

# ST. JOHN'S CHURCH DONISTHORPE

# GRAPEVINE

OCTOBER 2023



## KEEP OUR FOCUS ON GOD

Isn't it amazing how much time we spend looking after ourselves?

We join leisure clubs, eat health food, experience therapy, jog around the block, endure medical tests, visit our dentist and take vitamin pills. However, most of us are aware that we aren't just mind and body, but spirit too. Yet how much time do we spend looking at our spiritual side?

Why do we invest so much time into our bodies but ignore the soul? No amount of jogging will help you overcome fear, but solutions to this and many other life's hurdles can be found by exploring your inner self, the very deepest part of you, created and placed there by God himself.

As I am writing this article, we won't have had our team weekend, but as you read it, we will have. My thought process about having the team weekend was to join in a journey as a team, as we begin again the process of minster community and what that means and how we again process our thoughts and feelings about our future. In all we do we keep our focus on God. and all creation.

This time of year has a special meaning to me as I watch the farmers gathering in the crops. I spent many a happy harvest helping my grandad and my uncle on the farms they ran in Dorset, helping to bail and being on the combine harvester. So, let's also keep a special prayer for those who have to gather in this harvest as we come together to worship all of God's creation.

Every blessing

Rick

## OCTOBER – SERVICES & EVENTS ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM.

Sunday October 1 <sup>st</sup>	# Harvest Praise with Holy Communion - Packington Church 10.30am # Confirmation Service with Bishop Saju - Measham Church 4.00pm
Tuesday October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Coffee &amp; Chat at 9.30am. (Peter &amp; Linda Townsend's home)</b>
Saturday October 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St John's Prayer Group meeting at 10am at Derek Tomlin's home.</b>
*Sunday October 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (Harvest Thanksgiving in the orchard joining with Apple Day Celebrations at 11.00am), Appleby (HC &amp; Harvest), Packington, (MP), Snarestone (HC)</b>
*Sunday October 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe Lay Led Worship with Winnie Meadows at The Halfway House</b> Measham (MP), Normanton (Harvest), Swepstone (HC) Appleby (MP), Norton (HC), Snarestone (Harvest)
*Sunday October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (HC) at The Halfway House</b> , Packington (HC), Appleby (MP), Measham (Baptism)
Wed'sday October 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Midweek Communion Edwina's Home</b>
Friday October 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Lunch Light at The Woodlands, Bath Lane, Moira (12- 30 – 2.00)</b>
Saturday October 28 <sup>th</sup>	Lights of Love Service at Measham (2.00pm)
*Sunday October 29 <sup>th</sup>	▪ Team Service (HC) x2 - Normanton or Swepstone

(\* all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated) )

(# Team Weekend)

As we are meeting at the beginning of the month as one large team, the team service on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday (29<sup>th</sup> October) has been split to allow opportunity to meet together at some of our smaller churches.



## FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

**LUNCH LIGHT** our group that supports folk who are bereaved plan to meet on **Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> 12.30pm – 2.00pm.** at **The Woodlands, Bath Lane, Moira.** If you have lost a loved one and would like some company, a chat and a bite to eat, why not drop by. There is a charge of £3. Telephone Janet 01283 215000, if you would like to come along, or if you wish to help out.

**COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH** will meet on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October between 9.30 and 11.00am.** at **Peter & Linda Townsend's home.**

## PACKINGTON & NORMANTON CHURCH LADIES GROUP

**Open Charity Evening Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023** In Holy Rood Church, Packington LE65 1WP at 7.30pm. The Speaker will be Anna-Louise Pickering, President of the Pollyanna Pickering Foundation Wonderful World : Travels with a Wildlife Artist



**Find out why Anna-Louise says being the assistant to a wildlife artist is the best job in the world...**



Tickets £8 (drink & mincepie included) available from Doreen Gasson 01530 412012

0789 185 8283 e mail [gasson123@btinternet.com](mailto:gasson123@btinternet.com)

*Proceeds to the Pollyanna Pickering Foundation . - Supporting animal welfare and conservation projects worldwide.*

## HARVEST THANKSGIVING: OCTOBER 8<sup>th</sup> AT 11 am in THE ORCHARD

This year our Harvest Thanksgiving Service will be an integral part of the village's Apple Day Celebrations. It's a chance for all old and young, to celebrate God's goodness to us. Gifts of non-perishable food are welcome, to go to those in need via the local Food Bank.

## LIGHTS OF LOVE: SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE.

As always we are offering a choice of services across the Team of churches.

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm at Measham Church

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November at 6.30pm at Appleby Church

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November at 3.00pm Packington Church

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November at 2pm at Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Donisthorpe Lane, Moira**

This is a simple service of hymns, prayers and readings, during which we can remember those whom we've lost and to whom we still want to say 'We love you'. There's a chance to light a candle and say a prayer for your loved one.

Feel free to come along if this would be helpful to you. We at St. Johns are grateful to our friends at Wesleyan Reform who have kindly offered us the use of their chapel this year while our own church is temporarily out of use, so you are invited to join us there but you'll see there are four services planned, so if you can't make the one with us, try to make one of the others if that is more convenient.

## POPPY DAY SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup> 10.30am

Temporary closure of our church building requires us to rethink how we might mark this occasion that so many of you find special in the church's year.

We hope to be able to hold the service outdoors at the War Memorial Garden.

We will have no sound amplification and so we need to gather in reasonable close proximity.

By necessity the service will be shortened and will take on a slightly different format.

But the important parts of the service, most of the liturgy, words and prayers will still be included but we may need to omit the hymns and the address.

The Roll of Honour will still be called, Bugle Calls of 'Last Post and Reveille' will mark the beginning and end of our 2 minute's silence and we will lay our poppy wreaths of remembrance at the gates.

## **GOD --- THE LIFE FORCE OF EVERYTHING**

It is clear that autumn is here again, despite some warm and sunny days.

Cooler mornings, leaves starting to change, blackberries to pick, cobwebs in your face - all part of summer ending and autumn beginning.

It is also of course the time of harvest, many fields have already been combined, potatoes are being lifted, plums harvested, the fruit of the land taken in for our enjoyment.

But in amongst the ending there are already new beginnings; fields are ploughed ready for planting, land is fertilised, another crop will soon be sown. It is all part of our farming heritage, and reminds us of the ongoing cycle of creation.

Christians believe that God remains still the provider of sunshine and rain, seedtime and harvest - it is His life that powers the life all around us, and indeed the life within us.

Leading a school assembly this week, I was looking at ideas for Harvest, and one source I found associated Pentecost with harvest. 'That can't be right', I thought, 'Pentecost falls in early summer, not early autumn'. But of course when I read on I realised that Pentecost was celebrated by the Jewish nation when the first of the harvest was brought in, which in their case in a hot nation, was early summer. They celebrated the fruit of the land and gave thanks to God, as we still do today in our Harvest Festivals.

But God also chose the Pentecost festival to pour out the Holy Spirit on the infant church. He planted the seed of his life in his followers, fed and watered it by the Spirit, and then waited for the harvest.

And the harvest was that Christianity spread throughout the whole world, bringing the knowledge of the love of God to all nations.

As we look for the harvest from the land so may we also look for a harvest in our lives and communities; a harvest that gives thanks to God and continues to reach out with care and support to others.

It's a wonderful time of year, let's celebrate the harvest!

Rev'd. Sue Bradley, Team Vicar (2016)

## **PROJECT HEART**

Work on the transformation continues at pace. Removing the floorboards revealed large voids under the central pews which were much deeper than expected and the structural engineer advised that some needed consolidating before the block & beam floor could be laid.

. Additional large voids were found under the chancel. Most of the wooden floor beams were very wood-wormed so failing. This was not foreseen of course because this is the first time it had been opened up since the floor had been laid in 1838.

The floors were also found to be out of level, front to back and sideways.

All necessitating extra work to adjust levels.

These essential extra floor works have by necessity eaten into our contingency budget to the tune of many thousands of pounds.



### **Our Foundation Is Love**

In the coming Meditations I will be exploring a theme close to all of us-- *Love* . The most powerful, most needed, and most essential teaching is always about Love. Love is our foundation and love is our destiny. It is where we come from and where we're headed. As St. Paul famously says, "So faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

My hope, whenever I speak or write, is to help clear away the impediments to receiving, allowing, trusting, and participating in a foundational Love. God's love is planted inside each of us as the Holy Spirit who, according to Jesus, "will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you" (John 14:26). Love is who you are.

All I can do is remind you of what you already know deep within your True Self and invite you to live connected to this Source. John the Evangelist writes, "God is love, and whoever remains in love, remains in God and God in him [and her]" (1 John 4:16). The Judeo-Christian creation story says that we were created in the very "image and likeness" of God--who is love (Genesis 1:26; see also Genesis 9:6). Out of the Trinity's generative, loving relationship, creation takes form, mirroring its Creator.

We have heard this phrase so often that we don't get the existential shock of what "created in the image and likeness of God" is saying about us. If we could believe it, we would save ourselves thousands' of dollars in therapy! If this is true--and I believe it is--our family of origin is divine. It is saying that we were created by a loving God to *be love* in the world. Our core is original blessing, not original sin. Our starting point is positive and, as it is written in the first chapter of the Bible, it is "very good" (Genesis 1:31). We do have a good place to go home. If the beginning is right, the rest is made considerably easier, because we know and can trust the clear direction of our life's tangent.

The great illusion we must all overcome is the illusion of separateness. It is the primary task of religion to Communicate, not worthiness but union, to reconnect people to their original identity "hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). The Bible calls this state of separateness "sin."

God's job description is to draw us back

into this primal and intimate relationship. "My dear people, we are already children of God; what we will be in the future has not yet been fully revealed, and all I do know is that we shall be like God" (1 John 3:2).

**Gateway to Silence** - God's life is living itself in me.