

# Seek



## October 2024

**The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge**  
**[www.stmarksnewnham.org](http://www.stmarksnewnham.org)**

# The Vicar's Letter



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write this in the middle of my second week in the job. And whilst I have enjoyed myself thoroughly thus far, I have also been reminded just what complex and rich ecosystems parishes are. A parish is a web of relationships which interweave and stretch out in all directions. Some strands are new, some have been in place for decades or even centuries. All form part of the whole, and depend on one another in a variety of ways. As a newcomer, tasked with getting to grips with the physical and spiritual landscape here, I feel like an explorer, stumbling through uncharted terrain, trying to work out the connections and rhythms which are in play, following the different trails to see where they lead, digging below the surface to see where the roots lie.

This is not a complaint! Whilst I must admit that by the end of some days my head has been spinning somewhat, it is an enormous privilege to become part of our parishes' stories, and to have the opportunity to learn about them. That is my primary purpose at the moment. To shift the metaphor slightly, from exploring to gardening, I was always told that a good gardener, before pruning or planting, will first watch and wait and see what emerges in a patch of land over the cycle of seasons. I am in that stage, and even in these early days it has filled my heart with joy to see what life and love there is on display. I think of the warmth with which my family and I have been made welcome, across both parishes. My induction service at St Mark's, and the 'First Sunday' joint service at Grantchester, were tremendously happy occasions, full of the best of Christian community: joy, hope, and hospitality. And these were equally on display throughout our wonderful Autumn Fair. Thank you to everybody who played their part, and for the warmth of the welcome which you have extended to my family and me.

All this talk of ecosystems and gardens is quite fitting given that we are entering the season of harvest thanksgiving. Please do come along and take part in our Harvest Festival and lunch. The Christian faith is grounded in thanksgiving; on our

acknowledgement of the fact that we are dependent on others and ultimately on God for all that sustains life. The Church encourages us to use this time to also consider wider climate issues, as part of our duty of care for the gift of creation.

My own reflections, however, keep leading me back to this notion of the parish as an ecosystem; as precious and life-giving. A parish is an enmeshment of souls, every one unique, but all, by God's Grace, trying, striving to live in the light of Christ and grow in his likeness. And we do that by nurturing relationships with one another, and with those friends, neighbours and strangers amongst whom God has planted us. This is because God is Trinity. The Scriptures reveal that there is one God, but that there is plurality within God. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit - what classical Christian Doctrine calls the three 'persons'. The difference between a thing and a person is that a person can enter into a relationship with another. This capacity and desire for relationship and fellowship is what defines God. Human beings, we believe, are made in the image of God. We are made to be in relationship with one another. Indeed, it is only by our relationships that we are drawn out of ourselves and enabled to become more fully and authentically human.

This is in contrast to a great deal of western philosophy, which focuses the spotlight on the individual: think of Descartes' famous dictum, 'I think therefore I am'. The older, Christian alternative to this is 'I love therefore I am'. In other words, our identity and our flourishing is not something we can attain on our own, but only through a shared life within a community. Our mutual interdependence with one another and with the whole fabric of creation - something which, as I have already said, harvest thanksgiving encourages us to reflect on - is therefore not something to bemoan or even try to free ourselves from. It is something to celebrate, and give thanks for. I, for one, already feel incredibly dependent on so many of you, who have helped welcome me into this community, and I am eternally grateful.

In friendship and faith,

*The Rev'd Jim Robinson*  
revjrobinson@gmail.com

# The Installation of the Revd Jim Robinson

"This Thursday we shall be installing our new vicar. It sounds like fitting a new boiler". So remarked Andrew Hurst in his sermon on the first Sunday in September.

Four days later on the 5th September it was a great pleasure to attend the installation of Jim Robinson as Vicar of St Andrew and St Mary, Grantchester and St Mark's, Newnham. And with a full church in good voice it was a far more joyful occasion than commissioning a boiler.

It is worth quoting from the introduction to the order of service. "This service marks the beginning of a new phase of ministry for priests and people. It is one to which all come with a high sense of anticipation of God's blessing on the years ahead, and it is right that this beginning is marked by a special service both of celebration and dignity. Some features of this service have their origins in the Middle Ages; others are comparatively new".

The service was led by Alex Hughes, Archdeacon of Cambridge, and James Shakespeare, Rural Dean, who is well known to many as a former ordinand attached to St Mark's, with local clergy present. It was divided into sections starting with the Presentation of Jim to the parishes, led by Professor Godsill of Corpus Christi College as patron of Grantchester supported by representatives of the parishes. Following Bible readings and a sermon by the Archdeacon there was the Institution when members of the local ministry team came forward to join and welcome Jim. Then came the Induction during which Jim tolled the bell to signify taking

possession and was escorted to his customary stall in the chancel. In turn the Installation allowed members of both churches to deepen our commitment to God after which local community representatives and ecumenical partners came forward to welcome Jim with handshakes followed by an enthusiastic round of applause. The service concluded with Jim giving out his first notices as vicar and the great hymn "How shall I sing that majesty which angels do admire?".

The service was a happy combination of friendliness and formality. The necessary legal elements were in no way onerous or overbearing. Because installations are fortunately not frequent events the service is not perhaps well known and it provided an opportunity for reflection and prayer as Jim, together with his family, starts his new ministry with us.

A large number of people had worked hard to make the installation the undoubted success it was. The church grounds had been copiously tidied up, beautiful flowers arranged in church and delicious refreshments served at the well attended reception in the Community Centre afterwards. A combined choir under the direction of Marcus Cox led the singing of four hymns and two anthems. The churchwardens of both churches had organised the service with great care and thought. Thanks are due to all those involved. And the new church lighting proved superb on the first occasion it was used for a service after dark.

**Chris Hammond**

## Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer is said in St Mark's every weekday morning (Monday - Friday) at 9.00 am. All are welcome to join in this short act of worship based around a psalm and two scripture readings, which lasts around half an hour.

## The Tuesday Service

This is a traditional service following the Book of Common Prayer (1662) order for Holy Communion. It takes place in the main body of the church at 11.00 am every Tuesday. There are usually about twelve people, who value the quiet, devotional atmosphere of this service. The service lasts no more than half an hour, after which those who can stay to enjoy the opportunity for friendly conversation over coffee. The celebrant usually joins us for coffee. Everyone is welcome, including those in wheelchairs or with mobility issues.

## The November Issue of SEEK

All contributions are welcome. Please send them by  
Wednesday 16th October to Jane Plows at  
[janemp@virginmedia.com](mailto:janemp@virginmedia.com) (350120) or contact any member  
of the committee.

## Looking ahead to charitable giving next year via St Mark's Charity of the Month Scheme

As co-ordinator of the Charities scheme this is to remind you that it will soon be time to decide which charities we'll be supporting at St Mark's each month in 2025. All your suggestions will be very welcome.

We try to support a range of local, national and international charities, working with a wide range of people and issues. The list is drawn from suggestions made by members of the St Mark's congregation and others in the local Newnham community. Each year it has included some 'regular fixtures' and some entirely new.

If you have a charity you would like to nominate – or see repeated again from a previous year - please

do let us know. It would be helpful to have suggestions by the end of October, with a view to drawing up the new list at a meeting in early November.

For the charities selected we ask the sponsors to write a short piece for Seek, put up a small display at church and speak about the charity (2-3 minutes) at a 9.30 am service in the month concerned.

Please let Jim have your suggestions by the end of October, ([revjerobinson@gmail.com](mailto:revjerobinson@gmail.com)). If you have a query do get in touch with me on [sarah.squire7@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.squire7@gmail.com)- telephone 07912 990582.

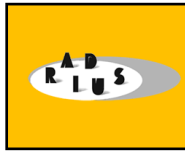
**Sarah Squire**

### ***Hints and Revelations***

#### **The Radius Festival of Drama**

**Saturday 12th October, from 12.00 noon to 5.30 pm**

**St Mark's Church, Newnham**



**The clouds methought would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me ... (The Tempest)**

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**See also the Radius website: [radiusdrama.org.uk](http://radiusdrama.org.uk)**



# Gombe Diocese : Charity of the Month

## Ten reasons for continuing our support of Gombe Diocese in Nigeria

At a time of significant change in our own community, it is inevitable that we ask ourselves where we might be going next. Underlying this article are, I think, broader questions: Should we as a church in England support the ministries of churches in other parts of the world? Isn't the church in England itself in need of money?

Over the past fifteen and more years, the St Mark's congregation has faithfully given half-yearly donations to the people of Gombe in Northern Nigeria. Is this an arrangement that we would want to see continuing? Here are my arguments for saying that as a congregation we should continue to have an international vision of the church, and thus continue to support the people of Gombe.

1. There is no doubt that ordinary people in the congregations of Gombe are in need of financial help. The economy of Gombe makes it difficult for them to earn a living. In one way or another they are dependent on farming. And this is an area south of the Sahara which does not support year-round natural growth.

2. The people in Gombe generally face multiple problems. They are not members of an important state and do not have access to the kind of funds available to other areas of Nigeria. Their problems are not just of personal poverty, but of the failure of governments to support even basic facilities needed for education and health.

3. Generally St Mark's congregations are concerned about the inequalities in the world. We want to do whatever we can to support those of our fellow human beings who struggle to survive against the odds which the modern world throws at them.

4. Jesus gave the church an international ministry. His instruction to the earliest disciples was that they should see their ministry as reaching "to the end of the earth". (Acts 1 v.9)

5. We cannot give to all cases of need, but because of an original contact with Gombe, we can feel that we are giving as directly as possible, through their diocese, to people who struggle through hard times.

6. Our link with Gombe came to us as an individual link with a student of Dan Hardy's (Perrin's husband). Dan tutored Henry Ndukubah in Durham before Henry returned to Gombe as its first bishop. Having met Henry and having received frequent communications and photos from the diocese we can see this as people from Newnham giving to people in Gombe.

7. We know that in their congregations the people of Gombe combine together to respond to the challenges which their communities face. It has been a privilege for our congregation to see how their efforts to build schools and health facilities are supported by local enthusiasm, for minimal cost.

8. We know from their frequent letters of thanks that our financial support is greatly appreciated.

9. They also appreciate our general concern and prayerful support. It is important that they do not feel alone in their struggles. A recent message from the diocese, which tells us how our money is being used, also asks: "*Please keep us in your prayers as a Church and Nation. Things have taken a turn for Nigeria .... The killings, poverty, inflation, corruption and Religious fanaticism. We are struggling to survive at this point.*"

10. The fact that we would be in this for the long term is a positive witness to the identity of our congregation. Children of our local school who come to visit our church building see the gifts we have been given by Gombe and they speak of the kind of community we are.

**Andrew Watts**

## Harvest Flowers



We shall be decorating the church on Saturday morning, 5th October, at 9.30 am. Please come and make the church look and smell beautiful for the Harvest Festival.

**Wendy Walford** 323519 or [wendy.walford@btinternet.com](mailto:wendy.walford@btinternet.com)

# Stuart Lingard

With the death of Stuart from cancer St Mark's has lost a cornerstone. When I saw him at the hospice a week before he died he said, "no eulogies" but surely we cannot let his life and work for us and Cambridge go unrecorded.

Stuart loved the natural world, particularly its birds. With Rita he travelled far to see them always returning happily to watch the Rugby at Grange Road. He was a staunch conservationist.

But it is for his work that he will be remembered. Almost 20 years ago he quietly offered to succeed Tony Dathan, another hero of St Mark's, as Church Treasurer when he saw Tony fading. He brought to us the experience of running his own accountancy practice and within a few years had quadrupled our reserves, securing our future. He was modest, summing up a year's work in one or two sentences. His advice was always sought and followed. Once

convinced, he supported all our projects with great enthusiasm and imagination. He was trusted with generous gifts! In all this Rita was an able partner.

His name was a byword for Charity. For us he created The Charity of the Month. He did the same as a Freemason. His kindness to individuals was little known but sometimes life changing.

When his luck ran out he faced Rita's ill health and then his own unflinchingly.

He was a man of few words and quiet faith. He wouldn't have wanted this to be any longer.

Farewell, wonderful friend and colleague.

## Alan Jones

Stuart died on the 1st September. His funeral will be held in St Mark's on Thursday 3rd October at 2.00 pm.



Newnham Croft Primary School is seeking governors and would be very interested to hear from anyone in the community who would be keen to support the school in this important way [https://www.newnhamcroft.cambs.sch.uk/web/governor\\_vacancies/493247](https://www.newnhamcroft.cambs.sch.uk/web/governor_vacancies/493247).

## Apple Day at Burwash Manor

### A Celebration of All Things Apple, In Aid of The Sick Children's Trust

Saturday October 12th 10.00 am onwards

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Entrance is £5 per adult, children under 12 are free. Last year we raised over £6,500 for the Sick Children's Trust....maybe this year we can make even more!

[www.burwashmanor.com](http://www.burwashmanor.com)

## From the Registers

**Funeral**

19th September

Lou Parmée

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

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## Children's Activities at St Mark's

For more information on any of these activities, please contact Jim at [revjerobinson@gmail.com](mailto:revjerobinson@gmail.com). Please also keep an eye on our website for special events, particularly our Christmas Eve service at 4.00 pm which will be especially tailored towards children and families.

Although we offer special groups and activities for children, it is worth noting that we welcome children and families to all our services. There is a children's corner in church which houses toys and books which you can use when visiting the church, whether during a service or not. There are also books in the entrance to the Community Centre which is where you will find our toilets and changing facilities too. We do not mind if children make a noise during services (in fact, we are glad to hear young people joining in!) and if there is any way in which we can make you more comfortable while you visit or worship with us, please get in touch.

### Toddles



Toddles is our stay-and-play group for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers. We run from 9.30 am - 11.00 am on Thursday mornings during school term-time in the Large Hall of our Community Centre (behind the

church). We have a good range of high-quality toys for a variety of ages, from a baby mat where babies can play safely, to wooden vehicles, several scuttlebugs (tricycles), a trampoline, and Mega Blocks. There is lots of space in the hall for children to ride and play, and we can use the small yard outside in good weather. When it is cold outside the hall is well heated, and when it is warm outside we offer some shelter from the sun.

Toddles is free to attend, although donations are welcome. Warm drinks are provided for adults, and baby/toddler snacks are available for the little ones. No need to book, just turn up when you can make it and we will be happy to see you!

### Messy Church



Messy Church takes place in the main church building on the first Tuesday of each month during school term-time, from 3.30 pm until 5.30 pm. Each session offers a variety of crafts and activities for children to take part in, as well as a good selection of toys for younger children to play with. Before we share a meal or go home, there is a story and a song.

All children must be accompanied by at least one adult. Free to attend, with drinks and biscuits provided as you arrive. There is a warm meal at 5.00 pm for anyone who wishes to stay and eat together. Our next session is on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### Junior Church



Junior Church takes place on the second, third and fourth Sunday of each month during school term-time. We all begin in the main church service at 9.30 am, before leaving to take part in our own worship using a method called 'Godly Play'. This method is accessible for all, as it involves listening to a story which is told with props, and then responding in whichever way we feel moved to respond. There is a variety of materials and books, which children can use and play with once the story has been told.

All children are welcome, and their adult(s) can join them if they would like to or can remain in the main church service.

### Youth

We are currently looking at what might be a good successor to our M&Ms youth group which lost momentum. We have several secondary-school-aged young people involved in our congregation and Junior Church and we might make a group together soon. If you would be interested in helping shape this and joining in, please do get in touch!

### Jim and Bethan

Vicar and Curate

## The Visiting Group

This is a small group of people at St Mark's who are available to offer support to anyone who is sick, lonely, bereaved, worried, or finding life difficult for any reason. There is a wealth of experience in the group from listening skills and practical advice to a knowledge of services and what is available and going on in the area. All members are aware of the need for confidentiality and a respect for dignity and discretion for all.

If you would like to receive or offer support please talk to the Vicar, Jim, our Curate, Bethan, the Church Wardens, Sarah Perry and Nigel Porter, or Margaret Banks (01223 350573).



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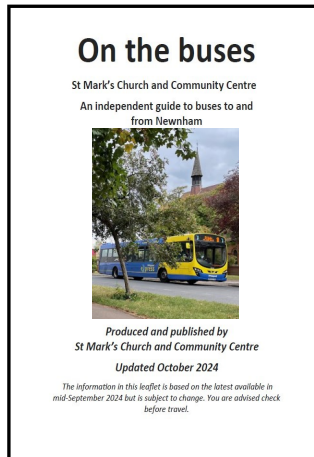
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## On the buses




With the printed copy of this magazine you will have received a copy of *On the buses*. We hope that you will find it useful.

This has been painstakingly compiled by Derek Cummings who has personally researched and travelled every one of the routes described in it. It is sponsored by St Mark's Church and Community Centre.

Derek believes that it will not only be useful to local residents but also to those living further afield who would like to enjoy our local shops and facilities, so do share it with family and friends.

We plan to put it onto the St Mark's website in due course so do watch out for it.



### Harvest Lunch

**Sunday October 6th at 12.30pm**  
**In the Community Centre**

The cost will be £6 (in cash please).

The menu is Chicken Normande (bacon, leeks) with creme fraiche sauce, potatoes and broccoli followed by blackberry and apple crumble.

There will be a vegetarian option.

*Please sign up in the Narthex and indicate any dietary needs*



## To Make You Smile

### Out of the Mouths of Babes .....

*My brother's granddaughter Eilidh\* got married in Perthshire this summer and, at her wedding reception, the bride's father in his delightful Scottish accent told this anecdote:*

After her first day in a new class at primary school, Eilidh came home, and announced:

Eilidh, excitedly: "We have got Piglets in our class"

Family in disbelief: "PIGLETS!? Are you sure?"

Eilidh, tentatively: "Twiglets?"

Light dawning, Family: "Oh! Do you mean **Triplets**?!"

(\* *Rhymes with Ceilidh!*)

Many thanks to Tina Wilson for this contribution.

## Home Groups at St Mark's

Home groups are a wonderful opportunity to gather together in smaller groups than on a Sunday morning, to get to know one another and to reflect on the Bible. There are three home groups and you are welcome to join any of them which will suit you. If you are interested in joining a home group but none of the current groups work for you, contact Bethan ([revbethanr@gmail.com](mailto:revbethanr@gmail.com)).

On Monday, every other week, a group meets in different houses under the leadership of different members of the group. The timing is 10.30 am to 12 noon. To find out where the next meetings are to be held you can call Sue Wagner on 01223 563435.

At Valerie and David Keeble's house (32 Barton Road; 01223 362291) a group meets on Tuesday evenings each week at 7.30 pm. Valerie and David host the group, with different group members sharing in leadership. New members would be very welcome.

Another group meets every week at Angela and Andrew Watts' house in Kings Road on Thursdays at 7.30 pm. Leadership is shared among members of the group. Contact [aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk).

## Ride and Stride 2024



Congratulations to Derek Cummings and Sue Payne for successfully completing their tour of churches within the South Cambridge Deanery. This was as part of the annual Ride and Stride Day on the 14th September.

Blessed with beautiful weather and guided by Derek's encyclopaedic knowledge of the Cambridge bus timetables they were back in Newnham six hours and 15,000 strides after they left St Mark's. They raised nearly £800 in sponsorship.

Of the money they have raised 50% will go to the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust whose well established enterprise this is and 50% to St Mark's. This will help support printing costs for the new *On the Buses* leaflet you have received with this magazine and also help fund future day trips from St Mark's like the recent one to St Alban's.

**Jane Plows**

## Prayers for October

*The following prayer is adapted from one that Chris Hammond chose for the Seek magazine a year ago when we were praying that a new priest would be provided for our parishes...*

O God, who knows the needs of your Church in every place: We thank you for having looked graciously upon the parishes of Newnham and Grantchester at this time by providing us with a new priest, Jim Robinson. Bless him and his family as they settle in and may we all, by your help, find ways to make your living presence more real in our community. Amen

*With autumn approaching, harvest will be celebrated at the church service in St Mark's on Sunday 6th October.*

Lord of the harvest,

We thank you for your generosity, for the food we are able to share and we ask your blessing on those who grow, harvest and prepare it.

Amen

*To pray can be so difficult sometimes, so it was interesting to hear a different perspective in a week of services broadcast on Radio 4's Morning Service (9.45am Radio 4 Extra) drawing on the life of religious communities. One place that the Revd Richard Carter visited was the Sisters of the Holy Paraclete at Whitby in North Yorkshire.*

There Sister Grace said: "Prayer is God's gift to us of learning, bit by bit, how much we are loved... how much each person is loved, and that takes a lot of faith, a lot of belief, but it's true... God loves us far, far more than we'll ever love ourselves or anybody else."

Sister Helen from the same community prayed: "Father, I pray that you'll be with us, walking with us, not just ahead and behind us, but with us, today and tomorrow and every day of our lives. Amen."

**Chosen by Tim Verney**

### Regular Groups

#### **Monday Bible Study**

10:30am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 01223 563435

#### **Tuesday and Thursday Home Groups**

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



## Services at St Mark's Church, Newnham in October

**Communion (BCP) at 8.00 am every Sunday**

### **Sunday Services**

6th October at **9.30 am** Harvest Festival  
13th October at **9.30 am** Morning Worship with Junior Church  
20th October at **9.30 am** Communion with Junior Church  
27th October at **9.30 am** Communion with Junior Church

### **Weekday Services**

**Monday - Friday at 9.00 am** Morning Prayer

### **Tuesdays**

**Weekly Communion (BCP) at 11.00 am** followed by refreshments

Tuesday 1st October at **3.30 pm** Messy Church

**Thursday 3rd October at 2.00 pm** Funeral Service for Stuart Lingard

## Foodbank Dates

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 6th October, coincidentally the day of the Harvest Festival service.

Alternatively, on Thursday 10th October 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.

There is also a Tuesday morning collection point from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm at the Gough Way island with the postbox.

In addition, there is a collection point at the Co-op.

