

Vicar's Pastoral Letter

Date : October 2007
Author : Rev. Peter Holzapfel, St. Mary's Church, Kempsey, Worcester.
Subject : Gift Days at St. Mary's and St. Denys.

Dear Friends,

It is with great delight and prayers of thanks that I can say that our recently launched Alpha Course has got off to a great start with over thirty people in attendance each Wednesday at St. Mary's Church. I would like to say an enormous thank you to everyone who is helping in any way and especially those who are weekly preparing our delicious food which is such an important part of our enjoyment and relaxation as we learn more of what God has done for us in sending Jesus as our Saviour. At this time of Harvest we rightly thank God for all our physical provision but let's never forget the words of Jesus that "man doesn't live by bread alone" and that we need spiritual and emotional nourishment too. And so I thank God for every person who is coming along to the Alpha evenings because each of them is part of that harvest of faith that is so vital to our well being.

It is, of course, as with any harvest so necessary to prepare the ground and to plant seeds and over the last two years this is what we have been doing. I know that some of you have found it hard to accept the changes to more informal family centred worship on Sunday mornings but I do ask you to continue bearing with it and supporting it because without opening up the church and making it more accessible and all inclusive then who would we have to invite on courses such as Alpha? It is a real sign of progress and blessing that we have many people to invite and that so many are accepting the invitation. Yes, it is slow, and the increase is certainly gradual, but let's not give up but continue in faith seeking God's blessing.

Part of that blessing is the Mother & Toddler service every Friday morning at 11:00am at St. Mary's Church and also our Youth Group that meets every Friday night and who will be leading a Praise Service at 6:00pm on Sunday 28th October. I thank God for all of them and for their leaders and ask you to continue to support them and tell others and invite them to the many good things that are happening.

This is all part of our Harvest and God's provision for us although it can't happen without you continuing to work with us. **And this coming month there are two great opportunities for you to show your support for our churches and all that they stand for both at St Mary's and St Denys'.**

On SATURDAY 27th OCTOBER between 9:30am and 5:00pm there will be a GIFT DAY FOR ST. DENYS' CHURCH. Peter (the Vicar) will be in church all day to receive any monetary gifts that you may wish to make for the renovation and work of St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke. The Church is not a pretty sight at present and you will see for yourself the damage following recent flooding. We need your help urgently not only for Church restoration but for the continuation of its life and ministry. Costs are high and increasing and we only have a small regular congregation and the amount simply cannot be met on our own.

A huge THANK YOU to all who have already given but we do need more and it really is up to you. If you value the church's presence and ministry please come and offer your gift however large or small. I can promise you a warm welcome and that it will be very gratefully received.

Then, on SATURDAY 10th NOVEMBER between 9:30am and 5:00pm there will be a GIFT DAY FOR ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KEMPSEY. Again Peter will be in church all day to receive any monetary gifts you may wish to make for the work, life and continued ministry of St Mary's Church. I can't say how grateful I was for the huge amount that was given last year: THANK YOU to you all. But, as I indicated then, the needs have not gone away and this year we still owe £40,000 in our Parish Share to the Diocese and building costs of well over £150,000. Fortunately the Church was not flooded (although St Mary's House was devastated) but the needs are still very great. We do need you to give generously if the life and work of this church is to continue because that cannot be guaranteed indefinitely. I would remind you that we get no help whatsoever from The Church of

England, our savings are now minimal having been spent on renovations including a new boiler, and so we are completely dependent on you, the parish, for your support. I do, therefore, look forward to seeing you with your gift, however large or small, and assure you of a warm welcome and sincere gratitude.

There is so much good being done in our parishes, so much of God's love being shared, so much to thank Him for at this Harvest season, let's pray that there always will be.

God Bless you.

Peter

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