



**The Parish of
St. Martin's, Chipping Ongar
with St. Peter's, Shelley**
Charity No. 1214524.



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NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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

Letter from The Rectory ...

During the third week of October, the reading was Jesus' story of the persistent widow, described in Matthew 18. Those who heard it at either the 8am or midweek communion services, gave me such positive feedback that I thought I'd reproduce it here, in case others find it helpful as well.

The Persistent Widow

We know this parable of the persistent widow is about the need to be persistent in prayer because Luke tells us so in Luke 18.1: Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. We know we need to keep praying, but we also need to learn to do so without getting discouraged when our prayers are seemingly not answered. Jesus is pointing out that the reason we can keep praying without getting discouraged is that God is as unlike the judge in his parable as it is possible to be. For if even a rubbish judge can ultimately be persuaded to dispense justice to someone who keeps pestering him with her plea, how can our heavenly father who loves us and is justice personified fail to respond when we cry out to him day and night? QED

Except that at this point, we are inevitably brought face to face with the reality of our experience that God does not in fact answer all our prayers in ways we think of as just and certainly not in ways we would think of as loving. I know that among the readers of this letter will be some here who have painful first-hand experience of this. We need to think and reflect a bit more deeply.

Persistence as a sign of faith

First of all, we need to look at the final sentence in v8, which says "And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" That looks like a reference to the second coming: the day of judgement, when justice will be seen to be done. We don't of course know when that is, so it rather implies we are going to need faith to carry on praying for justice of all kinds



especially when there isn't a swift response. It also implies that persisting in prayer when God doesn't seem to be answering is a sign of faith not unbelief.

This story of a widow determined to pursue justice for herself by directly petitioning the judge until he gives in shows us that we too are expected to persist in petitioning our judge, God himself, for justice - however long it takes - precisely because God is not like the judge but is on our side, and desperate for justice himself.

So why doesn't he always answer our prayers for healing where there is sickness, or those for peace where there is conflict, or those for plenty where there is scarcity? Whole libraries have been written on this question, which basically tells you there are no simple answers, and certainly none that apply in every case. But there are some possibilities that can help our understanding.

Reasons why God may not answer our prayer

The best summary I've seen comes from Pete Grieb, the instigator of the 24/7 prayer movement. He points out that firstly some prayers aren't answered because it's just the way **God's made the world to work**. It's hard to imagine living in a world where the laws of nature are so often being broken that there may as well not be any laws of nature. By definition, miracles have to be rare. This can be painful and challenging at times. If we build on floodplains or in earthquake zones those who live there are going to suffer the consequences.

The second reason is to do with God's will. Sometimes, we must accept that **God knows best**, just as good parents sometimes say no because they know that what the child is asking is a really bad idea. Mrs Billy Graham said that if God had answered all her prayers she would have married the wrong man at least 3 times! However, there are plenty of times when it can be very difficult to make sense of God knowing best. When someone dies or suffers from a degenerative disease or we long to see them come to faith, it can seem like the answer to prayer is obvious. But it doesn't happen. That's hard, and yet there are many Christians who value what they have learned through the dark times, and have met God in a much deeper way as a result. Maybe grief and pain aren't the worst things that can happen to us?

Finally, the Bible teaches that there are things that happen in this world that **God does not want**. We are in a spiritual battle – God's will is resisted. When a woman is raped, that's not the will of God. When a child is struck down in the street by a car, that's not the will of God. Don't believe anyone who says otherwise. The Bible teaches us that there are spiritual powers and principalities that are anti-God. They want to destroy his creation, including us. They can and do take advantage of opportunities we give them, especially through sin as that cuts us off from God's protection. That's why repentance is so important alongside accepting God's forgiveness and offering it to others.

Conclusion

The three things that result our prayers seemingly going unanswered then are:

The way God made the world

God knowing what's best better than we do

God respects the opportunities our sin gives the enemy

The big problem of course is that it's hard to know which applies in any one circumstance. Our prayers need to cover all eventualities, not least because we can wage warfare very effectively by praying. Asking for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done, especially

with specific requests, changes things. To quote the former Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple, "When I pray coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't." That's certainly my experience and I hope it's been yours too.

Let's keep praying, and doing so in faith that God will work all things together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purposes. Don't forget that wrestling with God over unanswered prayer is a sign of faith, not unbelief. It's precisely because we believe that God can and does answer prayer that we pray at all, so let us keep on asking God for the things we need, confident that he knows us, he loves us, he has a plan for us, and we can trust him.

With Remembrance blessings ...



Revd. Hazel



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

STREETS TO BE PRAYER FOR:

26 th October - 1 st November	Elstar Road
2 nd - 8 th November	Epping Road
9 th - 15 th November	Fyfield Road
16 th - 22 nd November	Great Lawn and The Pavilions
23 rd - 29 th November	Great Stony
30 th November - 6 th December	Greensted Road

FROM THE REGISTERS:

Baptisms:

Confirmations:

Weddings / Renewal of Weddings Vows:

Funerals / Internment of Ashes / Memorial Services / Cremations:

A Service will be held at 4 pm on Sunday 2nd November 2025



**A REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE WILL BE HELD IN
ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH AT 10.30 am ON SUNDAY 9th NOVEMBER**



CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

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

Sun	2	8.00 am	Communion
		10.30 am	One Big Family Service
		11.00 am	Church@Home Service of Morning Prayer*
		4.00 pm	All Souls' Service
Wed	5	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Sun	9		REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
		10.30 am	Communion with Hymns including Act of Remembrance There is no Church@Home Service today
		2.30 pm	Ongar Civic Remembrance Service at Ongar Health Centre
Tue	11		ARMISTICE DAY
		10.45 am	Remembrance Reflections in St. Peter's, Shelley
Wed	12	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Thu	13	2.00 pm	Julian Meeting in St. Peter's, Shelley
Sun	16	8.00 am	Communion
		10.30 am	One Big Family Service
		11.00 am	Church@Home Service of Morning Prayer*
Tue	18	8.30 pm	The Third Tuesday Club meet at The Cock Inn
Wed	19	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Sun	23	10.30 am	Communion with Hymns There is no Church@Home Service today
Wed	26	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
		10.00 am	Communion in the Chancel
Sun	30	10.30 am	Communion with Hymns and Healing
		11.00 am	Church@Home Service of Morning Prayer* Ongar Christmas Lights switch on in the High Street

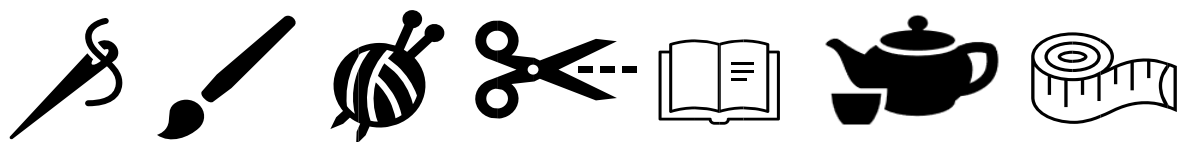
A date for your Diary in DECEMBER

Sat 6 10.00 am to 2 pm Advent Fair in St. Martin's Church

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

Are you holding an event?

*If you don't tell Peter Dudeney it won't appear in the Calendar.
His contact details are email peterdudeney@btinternet.com - Phone: 01277 364143*



SMARTYCRAFT FOR NOVEMBER

Why not join us at our SmartyCraft session in the Church Rooms on **Thursday 20th November from 1 pm until 3 pm.**

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

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

Ongar & Shelley Ladies' Thursday Group

Lewes and Bonfire Night

Linda introduced Andy Thomas who provided us with a presentation about the town's bonfire night history.

Andy was born, and still lives in Lewes, and describes the town and its inhabitants, as loyal and stubborn.

Andy gave us some history about the town, which is surrounded by many mounds, which are thought to be manmade, maybe used for gatherings. Lewes is known for its famous Bonfire Night which is thought to be the largest in the world, and consisting of seven huge individual bonfires, pyrotechnics, very loud firecrackers and barrels of fire which are paraded through the town. People visit from around the world, sometimes totalling around 50,000 people!

Bonfire Night is now traditionally on the 5th November, but in the 1600's, after the failed Gunpowder Plot at Westminster, the government tried to suppress it.

In Lewes, each of the seven bonfires are organised by individual societies, and they now raise money for charities and the local community. These bonfires are impressive, and include large burning effigies, some have been of well-known people including Vladimir Putin, Boris Johnson and Donald Trump! They all stop at the Memorial in memory of seventeen people executed under the rule of Mary I, then proceed to the bonfires. By the following morning, all has been cleared away as if nothing has happened!

Linda thanked Andy for a very interesting and informative talk.

Our next club meeting will be on Thursday 6th November at the URC Church Rooms. Entry at 2 pm for a 2.30 start. New members welcome.

Jan Turnbull – October 2025

News from St. Peter's Church, Shelley



Lest We Forget – 11th November

Remembrance Day holds special significance this year as we mark the **80th Anniversary year of the end of the Second World War**. We will be holding a special service on **Tuesday 11th November at 10:45 am** when we will be observing a two minute silence. During the service, a **candle will be lit for each of our fallen** as their names are read

aloud, and there will be an opportunity for anyone to light a candle in memory of someone significant to them.

This year, we will be including additional names for the first time, including **William Bolden** (whose mother lived at Brundish Hall Cottages) and **George Jervis** (whose mother lived at Shelley House). **All are welcome** to this special service.

Congratulations – Tom & Eloise

On **Friday 3rd October**, Tom and Eloise celebrated their wedding at St. Peter's in a glorious ceremony. The bride looked absolutely stunning - and so did the church! It is the first wedding here for many years; we hope it won't be long before the next.

Julian Meetings – Second Thursdays at 2 pm

Our Julian Meetings continue on the **second Thursday of each month at 2 pm**. We share a short commentary and music, followed by **45 minutes of silent meditation** and then time for tea, cake and conversation. Newcomers are very welcome.



Nine Lessons & Carols – Sunday 21st December at 2:30 pm

Looking ahead, our traditional **Nine Lessons and Carols** service will be held on the **last Sunday before Christmas**, which this year is **Sunday 21st December at 2:30 pm**. Preparations are starting now. If you'd like to volunteer to read, or have a particular carol you'd love to include, please contact **Monica** on **0771 7877 575** or email monicaprichardson@gmail.com. After the service, please join us for **mulled wine and mince pies**.

Stay in touch - If you would like to know more about life at St. Peter's, please contact **David Irving** on **07950 267880**.

Monica Richardson



A MESSAGE TO ALL CURRENT & NEW SPONSORS

I do hope that most of you will have had a chance to read the information about Josias, one of our sponsored children, on the notice board but if you haven't yet had the chance. Josias lives in Burkina Faso, West Africa. It is now that time of year when we ask you for sponsorship money! – by the end of November if possible please. A cheque made payable to 'Chipping Ongar with Shelley PCC' would be helpful or direct into the bank account clearly marked 'Compassion'.

Thank you so much for supporting these children over the years, it makes such a difference to their lives. If you want to read more, please go to their excellent website (www.compassionuk.org).

Anyone reading this who would like to join us, please do not hesitate to contribute as indicated above. Thank you in anticipation ... Sue

Remembrance Service

St. Peter's Church, Shelley

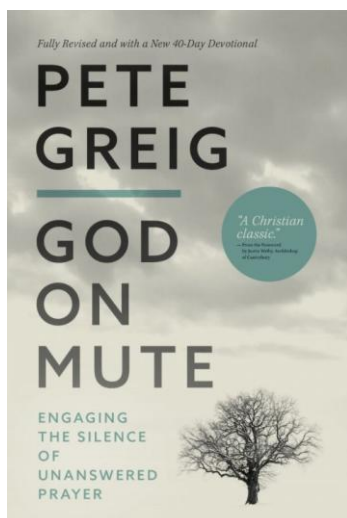


Tuesday 11th November
at 10.45 am

There will be a short Act of Remembrance
at 10.45 am and two minutes silence
observed to mark Armistice at 11.00 am



A quote from 'God on Mute' by Pete Greig ...



As a result of hearing Hazel's recent sermon on the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18v1-8) where Hazel tackled the challenging question 'Why does God not answer our prayers for healing where there is sickness, for peace where there is conflict, for plenty where there is scarcity?' (see also her 'Letter from The Rectory' at the beginning of this Parish Newsletter). I was prompted to buy the book she recommended 'God on Mute' by Pete Greig.

I'm still in the process of reading this readable and interesting book, but for now would like to share the following quote from the chapter entitled *Seeking magic fruit and finding tears*.

'When we are hurting and the pain seems endless, we may find it hard to think clearly or to pray diligently. But we can still trust, resting quietly in the Father's love for us (see Isaiah 30v15). What does this mean in practice? In part, it means meditating upon the wonderful promises of Scripture with a hopeful heart for the future. It also means remembering the goodness of God poured out to us in the past, perhaps through things and places that remind us of happier times. And in the present, it means receiving the kindness of people as gifts from God. Whenever we choose to recognise and receive such blessings (especially the small ones) with a grateful heart, we are open ourselves to the love of the Father.'

As well as a paperback, *God on Mute* is available on Kindle and as an Audiobook.

Shirley Dudeney

A prayer which Bishop Guli hopes will provide encouragement, especially if you are feeling in any way confused or uncertain ,,,

*My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

"The Merton Prayer" from Thoughts in Solitude



St. Martin's Church, Ongar

ADVENT FAIR

Saturday 6th December
10 AM - 2 PM

RAFFLE CAKES GIFTS PLANTS
CRAFTS TOYS BEAUTY VINYL
BOOKS CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

ALSO CHRISTMAS CAROL WINDOW DISPLAYS BY LOCAL
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SPONSORED BY
flitchtravel

Unable to get to church?

Well why not go to?

A Church @ Home



Want to know more?

Well, contact Shirley Dudeney

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/>

Falls 2 hour Community Response



Hertfordshire and
West Essex

Providing assessment and testing for patients without the need to go to hospital

8am - 8pm
7 days
a week

Person has fallen. Call the local Community
Response team on:

0300 123 7571 (East and North Herts)
03000 200 656 (South and West Herts)
0300 123 5433 (West Essex)

Response team will
visit patient within
2 hours and will:



- Make patient comfortable and complete full assessment to determine cause of fall
- Take blood samples, including creatine kinase (CK), urea and electrolytes (U&Es), where appropriate
- Blood test results back within 4 hours
- If raised CK levels or dehydrated, patient will be started on IV fluids.



Patient benefits

- ✓ Can stay comfortable at home
- ✓ No need for ambulance
- ✓ No waits in emergency department
- ✓ Blood results back with 4 hours - faster than if taken to hospital
- ✓ Same treatment as would take place in hospital, including fluids and follow up blood tests
- ✓ Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, home equipment and ongoing monitoring where needed



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.**