercies,
grant to Charles our King
comfort and sure confidence in you,
and keep him in perpetual peace and safety,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.