



Sunday 7th November – 3rd Sunday before Advent

Dear Friends, welcome to this week's Newsletter for all our friends and neighbours of Burchetts Green Parish.

Are you like your dog ? I have long-since stopped being surprised at how many people I meet around the Parish have a dog (or several). I often wonder how close the parallel might be between our relationship to the family dog, and God's relationship to us. Both are certainly relationships of mutual love and devotion, with care and protection being bestowed upon the 'junior' member of the relationship.

I took to musing along these lines recently when my dog, Mac, went missing on a walk in the woods near Stubbings church. One minute we were happily walking together, with Mac enjoying some off-lead freedom as he trotted too and fro. And then..... He stopped, lifted his head, his nose twitched a couple of times, and he was off through the woods in a flash!! I wasn't too concerned at first, but he didn't respond to my calls; it began to get dark, and then it started raining.



To cut a long story short, Mac was found by a friendly person and we were reunited. I asked where he had been found? Mac had been in the middle of the Henley Road, with traffic stopped in both directions - sniffing around at some road-kill, and completely oblivious to the dangers. The next day I purchased an extending dog lead, and for now Mac's adventures are more flexi-lead than off-lead.

But it made me think about the importance of free will for us humans, and how to use it well. God, I'm sure, loves us to use our freedom, our skills and our talents, and our intelligence in creative ways. And wow, the possibilities are endless – in science and technology, music and the arts, gardening, cooking, loving relationships, showing care and compassion for one another, and a myriad of other ways. We enjoy it, and I'm sure God does too – just as I enjoy watching Mac getting pleasure from running around doing doggie things. But sometimes we wander from what is best for us, often because we are overtaken by short-term pleasure at the expense of our longer term well-being. Just like Mac was overtaken by the impulse to follow the smell, regardless of the consequences.

God doesn't want us to be constrained by a metaphorical lead, and every time we wander off he will call us and search for us, and bring us gently home again. But maybe it would help if sometimes we stopped and listened to God, or to our conscience, before we ran off in a wrong direction following a lesser instinct, and towards things that can harm us. And the more time we spend just trotting alongside God, enjoying playing or a walk together, the easier it will be for us to recognise his voice when he calls, and the stronger will be the instinct to return to him because we will know him as the source of our safety and well-being, a place of warmth and love. And maybe sometimes we need to be a bit more flexi-lead than off-lead for a while, as we rebuild that stronger bond with God – to enable us to use our freedom better next time we're off-lead.

In this week's Gospel reading (attached) we read how Jesus called the first disciples – Simon, Andrew, James and John; they followed him for 3 years as he taught them. And then, after Jesus's

resurrection and with the help of the Holy Spirit, they grew to be the first leaders of the Church. A whole new adventure. Using their freedom well, in the service of God and of neighbour.

Services this Sunday are as follows:

9.15am	Littlewick Green	Family Eucharist and Sunday Club
10.30am	Hurley	God through Music
11 am	Littlewick Green	Baptism of George and Thomas Oakes
5pm	Stubbings	Choral Evensong

Amongst our lovely church services this week, we have the next in our series of **Choral Evensong at Stubbings**, using the traditional Book of Common Prayer and with hymns, a psalm and organ music played for us by our organist David. Many find this a refreshing and prayerful end to the weekend, in preparation for the week ahead.

Our Sunday morning Eucharist at Littlewick Green is accompanied by **Sunday Club**, a lively and creative space for our younger church members to spend fun time with leaders in the Sunday Club Cabin, with activities and a popular bible story. If you think your child might love this but aren't sure, give Richard Moores a call on 822282. All who have been attending this Autumn have absolutely loved it.

Come and Meet Each Other (CAMEO) is this Thursday at 3pm in the Priory Room Hurley. All are welcome.

Sandra Moores is holding two **Traidcraft Coffee Mornings** on Friday 12th 10.30 – 1.30 and on Saturday 13th 10.30 – 1pm, both at Oakleigh, Littlewick Green. All are welcome for fellowship and chat, with a wide variety of goods and festive food on offer – the perfect opportunity to purchase Christmas cards, Christmas presents and crafts, and to order a Christmas Hamper for yourself or a loved one. It is helpful to let Sandra know if you will be coming by phoning 01628 822282.



Next Sunday 14th November is **Remembrance Sunday**. There will be traditional services of Remembrance at each of our three churches starting at 10.45am. There will also be a service of Holy Communion at 8am at Stubbings.

Services for Remembrance Sunday 14th November:

8am	Stubbings	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.45am	Stubbings	Remembrance Sunday Service
10.45am	Littlewick Green	Remembrance Sunday Service
10.45am	Hurley	Remembrance Sunday Service

The **Covid Pandemic** has not gone away, but thankfully vaccination means this is much less likely to result in serious illness or fatality than when the pandemic first hit. We remain cautious and we ask that everyone who enters our church buildings, the Soltau Centre or the Priory Room please remembers to sanitise your hands on entering and exiting the building. If you come to a communion service you will be asked to wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) when coming forward to receive communion.

The **PCC Report and Accounts for 2020** have been approved by the External Examiner. You should find a copy on the noticeboards inside each of our churches, and you can also view the Report and Accounts on our website – go to www.burchettsgreenparish.org then click on 'About Us' and then 'Reports'.

QUENCH, our local Christian bookshop in Queen Street Maidenhead, is a good source of Christmas Cards and Christmas Presents with a religious bias, religious books and music. Quench has been hit hard by the pandemic and is considering the future of its shops, including the one in Maidenhead. Do please pray for them, and consider purchasing from them as you do your Christmas shopping.

Parish Office. The Parish Office is open for visitors and phone calls three mornings a week – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 12 noon. On other days, emails will be attended to on a daily basis. I **can usually be contacted** on revjohnainslie@gmail.com and 01628 629827 (do leave a message on the confidential answering machine if I don't answer).



Our churches are open for private prayer this week:

- St John's Littlewick Green – open every day 11am – 4pm
- St Mary the Virgin Hurley – open every day 8am – 5pm
- St James-the-Less Stubbings – open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9am – 12 noon

For our prayers:

The COP26 Climate Change Conference 31st October – 12th November. Please pray for Olivia, our Bishop of Reading, who is attending along with other faith leaders to share the wisdom of the faith traditions in this important area. Pray for the leaders of the nations and their teams of negotiators and advisers, that there would be growing understanding between regions of the world leading to bold and effective action to combat climate change. Pray for the brave financial commitments needed to make real change happen, in poor countries and in rich nations.

For those of our Parish in any kind of need, sickness, anxiety, fear or loneliness, and for those who help them. For the homeless and those on the margins of society, and those in financial hardship; for the work of Maidenhead Foodshare and those who are dependent upon it.

For the recently departed, and for all who mourn the death of a loved one at this time.

Creator God,
As we acknowledge the beauty of creation,
and your loving care
in giving us the fruits of the earth
for our well-being and enjoyment;
we pray that we will endeavour to protect,
nurture and cherish this Earth,
that all creation may flourish
and we may live in peace and justice,
to your glory.

Amen



If you are unable to join us in Church for whatever reason, there are many livestream and recorded services available online. I continue to recommend the daily and Sunday services from Canterbury Cathedral at <https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/worship/online-worship/>

Keep safe, be gentle on yourself, and remember that with God by your side you need never be alone.

With love and prayers,

Fr John Ainslie