

Seek



September 2024

The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge
www.stmarksnewnham.org

The Vicar's Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

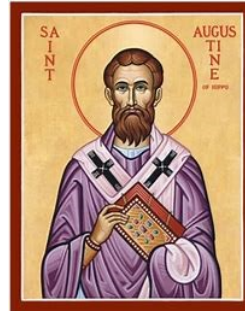


By the time you read this, God-willing, I will have been 'inducted and installed' as your new vicar. However, at the time of writing, I find myself in Carlisle, where

I have temporarily abandoned the chaos of paint tins and boxes that reigns in the vicarage, to accompany my elder son on a choir tour. I have just lit a candle for our parish in the beautiful cathedral here, and offered up a prayer for us all. It may seem obvious to say it, but prayer is at the heart of my ministry. So that candle will be the first of many! Please know that it will be my duty and my joy over the coming months and years to remember you before God. In time I hope to put together a cycle of prayer, which will mean that every day, at morning and evening prayer, church members will be prayed for by name, along with businesses and institutions within our parish.

When it was first founded, in the twelfth century, Carlisle Cathedral was in the care of Augustinian canons; that is, friars who followed the ancient rule of life of St Augustine. Augustine's theology has been a very important influence on my own faith, and I was pleased to learn that the cathedral honours its heritage by including some of his teaching in its Saturday services. I was reminded that the great saint once described prayer as 'the articulation of love'. So, while prayer of course involves us asking for God's help, strength and guidance, it is also a way by which we express our love for one another, just as Jesus prays for us out of his limitless love. Love is the deepest ground of all we do as a Christian community, and the prayers we offer for our parish keep us anchored in this primary calling of becoming ourselves expressions of divine love. We are to be walking, talking, living prayers, in constant conversation with God; points of contact between this world and the next. That may sound daunting, but, as Augustine reminds us, 'It is with the heart rather than the lips that we pray'. We do not need the 'right' words, or environment, or state of mind to pray. We only need the desire, the desire to be open to God. He does the rest.

Perhaps St Augustine's most famous work is the *Confessions*, his spiritual autobiography in which he narrates the story of his conversion to the



Christian faith. He portrays conversion as a gradual process, a slow, grace-propelled awakening of the heart and mind to the presence of the God who has always been there beside him. There are, however, moments of dramatic progression along

the way. At one point he hears a voice telling him to 'pick up and read'. He duly picks up a Bible, opening it at random, and reads a verse from Romans 13, which 'hits home', as we might say. He experienced those words as God speaking directly to him. This is a reminder that we can only pray to God because he first speaks to us. Scripture plays an important part, therefore, in the life of prayer. Through it we hear God's voice and are moved to reply. I myself experienced this strongly on the day of my interview for this post. I had thoroughly enjoyed the day, and the encounters that it had brought, not to mention the excellent lunch! But, upon returning home, I felt a little more unsettled, realising that I stood at a crossroads. Which path would I be led down? And if I was lucky enough to be invited to take up the post, what answer should I give? Was I the right fit for this place? I sat down and opened my Bible, and found myself reading Psalm 37, verses 23-24:

'When your steps are guided by the Lord and you delight in his way, though you stumble, you shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds you fast by the hand.'

This gave me my answer for when the phone call came. They are words I shall keep returning to. We do not walk through this world alone. Such knowledge is a source not only of strength, but of delight. I am looking forward immensely to praying not only for you but alongside you. And I hope that you will pray for me, and for Arabella, Aubrey and Ivor. And please do introduce yourselves to me, should you see me about. It will be my pleasure to meet you.

In Christ,

Jim

The Reverend Jim Robinson

01223 455 463

revjrobinson@gmail.com

A Warm Welcome

On behalf of our church communities the four Churchwardens of Newnham and Grantchester are delighted to welcome the Revd Jim Robinson and look forward to the 5th September at 7.00 pm when he will be installed as the next vicar of both parishes.

We are pleased that Jim and his family will be living in the Vicarage in Grantchester and that he will be seen around both parishes as much as possible. We all look forward to his ministry within the two parishes and pray that together we can carry forward the work of Jesus Christ.

So, Welcome Jim.

Here are the details of the installation

All are warmly invited to attend the service of installation on Thursday 5th September at 7.00 pm. Please be seated by 6.45 pm. You are also welcome to the reception after the service in the Large Hall of the Community Centre to meet Jim.

Jim's first service as Vicar will be held at Grantchester church on Sunday 8th September at 10.30 am where he will lead and preach. This will be followed by lunch in Grantchester Village Hall. All are welcome but please RSVP warden@churchgrantchester.org.uk if you would like to attend the lunch.

Please pray for Jim as he starts his ministry with us.

The Installation of our new Vicar the Revd Jim Robinson

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Cambridge Sustainable Food : Charity of the Month

Cambridge Sustainable Food CIC (CSF) is a non-profit organisation working to build a fairer, more sustainable food system which supports the community and the environment. They campaign to achieve healthy and sustainable food for everyone; food which is good for our health, the planet, and the local economy.

The charity campaigns to achieve healthy and sustainable food for everyone. They seek to drive change to create a thriving food culture that is focused on everybody's wellbeing, supports farmers' livelihoods and builds a strong food economy.

Current initiatives include:

- A Waste Not Wednesday Pay-As-You-Feel Café in St Philips Church.
- Holiday Lunches across Cambridge which provide free lunches for families of nursery and school-aged children in the holidays.

- The Big Urban Forage which is a mission to save unwanted seasonal fruit.



As we approach the season of Creationtide, please consider this charity and donate generously.

Barry Read

St Mark's Outing to St Alban's



It was good to revert to an annual coach trip for St Mark's congregation, friends and neighbours; I recall with pleasure past visits, among others to Lincoln, Norwich and Bury St Edmunds, not least for the company on the journey, at cafeteria tables and admiring the views. So I was quick to sign up for the trip to St Alban's organised by Sue Payne in July.

Having left the church at 9.00 am, we had ample time, after coffee, for a guided tour at the cathedral around its beautiful complex building with architectural features dating back to Saxon times and with the longest nave in England! I think we were all particularly impressed by the revival before our eyes of some medieval wall paintings, faded and whitewashed over, but by clever image projection shown as they would have been when first painted.

After lunch we had the opportunity to walk to the site of the old Roman town of Verulamium, which has an excellent museum, with its 'talking skeleton' of a past citizen. The coach then took us on to Hatfield House. Here we could walk through the fascinating East and West Gardens with their huge variety of monumental topiary. On the day it also proved possible to take a guided tour of the Old Palace, the childhood home of Elizabeth I.

Then back to Cambridge by 5.45, after a most interesting day out. We thank Myall's Coaches, who supplied the coach and our driver Nina, who regularly drives to and from the Market Square on the 199 bus. Most thanks, of course, to Sue who organised it all so efficiently.

Derek Cummings

An Earlier Outing

Verity Isitt of Fulbrooke Road recently contacted us to ask if we might be interested in a thank you poem written to her late husband Canon David Isitt.

David will be fondly remembered by many of our readers for the excellent lectures he gave in the Community Centre. As Nick Warburton wrote in a warm valedictory piece in *Seek* in September 2009 after David's death, "Someone at St Mark's Study Centre asked for a course on icons and so began his Tuesday afternoon lectures. These he gave for many years, without charging a fee, as his contribution to his parish church. They were wide-

ranging and based on his classical background and travels as a Swan Hellenic guest lecturer. As someone has written, 'They were informative and filled with personal experiences'. The group's annual class outing was always adventurous and great fun."

The poem we are including was written by Martin Ryle, Astronomer Royal, after he had joined one of the outings to explore a series of churches north-west of Cambridge in the vicinity of Huntingdon, Peterborough and Stamford. One page remains and it makes a delightful thank you letter.

St Mark's Church Mission Statement

To be the people of God in this place and to work to make God more real for our community.

Tuesday Outing



St Peter's Church, Tickencote, Rutland

Stamford and Longthorpe,
Tickencote – supreme! –
Gidding, Leighton Bromswold:
The names are a dream
Of a country at peace with its soul
And its heart;
Still undivided – unconscious in part
Of its links with a world moving
Ever more fast in events that near pull
Fortressed Island apart.....

Set in a blue-green haze
Chancelled and arched,
Solid, ethereal, stone built and vast
- Tickencote's glory rises, proclaims
In six backward arches
Again and again.

Look! – we are creatures, varied and strange.

Look! – we are humans: holy and vain.

Look! – we are foliage, simple and sweet

Found in our meadows, our trees and our streams.

Look! – we are patterns, simple and neat.

AUTUMN FAIR

**In aid of church funds and
the Red Cross**

- Book stall
- Cake stall
- Coffee and cakes
- Clothes swap
- Eco table
- Plant stall
- Children's games and crafts

**St Mark's Church (front lawn,
church and community centre)**

Saturday 14th September

10 - 12 noon

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Hints and Revelations

The Radius Festival of Drama



In 2022 St Mark's hosted the first Radius drama festival. So pleased were Radius with the warmth of the welcome and the stimulating and entertaining time had on that day, that they've asked to return. So, this October we'll be hosts again, this time for the second Radius festival – *Hints and Revelations*.

Those who remember the 2022 event will know that Radius is the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain, and that it provides a forum for people interested in the exploration of faith and the human condition through drama.

This year the festival will feature a directing masterclass, the performance of a play, and a panel discussion on aspects of faith and the theatre.

The masterclass will be run by actors Emerald O'Hanrahan and Martin Delaney who will use *The Tempest* as their text. Emerald may now be heard as Emma Grundy in *The Archers* on BBC Radio 4. She's been seen at St Mark's before – in a one-woman show based on the works of Jane Austen. Martin is an award-winning actor, writer and producer who appeared as Sergeant Towser in George Clooney's mini-series *Catch 22*.

Our play is Rex Walford's dramatization of John Betjeman's poetry, *A Hint of the Unknown God*. It

throws light on Betjeman's interest in the human spirit – its hopes, fears and solaces – and in the Church as an institution. The play will be produced and directed by Tricia Peroni and Wendy Walford, both well-known at St Mark's and stalwarts of the first Radius Festival.

Hints and Revelations concludes with lively debate when a panel of experts – including Rob Gillion who was Associate Bishop for the Arts in the Diocese of Southwark, and much-admired actress Amanda Root – will field questions raised by the day's programme.

Our master of ceremonies will once again be Sean Lang. Lunch (provided by our own Sue Wagner and team) is included in the price of the ticket for the first sixty applicants.

It's all happening on Saturday 12th October, from 12 noon to 5.30 pm. Tickets are £20 (Radius members), £25 (non-members) and may be bought online by going to Eventbrite and searching for *Hints and Revelations – Radius*. There is also a link on the Radius website: radiusdrama.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you.

Nick Warburton

The October Issue of SEEK

The October issue of Seek is delivered to every household in Newnham and so this is a good opportunity to reach a wider audience. All contributions are welcome. Please send them by Sunday 15th September to Jane Plows at janemp@virginmedia.com (350120) or contact any member of the committee.

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The New Church Lighting

Sunday 28th July was a memorable day. We entered an unlit church and sat in subdued light until the 10.00 am service began. At 10.00 am the new lights were switched on, the church was bathed in light and the congregation broke into spontaneous applause.

It was a great moment, the culmination of several years of hard work on the part of Alan Jones and his team, the Lighting Committee, who sought out advisers and contractors and negotiated an excellent price for the work, as well as surmounting all the hurdles involved in liaising with the Diocese. It seems extraordinary that the appeal was only launched last October and that we already have our wonderful new lighting installed, lighting which can be controlled and dimmed from a single switch whilst reducing our

carbon footprint and enhancing the appearance of the church.

Alan was warm in his praise of the contractors, Huttie's, who, with a team of just two men, completed the work in record time, not only installing the new system but also cleaning the upper reaches of the church which had been accumulating dust and dirt and cobwebs for decades.

And we were all equally warm in our praise of Alan who has spearheaded the entire project. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude.

Jane Plows

We are grateful to Richard Bauckham who has contributed the reflection which you can read on the next page.

The Etheldreda Medal



The 10.00 am service on the 28th July was memorable for another reason too. It was announced that Alan Jones has been awarded an Etheldreda Award.

The Etheldreda Award is a medal presented by the Bishop of Ely to people who have given 'generous and outstanding service which would not otherwise be recognised'. This award is for those who not only service their church communities, but also serve their wider community in exemplary fashion. For many people this is about the duration and persistence of their good works, for others it may relate to a short but extraordinary act of kindness or course of conduct.

Candidates were selected from the nominations received by a panel of volunteers who have been appointed by the Bishop to identify around twenty suitable recipients. Most of these awards will be

presented publicly at a special service at Ely Cathedral on the 26th October 2024.

Alan is surely a worthy recipient. As Hilary Murray writes, "At every PCC meeting that I have attended (since the days of Maggie Guite), we have been giving Alan our heartfelt thanks for one thing and another which is amazing! When someone is almost 90 and has only just decided to 'retire' from being quite so proactive, we felt that he deserved some wider recognition!" Alan's devoted work for Cambridge Hearing Help, formerly Camtad, is another example of his service to the wider community and many of us have either experienced or witnessed his extraordinary kindness to individuals in the community.

One regret that many of us had was that Eleanor, who has supported him in all his endeavours, was not in church with him to hear the announcement.

Jane Plows

Food Bank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 1st September.

Alternatively on Thursday 5th September leave them at 19 Kings Road (Eleanor Scott) 9.00 am - 3.00 pm, and 1 Millington Road (Rosey Gardiner) 8.00 am - 6.00 pm.

The New Lighting : A Reflection

If you have been to a service in St Mark's recently, or even if you have just looked into the church on some other occasion, you will have seen what a wonderful difference our new lighting system makes. St Mark's has become an even more attractive space and, most importantly, a space more conducive to worship.

I am prompted to reflect a little on the significance of light. When I moved from the northwest of England to St Andrews in Scotland, I became very conscious of the difference latitude makes to the alternation of daylight hours and darkness. The hours of daylight in winter seemed to me very short, and on dull days it felt almost as though the sun had not risen at all. People seriously affected by this have to top up their daily intake of sunlight artificially. But, conversely, in summer the light lingers long into the evening. One can stroll on the beach when people down south are going to bed.

The alternation of light and darkness is integral to the natural world. There are many creatures who inhabit the darkness and shun sunlight. But we humans love light and so light has always, in all cultures, been a powerful symbol of all that is beneficial and life-giving. The Bible even calls God light: "God is light and in him there is no darkness at

all" (1 John 1:5). Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), but he also called us, his disciples, the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). In that connection he told a short parable:

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house (Matthew 5:15).

We could improvise a similar parable for ourselves:

No community of Jesus's disciples lights up their building and then closes the doors to keep all the light for themselves. Rather, they let the light shine out to the wider community.

All disciples of Jesus are bearers of his light. When we worship in church we rejoice in the light. We are enlightened by the message God gives us to pass on to everyone. We experience the glorious light of God's presence that inspires us with love for everyone.

Let's make the most of the wonderful light we have been given!

Richard Bauckham

Regular Groups

Monday Bible Study

10:00am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 01223 563435

Tuesday and Thursday Home Groups

7:30 pm, weekly – contact: Andrew Watts, aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk or Mike Thompson, michaelangelot99@gmail.com

Prayer Meeting

11.00 am every Friday at 10 Stukeley Close – contact: Anne Howie, 01223 356140

Choir

The choir normally sings on the first three Sundays of the month at our 9:30 am service. Rehearsals are 6:00 pm – 7:15 pm on the first and third Fridays of the month and from 9:00 am on Sundays.

On the Buses



Thank you for all the many positive comments we have received about the *On the Buses* insert in the July copy of Seek. If you have not received a copy, there are still some copies of Seek with the leaflet in the Narthex. We are planning to bring out an updated version for our widely distributed October edition of Seek. If you have any suggestions about other relevant information to include in this, we will be delighted to receive them (by early September please). Before then, you should be aware that a number of bus timetables will change on the 1st September.

Derek Cummings

St Mark's Lending Library



Did you know St Mark's has our own lending library? There are story books, prayer books, Bible commentaries and more for children as well as adults, all available to borrow from the Community Centre whenever the building is open. Simply sign them out in the folder and sign them back in when you return them. It would be great to see this resource get more use!

Ride and Stride Day



I am planning to participate in Ride and Stride Day on Saturday 14th September travelling by bus and doing some walking to visit all the churches in our South Cambridge Deanery. I did this in September 2017, when I walked 12 miles and rode 12 miles by bus. This year I will use more buses and reduce the walking to about 5 miles. If anyone would like to join me in this expedition you will very welcome. As St Mark's Autumn Fair is being held in the morning of the 14th I plan to leave at midday and expect it to take six hours and to call in at 15 churches, using six different bus routes.

Derek Cummings

Memorial Service for Philip Spence

Philip Spence was Vicar of St Mark's from 1987 to 1995, before becoming Vicar in and Residentiary Canon of Peterborough and then covering a group of rural parishes based in Uppingham where he remained following retirement four years ago. He died on the 29th May, aged 84. Five of us from St Mark's went to the Memorial Service, which was held at the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul in Uppingham.

His appointment at St Mark's also included Chaplain and Fellow of Wolfson College and he was also religious advisor to Anglia TV. There is a quite detailed and comprehensive Obituary of Philip in the Church Times, providing a very good insight into his personality which we ourselves witnessed well here at St Marks.

When Philip was Vicar here in Newnham he made a considerable impact on many of us and I would like to use this article to say a little more about this. As described in the Church Times Obituary, Philip's background was Methodist and he brought to St Mark's a gentle "broad Church" informality to our Services- full of humour and very approachable. He was a very good artist and many of his sermons conducted from the Aisle included the use of flip charts particularly appealing to children who loved them, as we did too.

He was a very good communicator but also with a gift of friendship combined with a genuine interest in people - a "sparkling eye" making him very approachable. His sermons were "ex tempore" but nevertheless clearly well thought out. Building on Bill Loveless's Family Service he started Junior Church at St Mark's which flourished, often with more than thirty children. He also led a Church group, which included about twenty people, mainly

from St Mark's, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1994.

Philip and Monica lived in the St Mark's Vicarage, so were often seen about in the streets of Newnham. Monica was a very keen gardener, quite hard work in view of the size of the Vicarage garden. The Vicarage and its garden were made available by them for the annual Church Fête and for other occasions, including the monthly PCC meetings with Monica providing the refreshments.

I think all of us from St Mark's found the Memorial Service inspiring and, if I can use the word, joyful. Maybe typical for Philip, he himself put together the Order of Service, a prayer written by himself, hymns *Immortal, Invisible, Love Divine All Love Excelling* and *The Spacious Firmament on High*, the well known John 14:1 - 6 as the Bible Reading and, of course, there were tributes from family and clergy friends. Particularly memorable was a long ringing of the church bells after the Service, a full "canopy" of bells, sounding joyful and vibrant like for a wedding. To me this was typical Philip.

Quite a person whose memory we, Sue and myself, will continue to treasure. We are reminded of him frequently by the wall hanging in the North Chancel in St Marks where eight of our former vicars up to 2001 are shown - Philip with typically his great "mop" of white hair. However, please read the Church Times Obituary* (copies can be made available) which brings out his background and personality so well, much more than this short article can achieve.

Chris Wagner

*Obituary: Canon Philip Spence
(churchtimes.co.uk)

The Installation of our new Vicar, the Revd Jim Robinson

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Prayers in a Time of Conflict

It has been suggested that we should publish the collect for the Holy Land prayed by Bethan each Sunday. We have added the prayer for Ukraine used by Sophie Buchanan in her intercessions in August.

O God of all justice and peace we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths - Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for, to all of us, you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Prayer from Archbishop Hosam, Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East

God of peace and justice we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

The prayer written by our Archbishops of Canterbury and York especially for Ukraine and remembering all countries at war

Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham in September

Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday

Sunday Services

1st September at **9.30 am** Communion

8th September no 9.30 am service.

Instead, a joint service at 10.30 am in Grantchester Church (See below)

15th September at **9.30 am** Communion with Junior Church

22nd September at **9.30 am** Communion (Creationtide) with Junior Church

29th September at **9.30 am** Communion (Creationtide)

Tuesdays

Weekly Communion (BCP) at 11.00 am followed by refreshments