



Willingdon and Hampden Park & The Hydneye Parish Priest's Newsletter

#6 September 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As I write this newsletter the view from my window is refreshingly damp and grey after the long hot and dry summer. Everywhere the grass has sprung back vibrant and green and that which had died back is alive once again. There's a sermon in there I'm sure, though I'll spare you it for now! Over the last week autumn has begun to assert itself and I look ahead to harvest festivals, All Souls, Remembrance, Advent and the word that begins with 'C' that is too early to mention by far. I do hope that as you return from holidays and settle back into familiar routines that you will be blessed, like the grass, with new life and vigour.

Something that was on my mind a lot over August was baptism and the understanding of the church being the body of Christ, made up of all baptised people from the very young to the very old. As you may have gathered from my previous newsletter, I very much consider the newly baptised infant as much a part of the church as the seasoned Christian. All members have a part to play no matter who they are. I also reflected on the word 'volunteer' and how it really is an inappropriate word to describe a baptised disciple of Christ doing things to serve the Lord. As disciples we choose to serve the Lord with joy out of love of God and our neighbour. Our words, prayers and actions should flow from our baptismal promises and our relationship with Jesus. Members of social clubs may volunteer to do things, but members of the body of Christ, the church, serve others with a joyous duty borne of love. Our churches in Hampden Park & the Hydneye and Willingdon are full of disciples that give their time and resources freely to serve the Lord, one another and the local community. I'm always humbled and heartened to see people listening to God's call in their lives and acting upon it for the good of the Kingdom. Everyone has their part to play; the babies, infants and children spread joy simply by being present, some read, intercede, clean, make tea, welcome, set up for services, act as servers, serve on PCC or as churchwardens, some like Simeon and Anna in the temple or Mary at Jesus' feet bring blessings on the church through their quiet and prayerful presence in the body of Christ.

One really special ministry that some of our people carry out is that of Lay Minister of Communion. Having completed a period of training they are commissioned in the local church to distribute the Holy Sacrament both at the Eucharist and in the homes of the long-term sick. Some may be tempted to think that if they haven't seen someone in a dog collar recently then they haven't been visited by the church, but lay ministers of communion are as much the church as the newly baptised infant or the priest in charge. That said, Deacon Sue and I (along with our honorary PTO clergy) are more than happy to drop in for a visit if that is needed or desired and we are alerted to the request.

So, as autumn begins to unfold before us let each of us listen to God's call on us in this season of our lives. Let us discern what God is asking us to be and do out of love for the Lord and for one another.

With every blessing,

Fr. Adam Ransom

Confirmation: you'll sometimes hear me say before the distribution of communion (the body and blood of Jesus in form of bread and wine) "if you normally receive communion here or in your own church you are welcome to come forward and receive today, if not you are welcome to come forward for a blessing, for none are turned away from God's Holy Table.' The Church of England welcomes visitors from other Trinitarian churches to receive communion if they attend a service. However, if someone from a non-church of England background comes regularly, then that person should eventually be confirmed by a bishop. Similarly, those who are baptised but not confirmed who come regularly should strongly consider confirmation as a means of receiving God's grace, affirming their baptismal promises and being admitted to the sacrament of Holy Communion (the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper.) If anyone wishes to be confirmed, or would like to chat it over, please do be in touch with Fr. Adam. Confirmation preparation is a joyous thing to do and does not require one to undertake any academic study or similarly scary things! It is more about talking about our faith simply and coming to a deeper understanding of our journey with God so far in our lives. The bishops don't test people before they confirm them. You can find out more here: www.churchofengland.org/life-events/confirmations/confirmation-faqs

Deepening our faith: Our parish partnership offers several opportunities through the year to engage with our faith in deeper ways; we have bible studies, advent and lent book groups, occasional courses and quiet days. All of which are advertised in our pew sheet and on our church near you web pages and are open to everyone to come to. However, I know lots of people are looking for ways to engage with their faith at home in their own time too and I thought I might recommend a few resources that people might like to explore.

For those who are happy to use apps on their phone the following are great for prayer and devotion. If you search in your app store by name you should find them: **Daily Prayer** (the CofE morning and evening prayer services), **Time to Pray** (the CofE prayer during the day and compline services), **Everyday Faith** (Daily reflections from the CofE), **Our Daily Bread** (a great daily bible reflection resource), **Pray as you go** (a daily audio prayer resource), **PRS Bible** (good for reading the bible on the go plus dramatized audio bibles to listen to the scriptures and bring them to life.) All these apps are free to use, though some have paid plans for increased features.

For those who do not do apps the following can be ordered online or through a Christian bookshop: **Bible Reading Fellowship Notes** (www.brresources.org.uk/collections/bible-reading-notes-home a daily bible reflection), **Reflections for Daily Prayer Advent 2026 to Christ the King 2027** ISBN 9781781405246 (reflections to accompany daily CofE morning and Evening prayer readings), **Daily Bread October-December 2026** ISBN 9781785069888 (Scripture Unions daily bible study notes.) We also have a good number of books to help you pray and study available in our parish library in Willingdon Church that you are welcome to borrow.

St Olaves, Chichester, 01243 782790, I can personally recommend their service, the staff are very knowledgeable, and they are happy to post out books to you too. Fr. Adam

Collection: At St Mary, Willingdon, one of the many things that disappeared with COVID-19 were the collection bags making their way round the church during the service. They weren't restored because most people now give via standing order or the Parish Giving Scheme. A downside of this is that we don't regularly give thanks to God for the gifts that we receive. Therefore, the bags will soon be making a comeback accompanied by tokens at the door that can be put in the bag to represent monetary gifts given to the church in other ways. Everyone that gives electronically in some way can put a token in the bag during the collection to represent their monetary gift, and anyone who so wishes can put cash/ cheques in too as in former days. The bags will come to the front during the offertory hymn as they used to and a prayer of thanks given by the priest. It will be good to recognise and honour those gifts before God at the altar once again.