

# Seek

**October 2025**



**The Church and Parish of St Mark Cambridge**

**[www.stmarksnewnham.org](http://www.stmarksnewnham.org)**

## Regular Groups

### Monday Bible Study

10:30am, alternate weeks – contact: Sue Wagner, 07738 698884

### Thursday Home Group

7:30 pm, weekly – contact: Andrew Watts  
aa.watts@hotmail.co.uk






### Choir

The choir sings every Sunday morning during term time and one Sunday evensong per month. Rehearsals are every Friday during school term time (5.15 pm – 6.00 pm *Junior Choir*, 6.00 pm – 6.45 pm *Adult Choir*) Contact Marcus Cox at [singing@stmarksnewnham.org](mailto:singing@stmarksnewnham.org).

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

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

### Sunday Services

5 <sup>th</sup> October at <b>9.30 am</b>	Communion
12 <sup>th</sup> October at <b>9.30 am</b>	Harvest Festival
<b>6.00 pm</b>	Choral Evensong at Grantchester
19 <sup>th</sup> October at <b>9.30 am</b>	Communion
26 <sup>h</sup> October at <b>9.30 am</b>	Communion

### Regular Weekday Services

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

### Tuesdays

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

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## The Vicar's Letter



Dear Friends,

I was recently part of our annual Parish Quiet Day, when 15 of our number headed out to the retreat house at Little Gidding, for a day of reflection, prayer and stillness.

Now I must admit that this has been a rather hectic week.

There are quite a few jobs not yet done and people not checked in on my conscience. So I went to Little Gidding secretly armed with my laptop and a packet of chocolate fingers, hoping to catch up on work on the sly (there's an insight into my working methods for you!).

But in the end, my laptop and - even more miraculously - the packet of chocolate fingers - remained unopened. Because as soon as we began our first period of free time, I felt an invisible hand guide me to an enticingly positioned bench. It sat in a gap between hedges, on a piece of high ground, overlooking an expanse of heavenly English landscape, of ploughed fields and sheep pasture, land returning back to a soft green hue after the summer's parching, whilst the chestnut trees rusted, and a spine of poplars quivered in the bright breeze. Clouds towered and a single church spire punctured the horizon.

And a verse from the psalms, which has always been dear to me, but which, like all precious things, is open to neglect, came to mind:

'On God alone my soul in stillness waits' [Psalm 62.1]

I am by no means the first person to feel the peace of that place. Little Gidding was of course the setting for T.S. Eliot's final poem in his 'Four Quartets', where he wrote of a visit made in the midst of the Blitz, in a frozen winter - 'the dark time of the year' - and experienced 'the intersection of the timeless moment'; the feeling of being 'suspended in time', where the promise of eternity could be 'half-heard, in the stillness/ Between two waves of the sea'.

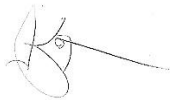
I have also been reflecting on the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus' tale of one man's heroic undertakings on a stranger's behalf. On the one hand this famous parable can feel, in stark contrast to the scene I have just described, like a rather daunting call to action. But it is as much about what God does for us as what we are supposed to do for one another. And, for me at least, the most striking thing that the Samaritan gives up is not his money, or his effort, but his time. All that time he suddenly dedicates to the injured man - unexpected, undiarsed and without any obvious endpoint.

There is a strong echo in the story of the way God is described in the twenty third psalm, with its well-known opening statement, 'The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not want'. The psalmist goes on to say how the Lord will wait on us, accompany us even in the valley of the shadow of death (as the Samaritan did for the robbed man in the story) and that he longs to lavish us with good things, things we need. Oil and wine, again as in the parable, restoring our soul, overflowing our cups.

So we can read this parable not simply as a call to action, but as a reminder of God's patience and mercy, of the time he takes with us. God has time for us. Perhaps by recalling God's patience with

us, we might also find it easier to be patient with ourselves, and grant ourselves the permission, in Eliot's stirring words, not to 'verify, Instruct [...] inform curiosity/ Or carry report', but simply to be still, which is the essence of prayer, and the kindling of faith.

In friendship and in faith,



Jim

## **The October Charity : Support for Gombe Diocese**

The issue of identity is one which constantly faces Nigerians who have chosen to be Christians and who live in the north of their country. One of their challenges is that other Nigerians believe that by being Christian they are somehow not fully African. This is the point made in the name of the terrorist group ***Boko Haram***. Those words can mean that Western features of modern life, such as secular schools, are 'forbidden'. Their implication is that being a Muslim is nowadays more African than being a Christian.

But this overlooks the fact that both Christianity and Islam have their roots in the Middle East, that part of the world where Europe, Asia and Africa physically meet. Jesus left his disciples with the task that the gospel must be preached "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1.8). So Christianity, like Islam later, spread out from the Middle East. In that sense all of us when choosing a religious affiliation take on a new identity, alongside our ethnicity and geographical roots.

Jesus clearly believed He was setting up a world-wide church. North Africa was initially Christianised before Europe. Gradually the faith moved to the outer reaches of the continent. A recent BBC documentary about St Patrick showed pictures of Europeans looking out from the steep mountain, Croagh Patrick, towards the Atlantic Ocean, remembering that in St Patrick's time people really believed they had reached the end of the earth there.

Christianity reached the coasts of southern Africa as European explorers found their ways round Africa heading for Asia. It moved inland in Nigeria in the 18th and 19th centuries. A key figure in this was Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Having been taken into slavery in 1821 from his home in the Yoruba speaking west of Nigeria, Crowther lived in Sierra Leone after he had been rescued from a slaving ship. His gifts in learning languages were recognised in his work of translation. He became ordained, was later awarded a doctoral degree, and when a mission to Nigeria was organised in 1841 Crowther was part of it. In 1864 he was appointed as the Bishop of Niger, the first black person to hold such a post in the Anglican church.

There are now more practising Anglicans in Nigeria than in Britain. In supporting Gombe diocese we are helping African brothers and sisters to maintain their identity, not as European Christians but as Africans. As we have observed the moves towards the choosing of a Pope and the ongoing process of finding a new Archbishop of Canterbury, we are seeing how our western-based churches are recognising institutionally the shifting of the balance in the Christian world. Within that reality we at St Mark's are reflecting our belief that the best model to work towards is for churches worldwide to help each other.

**Andrew Watts**

SEEK

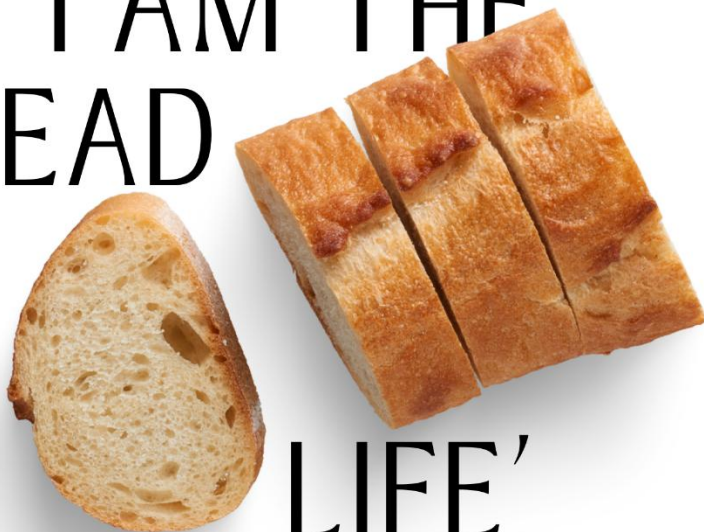
October 2025



# HARVEST FESTIVAL

SUNDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

'I AM THE  
BREAD  
OF  
LIFE'



JOHN 6.35

9.30 HOLY COMMUNION

WITH A COLLECTION OF NON-PERISHABLES FOR  
THE FOOD BANK

10.30 COFFEE AND STICKY BUNS!

11.00 REFLECTION ON 'BREAD' IN ART  
AND THE BIBLE

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## Families Network

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We have a thriving children's ministry at St Mark's, with Junior Church now taking place alongside the 9.30 service every Sunday during term time, a new junior choir getting off the ground, and our ever-popular Toddlers stay-and-play group going from strength to strength. For more information about any of these, see our website or email Jim.

We are really keen to grow this ministry to young people (and their parents).

A helpful first step would be to create a network of those existing families who would like to be involved.

This will primarily take the form of a WhatsApp group and an email list, to enable us to communicate easily, with suggestions, proposals, opportunities, as well as sharing some practical support and solidarity!

If you would like to be included, or to find out more, please be in touch with Jim.

[revjrobinson@gmail.com](mailto:revjrobinson@gmail.com)

## Harvest Flowers



We shall be decorating the church on Saturday morning, 11th October, at 9.30 am. Please come and make the church look and smell beautiful for the Harvest Festival.

**Wendy Walford**

323519 or 07856 065420   [wendy.walford@btinternet.com](mailto:wendy.walford@btinternet.com)

## A Coventry Welcome

*This greeting welcomes visitors as they enter Coventry Cathedral*

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, straight, gay, confused, well-heeled or down-at-heel. We especially welcome wailing babies and excited toddlers.

We welcome you whether you can sing like Pavarotti or just growl quietly to yourself. You're welcome here if you're just browsing, just woken up or just got out of prison. We don't care if you're more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury or haven't been to church since Christmas 10 years ago.

We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome keep-fit mums, football dads, starving artists, tree huggers, latte sippers, vegetarians, junk food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems, are down in the dumps or don't like organised religion. We're not that keen on it either.

We offer welcome to those who think the Earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or are here because Granny is visiting and wanted to come to the cathedral. We welcome those who are inked, pierced, both or neither. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throats as kids or got lost on the Ring Road and wound up here by mistake.

We welcome pilgrims, tourists, seekers, doubters and you.

First published on: 11th March 2024

## **PCC Report**

The PCC met on Monday 22nd September.

The varied agenda ranged from reviewing recent events and planning upcoming ones - with plans for the Advent Fair on Saturday 29th November in full spate - to discussing finances and the role of church treasurer.

We are in awe of the work Sandi and Xanthe have been putting into getting the church finances in order and setting up systems to take us forward.

It was a delight to have Kennedy join us for the first time.

As ever, children's ministry and safeguarding formed important parts of the discussion.

Approval was also given for Felicity Parker to begin a preaching ministry at St Mark's.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 20th November.

## **Foodbank Dates**

Please bring donations for the foodbank to church on Sunday 12th October.

Or leave them on Thursday 16th October at 19 Kings Road (Eleanor Scott) 9.00 am - 3.00 pm, or at 1 Millington Road (Rosey Gardiner) 8.00 am - 6.00 pm.

There is also a Tuesday morning collection point from 11.00 am to 12.00 noon at the Gough Way island with the postbox. In addition donations may be left up to the Thursday evening in the black plastic box on the driveway of number 14 Wootton Way, the home of Sarah Smalley and Martin Richards.

There is a collection point at the Co-op too.

## Arts Events for Your Diary

**Sunday 12th October at 11.00 am:** 'BREAD'. A special illustrated talk for Harvest by Dr Hannalore Hägele

**Friday 14th November at 7.30 pm:** DESERT ISLAND PICKS Two more St Mark's friends share stories and choices

**Friday 5th December at 7.30 pm and Saturday 6th December at 3.00 pm and 7.30 pm:** A seasonal programme of stories and songs ATHEATRICAL CHRISTMAS - presented by Bawds theatre group

**Friday 13th February time tbc:** BOUND BY LOVE - a words and music concert with Jane Bower and friends

## Music at St Mark's

The choir is a valued and integral part of our worship, singing at the 9.30am service every week during school term as well as monthly choral evensong and other occasional special services. Rehearsals are on Fridays at 6pm during school term and last around 40 minutes. All are welcome to join irrespective of gender, voice part or commitment level.

Junior Choir meets on Fridays during school term time. Rehearsals run from 5.15 pm-6.00 pm, with snacks available from 5.00 pm, and feature fun warm-ups and exercises, lessons in good singing technique and a variety of hymns and anthems. Although still in its infancy, having only started last term, Junior Choir has a respectable cohort of regulars and is still welcoming newcomers. If you have a child aged 8-13, why not bring them along and see if it's right for them?

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## **On the Buses: the Future**

### **An open letter to all who are responsible for our bus service.**

Whippet buses organise a good bus service through Newnham, which at its best can provide four buses an hour in each direction and take us directly and quietly in clean, modern electric buses to the centre, rail station and Addenbrooke's Hospital from 6 am to 11 pm, not to mention choice destinations such as King's College Chapel (near), the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Botanic Gardens. One change of bus will take us from Newnham to most areas of the city, as I have shown in previous articles in Seek (available on our St Mark's website) and the On the Buses leaflet.

I suggest the following objectives for this service, all of which make commercial sense to me:

Replace the hideous bus shelters which disfigure our main roads.

At weekends. divert all U2 buses along Barton Road, the U1 route. The only U2 bus stop in West Road is hardly used at weekends and the University Library is as accessible from the Robinson College stop on the U1. This would double the number of buses calling at the three Newnham bus stops at weekends at no extra cost to the company.

Move the main arrival bus stop, returning from the city centre, from Barton Road/Hardwick Street to Newnham Road opposite the inward stop. The existing stop has to cope with 50 buses a day with passengers served badly on a narrow pavement and road traffic blocked. Newnham Road is spacious and welcoming.

Introduce a Sunday service on the 18 route. Sundays in Cambridge are as busy as weekdays.

Provide a live bus tracker at all main bus stops e.g. Newnham Road, the nearest stop for most Newnham residents.

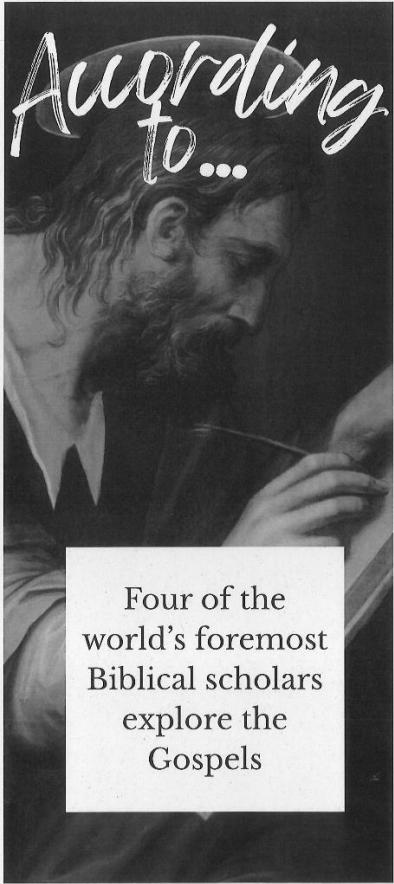
## **November Seek**

**Please send contributions to Jane Plows by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October**

I am an experienced bus traveller in several urban locations and when young worked for several years for the Western Welsh bus company in Cardiff. I believe that adopting the measures above would double the number of frequent bus passengers in Newnham to everyone's benefit.


**Derek Cummings**

*Comments on this article are welcome to [drcummings77@gmail.com](mailto:drcummings77@gmail.com)*



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**Richard Bauckham**  
*on St Mark*  
~

5<sup>th</sup> October  
**Michael Thompson**  
*on St Matthew*  
~

2<sup>nd</sup> November  
**Steve Walton**  
*on St Luke*  
~

7<sup>th</sup> December  
**David Ford**  
*on St John*

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## Prayers for October with Harvest in Mind

Creator God,  
you made the goodness of the land,  
the riches of the sea  
and the rhythm of the seasons;  
as we thank you for your gracious providing may we cherish and respect  
this planet and its peoples,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,  
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.  
He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,  
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.  
All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above;  
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love.

*Matthias Claudius 1740-1815*

Generous God,  
we praise and thank you  
for the gifts that you have given us:  
the fruits of the harvest  
and the joy of your love.

Free us from the fear that leads us  
to store up more than we need.  
Fill our hearts with gratitude  
which moves us to share what we have.

Show us how to plant seeds of hope  
and together reap a better world,  
where each and every person  
can share in the fullness of your love. Amen.

Catherine Gorman/CAFOD

**Chosen by Tim Verney**

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