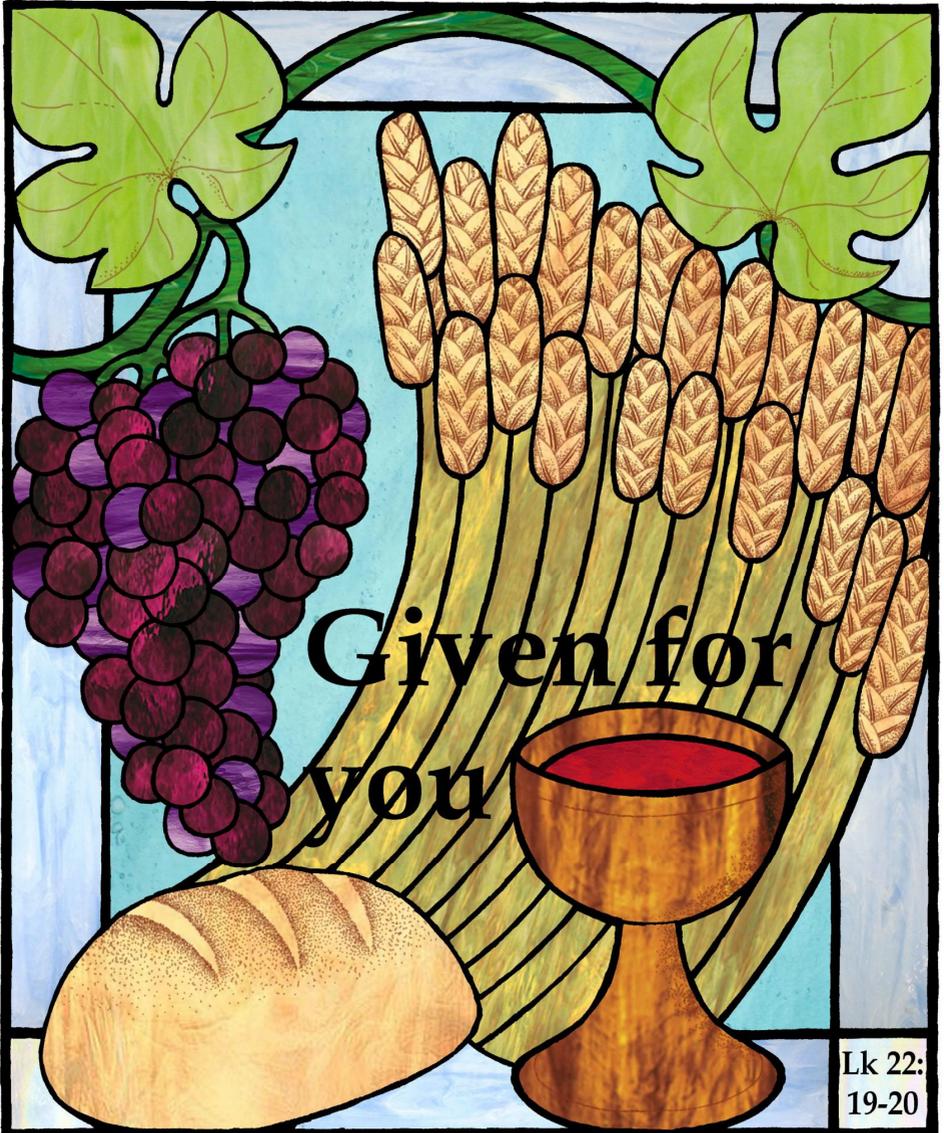




September  
2020

# St Michael's, Oulton.



Lk 22:  
19-20

Where has the year gone? It seems to me that the challenging times that we've been living through have led to an acceleration of 2020. It seems unbelievable that September is now upon us! In the normal run of things, we would be celebrating Harvest in Church but, at the time of writing, it's unclear as to the manner in which we'll be able to mark the occasion this year.



Rev. Helen Jary.

When I was serving in the Thetford Team Ministry, we had a number of farmers in our rural Parish congregations and they were a good reminder of the connection to the origins of our food. Living in a town, I am sorry to say that, although I do occasionally buy produce from Farm Shops, time and convenience mean that the vast majority of the food that I buy comes from the Supermarket. Vegetables that have been selected for their size and shape, then washed and wrapped in plastic are less likely to remind us of the process of sowing, tending and harvesting crops ...as well as increasing plastic use, with the associate environmental impact of that. Therefore, we can be several steps removed from the origins of our food and also from thoughts of God as the ultimate provider of all that we enjoy.

Harvest is there to offer us some important reminders. We are reminded that there are those who work hard, often in challenging circumstances, to produce a yield from the land (let's not forget that we've seen both water shortages and flood in the UK this year!). We are reminded to be thankful for God's provision, which we can sometimes take for granted. And we are similarly reminded to "... look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

Harvest is both a reminder and an opportunity to share with those in need; to hold what we have in an open palm. Consider this illustration: if grain is poured out upon an open hand it will freely overflow, but there will still be a pile of

grain left in that palm. If the hand, however, were to close and try to grasp as much grain for itself then less is able to be retained. This is a picture of an attitude that, I believe, God calls us to. When we resist the urge to hold onto things for ourselves, he provides for our needs but there is also an overflow to others.

*“Freely you have received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:8)*

With love and prayer,

Helen

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## **Bring back hedgerows**

We need our hedgerows back – urgently. They are part of ‘nature’s toolbox’ to help us reduce our carbon emissions.

That was the recent message from the CPRE countryside charity which points out that there were twice as many hedges in England before the Second World War. Since then thousands of kilometres of hedges have been ripped up to make way for new housing and motorways, and to merge and enlarge fields.

The 2007 UK Countryside Survey found that there were 600,000 kilometres of managed and unmanaged hedgerows in the UK, with the vast majority of them in England.

This was a significant decline on the same survey from 1984, when there were about 680,000 kilometres of hedges across Great Britain. That is a reduction of 80,000 kilometres, or 50,000 miles. To put that another way, we have ripped out about 57,000 times the entire length of Britain (874 miles).

No wonder, then, that the CPRE’s report, Greener, better, faster: countryside solutions to the climate emergency and for a green recovery, calls for millions of pounds to be spent on new hedges. It says: “By planting more trees and hedgerow, restoring peatlands and moving toward a more sustainable way of farming, we can use nature’s toolbox to capture greenhouse gases from the air, while revitalising our natural environment

## Famous Christians - Joseph Rowntree

If I were to mention Fruit Pastilles, Fruit Gums and Jelly Babies which name immediately springs to mind? Yes of course Rowntrees.

Joseph Rowntree was born in York on the 24th May 1836, the son of an English Quaker. After five short years of schooling he began work as a grocer working with his father at the age of 14. Part of his apprenticeship involved working in London where he became interested in politics, regularly attending debates in the House of Commons.

Joseph returned to work with his father but in 1869 he left to join his brother Henry who owned the Cocoa, Chocolate & Chicory Works in York. The company only employed thirty workers at the time, but under Jo-



seph's influence the company grew rapidly and by the end of the century it was an enormous international concern with over 4,000 employees. In 1882, the company began to produce Fruit Pastilles followed by Fruit Gums and Jelly Babies.

Following the death of his brother in 1883, Joseph became the owner of what was now a successful company. Even as a powerful businessman, he was deeply interested in improving the quality of life of his employees; this led to him becoming a philanthropist, pursuing many charitable causes.

He served on the committee responsible for two Quaker schools in York and taught in an Adult School on Sunday. Rowntree also played a leading role in the establishment of the York Public Library. He also provided a park in York as a memorial to those killed during the First World War.

Influenced by poverty, Joseph attempted to improve the quality of his employee's lives by providing a library and free education to workers under the age of 17. A social welfare officer, doctor and a dentist were also employed

to provide free services for the expanding workforce.

Rowntree was a supporter of the Liberal Party. In 1907 he funded the Nation, a weekly journal that advocated social reform. Three years later he helped purchase the Morning Leader and The Star, to stop the newspapers falling into the hands of supporters of the Conservative Party.

A long time active member of the Temperance Society, Rowntree wrote several books and pamphlets on the subject including The Temperance Problem and Social Reform (1900), Public Control of the Liquor Trade (1903) and The Taxation of the Liquor Trade (1906).

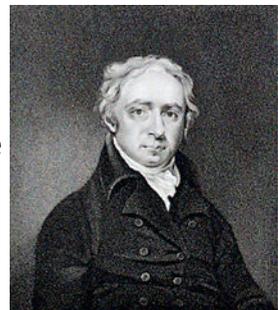
Joseph Rowntree was critical of the Anglican Church for what he considered to be its lack of interest in dealing with social injustice. Rowntree was also in favour of abolishing the House of Lords, an institution that he believed was hampering social progress. Rowntree retained his interest in politics and social welfare until his death in 1925.



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### **'Having a senior moment'**

English clergyman and writer William Lisle Bowles once gave one of his parishioners a Bible as a birthday present. When she asked him to write an inscription in it, he signed it "From the author!"



## St Michael's marks V.J. Day.

St. Michael's proudly took part in marking the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day on Saturday 15th August. Approximately 70 people made up of both church members and those from the wider community, met to remember the service and sacrifice made by so many servicemen who had fought under terrible conditions in the Far East. They had become known as the 'forgotten army,' tirelessly beating back the Japanese forces whilst many on the home front were celebrating the laying down of arms in Europe in May 1945. Meanwhile many thousands of Armed Forces personnel were still engaged in bitter fighting in the Far East. Victory over Japan would come at a heavy price, and Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) marks the day Japan surrendered on the 15 August 1945, which in effect ended the Second World War.

Preparations for the event had started a few days earlier, with cutting the grass and tidying up the churchyard under extremely hot and humid conditions. A new Union flag, which had been donated by local parishioner John Mason, was ceremonially raised on the mast and the bell tower, which to all intents and purposes had lain silent since lockdown, were checked over by Tony Crawford and Martin Dennison.

The short ceremony, which was led by the Reverend Helen Jary, welcomed everyone including representatives from the Parish Council, Royal Air forces Association, and the Royal British Legion.

Following the 'Adulation,' the Last Post was played followed by two minutes silence.



Martin Dennison and Alan Allsop replace the Union flag in preparation for VJ Day.

The 'Cry for Peace,' which had been especially written for the occasion, was read by Robin Keightley. Following a 'prayer for peace,' the tenor bell was rung 75 times, one for each year since 15th August 1945.

Afterwards, Robin said, "it was a simple yet very moving occasion, and everyone was delighted with the parish support for the shared moment of commemoration and celebration."

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## Has lockdown damaged your eyesight?

Are you suffering from 'coronavision'? It is perfectly possible.

Lockdown led to many of us staring at our television or computer screens for long periods of time. And that could have strained our eyes, warns the College of Optometrists.

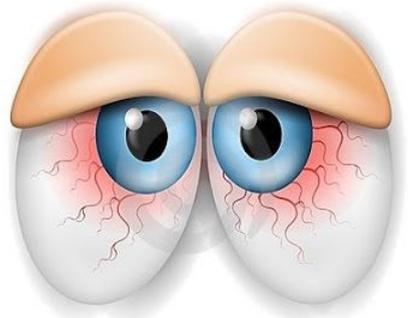
By this summer one in five adults in Britain had reported a deterioration in their eyesight. Symptoms include blurred vision, difficulty in focussing, and red or painful eyes.

As one optometrist explained:

"Working from home, video calls with friends and family, watching more TV, time spent looking at your phone – all that screen time adds up.

The good news is that this is unlikely to cause any permanent harm to your vision."

Nevertheless, the College urges people to get their eyes checked if they feel on-going discomfort. They also advise that when you are looking at a screen, you rest your eyes every 20 minutes, blink regularly, use eye drops, position your screen below eye level and increase the size of the text.



[dreamstime.com](http://dreamstime.com)

## The Rectory

### St James the Least of All



September 2020

My dear Nephew Darren

I think your idea for both our Confirmation groups getting together for a weekend away – socially distanced, of course - was excellent and our meeting last week drew most of the plans together. We didn't take any minutes, so let me record the decisions I believe we made.

Since all of us have to sleep far apart at the centre, I am prepared to spend the nights at a local hotel. By chance, I have found that there is a four star one only a few miles away, so I have booked myself in.

As the dining area in the youth centre may be cramped, I am also willing to have dinner each evening at the hotel, thereby creating more space for the rest of you. An additional sadness is that, since breakfast at the hotel is not served until 8am, I will not be able to join you either for your pre-breakfast dip in the nearby stream. It would be grossly unfair to expect you to pack lunch for me, so I will arrange for the hotel to provide me with a picnic hamper for one which I can have while you all enjoy your cheese and pickle sandwiches.



I think it will be an excellent learning experience if you prepare all the

teaching sessions yourself, but be assured that I will always be on hand to give the advice of experience. That large armchair near the fire in the common room seems to be the best place for me to sit, so I can keep an eye on proceedings, while I take on the responsibilities for stoking the fire. This reminds me; do make sure that the young people are encouraged to saw enough logs each morning for me to fulfil my obligations.

Naturally, my arthritis will prevent me being able to accompany you on your afternoon hikes, but I will cheerfully park my car wherever you leave the minibus, to provide a second vehicle in case of emergencies. I do not mind in the least waiting all those long hours until you get back; I have already found an attractive tea shop in the village.

I am fully aware that not sleeping or dining at the centre, not being responsible for preparing the teaching, nor being involved on the walks will mean that my contributions will be ever so slightly limited, but these are sacrifices I gladly make in order to give you further experience in your ministerial career.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

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## **Change to Publication dates.**

As has already been mentioned in previous editions of 'Pew News,' this is to be the last monthly edition produced. The publication of the newsletter will now come out on a quarterly basis. That means the next edition will hopefully appear in your in-box at the beginning of December. I would welcome any submissions in the meantime for inclusion in the winter edition.

Editor



## **London 'more religious than the rest of the country' says new report**

London is more religious than the rest of the country, according to a new report published by the think tank Theos.

The report 'Religious London', shows that Londoners are significantly more religious than people living elsewhere in Britain, and the capital's Christians are far more ethnically diverse.

The polling, conducted for Theos by Savanta ComRes, shows that: most Londoners are religious (62 per cent identify as religious compared to 53 per cent across the rest of Britain outside London)

Religious Londoners were 48 per cent BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic) compared with just 27 per cent of non-religious Londoners.

Christianity in particular was significantly more ethnically diverse in the capital - 31 per cent of Christians in London are BAME compared with just two per cent across the rest of Britain outside London.

Theos also identifies further insights around the nature of religious practice, finding that Londoners are more intensely practising, more likely to pray, and more likely to attend a religious service than those outside the capital.

One in four Londoners attend a religious service at least once a month compared with 1 in 10 in the rest of Britain outside London.

Religious Londoners are twice as likely as religious people in other parts of the country to attend a service twice a month or more (31 per cent vs 15 per cent)

56 per cent of London Christians pray regularly compared to 32 per cent of Christians in the rest of Britain.

Christian Londoners are also more likely to say that they will donate to a charitable initiative than non-religious Londoners (76 per cent vs. 68 per cent); that they would help their neighbours with a simple task than non-religious Londoners (92 per cent vs. 86 per cent); and half of Christians (49 per cent) and non-Christian religious adults (53 per cent) say that they are likely to volunteer regularly for a local charitable initiative, compared to 40 per cent of non-religious Londoners.

The report argues that London's leaders and policy makers should take more account of religious communities and their significant role in providing social welfare across the capital.

Theos director Elizabeth Oldfield said: “The great success story of London has been its ability to welcome and accommodate opinions

from across the political spectrum. The city still has the capacity to shock us – and this is one of the things which makes London one of the most dynamic, complex and interesting cities in the world.”

Savanta ComRes, who conducted the polling, interviewed 2,023 British adults aged 18+ online between 17th -20th January 2020 and 1,005 London adults aged 18+ online between 17th - 23rd January 2020.

The ‘Religious London’ report is available at: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2019/02/19/religious-london>



## 18th Sept St Joseph of Copertino - the awkward saint.

Joseph of Copertino (1603 – 63) should be the patron saint of all awkward people who mean well, but who drive those around them to distraction – especially their church leaders. Joseph began life in a garden shed, because his father had sold the house to pay debts. Then he grew up wandering about open-mouthed – his mother despised him and called him ‘The Gaper’.

Young Joseph’s intense devotion to God led him to try and join the Capuchin monks – but he drove them crazy: forgetting to do what he was told, dropping piles of plates on the kitchen floor, and neglecting to tend the all-important kitchen fire. He was finally accepted by the Franciscans as a servant, and grew so religiously fervent that he was

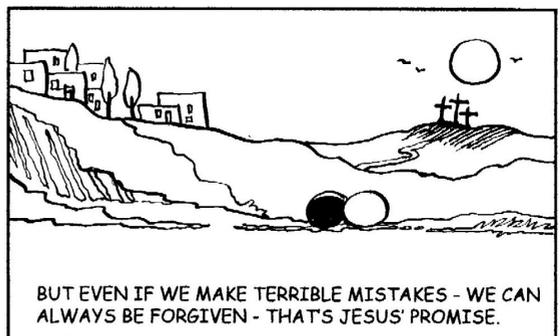
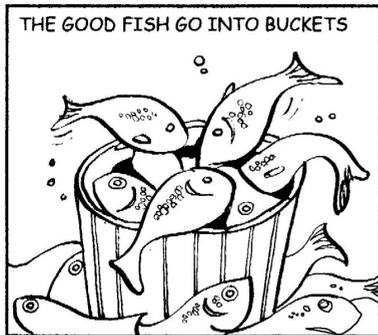
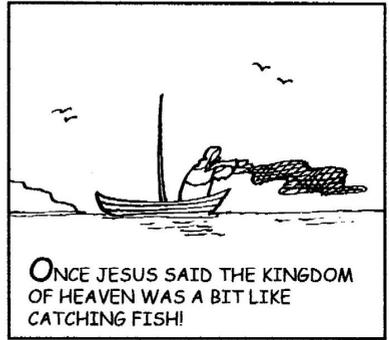
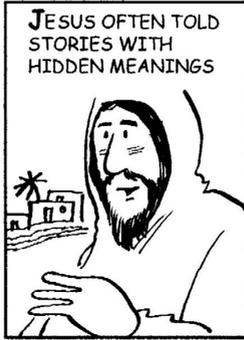
accepted as a novice in 1625, and ordained a priest in 1628.

As a priest he was devout, but apt to do anything – much to the irritation of his superiors. One problem was his repeated levitations, of which there were 70 reported instances. The most spectacular stories are of his flying to images placed high above the altars and helping workmen to erect a Calvary Cross 36 feet high by lifting it into place while he was hanging in mid-air himself. Such feats earned him the name of ‘the Flying Friar’ by admiring locals, but gave his superiors headaches. They were also disturbed by his habit of going into states of ecstasy, from which nothing could wake him. Joseph’s reputation for flying about and for occasional ecstasy drew the crowds: they were all eager to see what would happen next. What did happen next was that his superiors kept him in virtual isolation for many years, eager to contain this intensely emotional and erratic priest. In 1767 he was canonised, not for his levitations, but for his extreme patience and humility.



‘The Flying Friar’ - Joseph of Copertino

The parable  
of  
the  
Fish  
and the  
Nets



*Editor: The Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the CofE, reports on a recent warning from the Trussell Trust.*

## **Churches warned to prepare for ‘tidal wave of poverty’**

Church leaders are being urged to be ready to respond to the lasting impact of the pandemic on the country’s poorest people.

The effect on urban, suburban and rural communities is likely to be severe with many thousands of jobs being lost and livelihoods threatened. The poorest in society may find themselves hardest hit.

Churches are being encouraged to respond to the devastating impact of the pandemic and to build on the numerous social projects already in place.

The Trussell Trust that supports around 1200 UK foodbanks is warning of a ‘tidal wave of poverty’ poised to engulf the country.

**DONATE  
FOOD  
HERE**



Chief Executive Emma Revie has called on church leaders to talk to their congregations about justice and compassion and to work to address the root causes of poverty.

Speaking at a Bible Society webinar she encouraged church leaders “increasingly to talk to their congregations about God’s concern for justice and compassion to characterise the structures of our society: the way our benefit system works, the way our economy functions, people’s employment conditions and wage levels.

Emma Revie said that the Trussell Trust was “very clear that food banks are not a solution to poverty” and the charity wanted “to see people experiencing fulness of life and not being trapped by poverty.”

She praised the vital role played by churches in running foodbanks and encouraged congregations “That when we pray for our foodbanks, that we would also allow ourselves room to lament the injustices that make them necessary in the first place and seek wisdom about how we might be part of bringing about change.

“Because if we don’t concern ourselves with these things, the tidal wave of poverty is going to be too high and too powerful for us to respond to and we will see many more people being swept into destitution in the UK.”

At the webinar ‘Mission during lockdown and beyond,’ the Bible Society published research showing that church leaders are expecting increased demand for food banks, poverty relief, mental health work, bereavement support, relationship counselling, as well as courses such as Alpha that introduce people to the Christian faith.



## **‘I do like to be beside the seaside!’**

For centuries, many doctors have sent patients to the seaside to recuperate, believing that a bit of seaside air was good for them. Now the government agrees: a day by the coast does indeed have a therapeutic effect on you.

A recent study by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has found that people who spend time by the sea reported increased happiness and better general health. They were also more physically active during their visit, compared with visits to other types of environment.

Rebecca Pow, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, said spending time by the sea “has a welcome impact on our wellbeing. This makes it all that more important that we take care of our environment.” In England, we make 271million recreational visits to the sea each year, and more than 22million of us live within five miles of the coast.

According to that report we must be very fortunate to live by the sea, that is until those bitter north easterly winds blow in the winter!

## St Michael's Gift Day

Later this month, on 29 September, we celebrate the feast of St Michael and all angels, or Michaelmas. In England, Michaelmas is one of the quarter days, historically marking the time for settling of accounts, payment of rents, periods of employment, etc. Probably the most memorable use now of the word "Michaelmas" is in the name of the school term; also we think of the lovely daisies that flower at this time of year. Michaelmas is an important time in the agricultural year; we give thanks for the harvest that is gathered in around this time. The other quarter days are Christmas Day (25 December); Lady Day, or feast of the Annunciation (25 March); and St John the Baptist's Day (24 June). These dates are separated by approximately 3 months and are near a solstice or equinox. The way to remember the date for the quarter day is that it is twenty plus the number of letters in the month, except for Christmas Day for which everyone knows it is the 25th. Hence "March" has 5 letters so the quarter day is 25th; June has 4 letters, hence 24th; September has 9 letters hence 29th.



So St Michael's Day has a very important traditional place in the calendar; it is also very important for our congregation, whose church is dedicated to St Michael. It is right that we should at this time give thanks, and remember the congregations that have gone before us and their generosity in bequeathing us such a beautiful church, and for supporting the many priests who have served in our parish. For some years it has been traditional to hold a Gift Day near to Michaelmas to support St. Michael's Church, Oulton and its work. For a regular churchgoer this may be a supplement ("birthday present" is a near-literal analogy) to giving during the rest of the year; or may be an opportunity for a gift from someone who, not being a regular attendee, is nevertheless very much in sympathy with having a local church and a priest to turn to for baptisms, weddings, funerals or in time of trouble.

This year it is more important than ever to try to recover lost ground. During the current coronavirus crisis St Michael's income has been badly hit. Despite generous bankers' orders and regular envelope donations, which have continued, income is about £400 per month less than normal due to the lockdown. We have had to reduce our contributions to the Parish Share, payable to the Diocese to support Church Ministry. Thus your generosity at this time will help enormously.

The nearest Sunday to Michaelmas at which there will be a service at St Michael's is 4 October, and this will be our Gift Day this year. There will be a plate at the back of Church to receive gifts.

Alternatively there are many other ways to give and this can easily be done remotely, for example if you are shielding. In this situation you can set up a payment using online or telephone banking or by letter to your bank quoting the account name "Oulton St Michael's PCC", Sort Code 20-53-06, account no. 50719323 and reference "Gift Day". It would be helpful if you can phone me on 562301 so that I can look out for your payment and I can ask if it should be Gift-Aided.

Cheques may be made payable to "Oulton St Michael's PCC" and either taken to Church on 4 October; handed in or put in the letterbox at St Mark's office; or sent directly to me, St Michael's Church Treasurer, Oulton Lodge, Borrow Road, Lowestoft NR32 3PW.

Cash should be in a secure envelope and taken to Church or brought to me at home, please ring me first on 562301 to make sure I will be in. Or I can call and pick it up from you.

A blue "Gift Aid" envelope is enclosed with hard copies of this "Pew News", please fill this in if you are using a cheque or cash and pay income tax and we can reclaim the tax you have paid on your gift.

With grateful thanks on behalf of the PCC.

John Hunt

## Harvest Home!

Ever since I was a young child I loved harvest time. Coming from a rural community as I did, the annual gathering of the harvest was a busy time which culminated in our chapel's 'Harvest Supper'. This was the grand coming together of chapel folk, many of whom were farmers and agricultural workers, to partake in a traditional supper followed by home grown entertainment.

This was followed by the Harvest Festival Service where the church would be bedecked with all sorts of homegrown produce and the centre piece would be a modelled sheaf of corn made from unleavened bread and glazed with a liberal



layer of varnish! For one day a year the chapel had the distinctive aroma of fresh apples, pears, plums, vegetables of all descriptions and of course flowers of every class and colour. And then of course there were those wonderful hymns, which came out for an airing once a year, hymns such as, 'We plough the fields and scatter', 'All things bright and beautiful,' and a great favourite of mine, 'Come ye thankful people come.' That glorious harvest hymn written in 1844 by Henry Alford who was then Rector at Aston Sandford in Buckinghamshire. The first verse is written as a celebration of the harvest, calling for people to give thanks to God for it.

'Come, ye thankful people, come,  
Raise the song of harvest-home!  
All is safely gathered in,  
Ere the winter storms begin;  
God, our maker doth provide  
For our wants to be supplied;  
Come to God's own temple, come;  
Raise the song of harvest home'.

The last two verses of the hymn are based on the Parable of the Tares, and discuss the last harvest at the Second Coming of Jesus. But what is the history behind this annual festival. In Britain, thanks have been given for successful harvests since pagan times. Harvest festival is traditionally held on the Sunday near or on the Harvest Moon. This is the full Moon that occurs closest to the autumn equinox (22 or 23 September). The celebrations on this day usually include singing hymns, praying, and of course decorating churches with baskets of fruit and food in the Harvest Festival, Harvest Home, Harvest Thanksgiving or Harvest Festival of Thanksgiving.

The autumnal equinox is 22 or 23 September, and it's when the Sun is 'edgewise' to the Earth's axis of rotation, so that everywhere on earth has twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of darkness. So it's the time we gradually slip into autumn and the ever encroaching darkness until the spring equinox when it slips into reverse.

In British churches, chapels and schools, people traditionally bring in produce from the garden, the allotment or farm or as in the case nowadays from Tesco's and other leading supermarkets. The food is often distributed among the poor and senior citizens of the local community, or as the case at St. Michael's, given to the local foodbanks.

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## **29th September : Enter all the angels, led by Michael**

What is an angel? Easy, people think: a shining figure with glorious wings, who appears from time to time to do some mighty work for God or bring a very special message from him.

Well, that's right in one sense (apart from the wings, which owe more to stained glass windows than the Bible). But the fact that not all 'angels' in the Bible are 'glorious' or 'shining' should make us hesitate to categorise them in this spectacular way. After all, the three apparently ordinary men who visited Abraham and Sarah to tell them that she would have a son even though she was long past child-bearing age had none of those outward embellishments. Nevertheless, Abraham recognised them as divine messengers.

The Bible is full of angels, from the early chapters of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, and often they had a key role in crucial events. It seems, from just two instances, that Michael was their leader, an 'archangel'. In many stained glass windows he's seen with a sword, because in a vision in Revelation he led the angelic host who fought and defeated Satan and his army.

In the Gospels, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, to tell him that his elderly wife was to have a son, the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist. An angel - Gabriel - appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God. An angel appeared 'in a dream' to Joseph, the village carpenter in Nazareth, to tell him to go ahead and marry his fiancée, Mary, and later - also in a dream - warned him not to go back to Bethlehem. A 'young man', whom we take to have been an angel, was sitting in the empty tomb on Easter morning, waiting to tell the startled women that Jesus wasn't there - He had risen (Mark 16:5).



Without going into every biblical reference to angels, those should be sufficient to show that the word covers an enormous diversity of experience. So the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of those who practice hospitality as sometimes 'entertaining angels unawares'. Sometimes people recognised angels for who they were, and sometimes they didn't. Angels, quite simply, are God's agents or emissaries, messengers and ministers of His will. Sometimes they are human; sometimes they seem to be spiritual beings.

Perhaps we could even say that anyone, in any situation, who is at that moment God's 'messenger' to us, or serves us graciously, is an 'angel'. So, when we say, 'Oh, be an angel and pop up to the chemist for my prescription', we may be nearer the heart of the matter than we think!

Canon David Winter.

If you have any contributions for the next quarterly edition of the 'Pew News' please send your material to Robin Keightley

[robinkeightley175@btinternet.com](mailto:robinkeightley175@btinternet.com)