



**The Parish of  
St. Martin's, Chipping Ongar  
with St. Peter's, Shelley**

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## **SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER**

**To be a growing church, God's gift to the community**

### **Letter from The Rectory ...**

#### **Money, money, money!**

Did you know that there are well over 2,000 references in the Bible to money, wealth and possessions? It equates to 6 for every day of the year! That's an awful lot, implying it's an important topic that deserves significant attention from us. Traditionally, an Englishman's wallet has been as much his castle as his home – and the same goes for Englishwomen too of course. How much money we have and what we do with it is a very private affair, and not one we normally discuss. Most of us are never taught how to manage money well, how to budget and plan. When you have plenty of savings, that's less of an issue but when you haven't, not budgeting can lead to disaster as many find out the hard way. In the book David Copperfield, Charles Dickens has Mr Micawber say (referring of course to old money: pounds, shillings and pence), *"Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure, nineteen, nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty, nought and six, result misery."* In other words, spending less than you receive is fine, spending more than you receive is the route to financial disaster.



With the drop in congregation numbers most churches, including our own, are finding it harder and harder to meet all the demands on the church purse: paying for clergy, paying utility bills, paying for building repairs and improvements, never mind paying for the mission and ministry that is our core purpose. We would love to see our congregation grow in numbers and discipleship so that we have the resources we need to share our faith more widely in our local community, in word and deed. We'd love to support young families and the increasingly frail more than we do, but we lack people within our congregation to provide that support and we don't have the funds to employ others to do so. We don't have enough funds to improve our buildings as much as we would like to either – toilets, better heating, more comfortable seating, better technology. And it would be great to have musicians at all our services, but musicians need money to live on as much as the rest of us do!

Coming up this month is Generosity Week, when the Church of England invites us to think how we handle our money as followers of Jesus. In particular, we are invited to explore further the two sides of the coin that are gratitude and generosity. So I thought I'd make a start here.

## **Generosity**

Online definitions of generosity include 'a willingness to give help or support, especially more than is usual or expected' and 'willing to do kind things or give somebody money, gifts or time freely'. They both match my understanding of the word and hopefully yours too. In virtually all cultures, religions and philosophies, generosity is regarded as a virtue and therefore something to be celebrated.

Apparently, at least one study has shown that participants saw those told to act generously towards them as more trustworthy than those told to be selfish. Our unconscious biases would seem to tell us that we can rely on generous people but selfish ones are likely to let us down. I bet that applies to our view of God too – if you recognise Him as an incredibly generous God, it's much easier to trust Him. After all, God has provided us with this amazing planet able to support an abundance of life, and he loves us so much he died for us in the person of Jesus that we might receive the incredibly generous gift of himself in the person of the Holy Spirit. The more you experience His generosity the easier it is to trust Him and be generous in turn.

## **Gratitude**

Online definitions of gratitude include 'the feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks' and 'a strong feeling of appreciation to someone or something for what the person has done to help you'. Again, both certainly fit with my understanding of the word and hopefully yours too.

There seem to have been far more studies on gratitude than generosity. One finding is that those who regularly attend religious services or engage in religious activities are more likely to have a greater sense of gratitude in all areas of life. Another is that gratitude is related to higher levels of general well-being both mentally and even physically. Grateful people have fewer negative emotions, are happier, less depressed, less stressed and more satisfied with their life and relationships. They tend to be better at accepting themselves, finding purpose in life, learning from experience and seeking support when they need it. They sleep better, cope with challenges better, eat healthier food, and even receive bigger tips if they write 'thank you' on their customer's bills when serving in restaurants – at least American ones!

Gratitude it seems is good for you.

## **Grateful generosity and generous gratitude**

The Bible is very clear in calling God's people to express their gratitude to him through giving. The Old Testament talks a lot about giving the first fruits, the earliest part of the harvest to say 'thankyou' to the God who sends the sun and rain and makes things grow. It is a call to generous gratitude, trusting that the harvest will continue so that all have enough to live and enough to give, as one of my favourite prayers puts it. Indeed, throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly explains that his people's generosity towards him, especially in the way they share with others, will be reflected in the size of their harvests. Only a small portion of the tithes and offerings that they brought as worship to God were burnt as a demonstration of giving to God without expectation of reward. The rest was

intended to maintain the Levites who worked in the temple as they hadn't got farms to grow their own food, and to provide social security for those in need, as well a meat for your own feasts.

The same teaching of giving as a way of showing devotion to God not least to help others, appears in the New Testament too, though with a greater emphasis on giving of our money rather than crops, no doubt reflecting the increase in trade.

The biblical view that our generosity towards each other influences God's generosity to us, is a teaching that has come home to roost some millennia later. We are increasingly discovering that our thoughtless greed has robbed the soil of the nutrients it needs for crops to grow, and destabilised our climate so that we are not getting sun and rain in the right proportions and so-called natural disasters are becoming unnaturally more frequent.

So, as we approach our Harvest Festival this year, let us do so with better understanding of how much more dependent on God we are than we in the west have been used to thinking. And let us take this annual opportunity to reflect on our own levels of gratitude and generosity both towards God and one another.

God bless and happy harvest!



**Revd. Hazel**

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*Morning Prayer each  
Wednesday at 9 am in St.  
Martin's Church*

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**STREETS TO BE PRAYER FOR:**

31 <sup>st</sup> August - 6 <sup>th</sup> September	Bushey Lea
7 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Castle Street
14 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> September	Chelmsford Road
21 <sup>st</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> September	Churchill Close
28 <sup>th</sup> September - 4 <sup>th</sup> October	Clare Mews

**FROM THE REGISTERS:**

*Baptisms:*

*Confirmations:*

*Weddings / Renewal of Weddings Vows:*

*Funerals / Internment of Ashes / Memorial Services / Cremations:*



## CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER

**All Services are in St. Martin's unless otherwise stated**

Wed	3	10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Sun	7	8.00 am	Communion
		10.30 am	One Big Family Service
		11.00 am	<i>Church@Home</i> Service of Morning Prayer*
Wed	10	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Thu	11	2.00 pm	Julian Meeting in <b>St. Peter's, Shelley</b>
Sun	14	10.30 am	Communion with Hymns
			<i>Church@Home</i> Service of Morning Prayer*
			<b>Harvest at St Peter's Shelley including:</b>
		1.00 pm	Bring and Share Picnic
		2.30 pm	Songs of Praise Service
Tue	16	8.30 pm	The Third Tuesday Club meet at <b>The Cock</b>
Wed	17	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Sun	21	8.00 am	Communion
		10.30 am	One Big Family Service
		11.00 am	<i>Church@Home</i> Service of Morning Prayer*
Wed	24	10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Thu	25	1.00 pm	until 3 pm - Smartycraft meets in the <b>Church Rooms</b>
Sun	28	10.30 am	Communion with Hymns
		11.00 am	<i>Church@Home</i> Service of Morning Prayer*

### Some events in our MMU in September which you might also enjoy

Sat 20 & Sun 21 Harvest Flower Festival at **St. Christopher's, Willingale** 10 am to 4 pm each day. There is also a Harvest Service at 9.30am on the Sunday

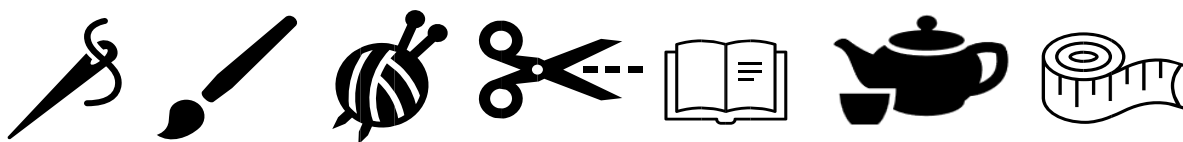
### A date for your Diary in OCTOBER

Sat 11 7.00 pm ***Your Choice of Desert Island Disc in the Church Rooms.***  
For more detail and how to book please see details elsewhere in this Newsletter and posters on our Noticeboards

*\*If you haven't attended Church at Home before and would like to attend, please contact Shirley Dudeney ([shirleydudeney@btinternet.com](mailto:shirleydudeney@btinternet.com)) for the necessary link*

*If you are running a closed group and don't want to encourage people to join, so be it. If, however, you would like to share what you do in our monthly calendar so that others can participate, please let Peter Dudeney have the details – his email address is [peterdudeney@btinternet.com](mailto:peterdudeney@btinternet.com)*

Thanks! 😊



## **SMARTYCRAFT FOR SEPTEMBER**

Why not join us at our SmartyCraft session in the Church Rooms on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September** from 1 pm until 3 pm.

Please come and relax and chat with our craft project; we will be starting to design our Christmas crackers for the Advent Fair. Jill will provide a short Bible reflection for you to ponder on and Rita will provide refreshments.

**Thank you for collecting your toilet roll middles for us. We now have enough to make our crackers.**

Hope to see you there ... **Jill and Rita**

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### **Ongar & Shelley Ladies' Thursday Group**

#### **First Responder**

Linda introduced John Newman who works for the East of England Ambulance Service which covers the areas of Norfolk, Suffolk, Herts and Essex.

He mentioned how people react if someone is taken unwell in a public place or at home, and that most were nervous about doing any first aid or using a defibrillator. He said that many towns and villages now have one of these installed, mostly funded by a local charity and costing around £1,000 each. There is certainly one in the old phone box outside our local newsagents.

John showed the group how to use the defibrillator using a dummy for demonstration. Make sure the patient is not responsive by shaking them and asking if they can hear you. If not, dial 999 straight away, or get someone nearby to ring, ensuring they let you know they have done this. John showed us how to use the machine, which gives continuous instructions, and stressed that you cannot harm the patient if you listen carefully and will only 'shock' if the machine tells you to do so. Meanwhile, do chest compressions, to keep the heart going; this needs to be done until the ambulance arrives. Get someone else to help you. John gave a very interesting talk and hopefully give some confidence to our members to use the machine if need be.

Linda thanked John for a very interesting and informative talk.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September at the URC rooms. Entrance at 2 pm for a 2.30 start. New members welcome.

We are organising a coach trip on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October to a large garden centre in Oakham, Rutland. All the Christmas decorations will be there and it feels like fairyland! There is also a delicatessen and restaurant / café. The cost is £23 per person. If interested, please contact Sylvia on 362924, or Linda on 363278.

**Jan Turnbull – August 2025**

## St. Peter's Church, Shelley

### News from St. Peter's



On 9<sup>th</sup> August we held our extremely successful Summer Fair, which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended and which raised a little over £1,000. This will be put towards our fund for providing a permanent accessible compostable toilet in the churchyard.



We will be holding our annual **Harvest Festival** on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September**. This will begin with a Bring and Share lunch at 1 pm followed by a Harvest Songs of Praise service at 2.30 pm. All are very welcome."

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September – Julian Meeting at 2 pm.

For any queries about our events or about St. Peter's, please contact Monica Richardson on 07717-877575.



**Monica Richardson**



# HARVEST




## *Songs of Praise*


**St Peter's Church  
Shelley**



**SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**



BRING & SHARE PICNIC AT 1.00PM,  
SONGS OF PRAISE SERVICE AT 2.30PM  
PLANTS FOR SALE



# DESERT ISLAND DISC EVENT



Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October 7pm Tickets £ 15 each in advance from Jill 07894 050663 or Rita 01277 364921

Tell us your 3 discs that you would take to a desert island and why. (in advance) We will play at least one for you during the evening as we relax with a meal in the Church Rooms. Bring your own drinks and glasses.

**Unable to get to church?**

*Well why not go to?*

**A Church @ Home**



*Want to know more?*

**Well, contact Shirley Dudeney**

**[shirleydudeney@btinternet.com](mailto:shirleydudeney@btinternet.com)**

**for more information  
and the Zoom Link**

**HOME COMMUNION** ... Is there anyone who, for one reason or another, cannot be in Church as they used to be? For those of you who would like it, we can offer home communions. If this is something you would like, please contact either myself, Sue on 01277 362723 or Shirley on 01277 364143, and we can arrange a convenient time to bring the sacrament to you.



# **ST. MARTIN'S, CHIPPING ONGAR**

## **Times for Services & Private Prayer**



### **Sunday Services**

**First & Third Sundays - 8 am - Holy Communion**

**First & Third Sundays - 10.30 am - One Big Family for All  
(non-Communion)**

**Second, Fourth & Fifth Sunday - 10.30 am - Holy  
Communion**

### **Wednesday**

**9 am - Morning Prayer**

**10 am - Holy Communion**

**St. Martin's Church is usually open for Private Prayer each day between 9.30 am and 5 pm or until dusk whichever is the earliest (12 noon on Saturdays).**

**Please adhere to any notices displayed**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU!**

Please do remember to visit us on the 'A Church Near You' website <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

## OUR 2025 TEXT TO REMEMBER



Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



**THE TUESDAY CLUB**



... meets at ...

**The Cock**  
on the

**Third** Tuesday of the month at 8.30 pm

Come along and enjoy good conversation and banter

**ALL WELCOME !**

### PARISH VISION

**To be a growing Church, God's gift to the community.**

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**In the light of God's call and our situation here, our mission is:**

**to be a more evident presence in our community, witnessing to God's love for all;**

**to be God's hands and feet within the Church and beyond through  
worship and prayer;  
listening and serving;  
acceptance and welcome;**

**to be a people who are growing towards a closer relationship with God,  
creation and each other.**