

THE BANSFIELD BENEFICE

Vicar : Rev. Ian M. Finn

The Vicarage, Church Road, Wickhambrook, Suffolk. CB8 8XH Tel : 01440 820288

CHURCH NEWS



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Dear friends,

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8)

Morning assembly was under way, and the Head teacher introduced the Vicar, making his monthly visit. With Halloween approaching, the Head teacher knew he would want to stress that this meant the Eve of All Hallows, All Saints.

As usual, the Vicar began his talk with a question. "Now then, who can tell me anything about All Saints?"

A little girl in the front row wriggled excitedly, hand waving aloft. Oh dear, thought the Head teacher. Molly had been absent yesterday, when he'd primed the youngsters with suitable facts, and cleared up any misapprehension about the pop group of the same name.

The Vicar swooped gratefully on Molly. "Well now," he said. "What can you tell me about All Saints?"

"I really like them!" Molly enthused. "Especially the stripy ones."

Silence. Head teacher and Vicar exchanged glances, but Molly continued, "Granny always buys me a box when she comes to stay."



"She means All sorts, not All Saints!" a boy shouted, and the children squealed with laughter.

Before the Head teacher could intervene, the Vicar smiled and said, "Well done, Molly! All Saints is about

All Sorts of people. I couldn't have put it better myself."

In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that there are all sorts of saints. We are so familiar with the Beatitudes that we sometimes forget the radical nature of this teaching, right at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. This list of people who are blessed includes some the world would not consider blessed at all, and not just those who mourn.

We are often told, for example, that the poor in spirit are those who know their own spiritual poverty and their dependence on God. Yet the first Beatitude Matthew records could also be translated "Blessed in spirit are the poor", as in Luke's version, where "the poor", not "the poor in spirit", are blessed. Luke also mentions the downright hungry, rather than those who hunger for righteousness. Put the poor and hungry alongside those who mourn, and call them blessed, and you fly in the face of Jewish teaching at the time, which regarded such misfortune as a sign of God's disfavour, a punishment for sin.

Furthermore, the list makes no reference to keeping commandments or performing religious duties, which the Jewish authorities would have seen as vital for God's blessing. Its focus is on attitudes, a disposition of the heart towards God and our neighbour. Throughout Matthew's Gospel, Jesus stresses the importance of the heart, the inner response as opposed to the outward show of religion. The radical element of all this was that anyone, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, whose heart was in the right place, with God, could know themselves blessed by him.

Jesus gathered around him as followers not high-ranking religious officials, but fishermen, a loathed tax collector... even women! Here, at the beginning of his teaching about discipleship, he encourages them and us. Despite sadness, misfortune, persecution, all who love God and

model their lives on his mercy and peace, all whose hearts are thus being purified, will see God at work in their lives and know themselves to be his children. An emphatic present tense in the middle of all those future tenses: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Literally, "the kingdom of heaven is of these", consists of these. Now.

Who do we commemorate, on All Saints' Day itself (November 1st)?

We remember all those "official" saints recognised by the Church: remarkable Christians (from all sorts of backgrounds) who have left their mark in this world and serve as examples for disciples today.

We remember the whole company of heaven, that great multitude (from all sorts of backgrounds) who stand before God's throne and worship him.

But we also remember that all Christians are saints-in-training, and all human beings potential saints.

It's difficult enough to think of ourselves as saints, let alone see a halo around people outside the Church!

Jesus shocked the religious authorities of his day by opening heaven to outsiders.

What can we do to reach out to those who find church services boring or irrelevant? Isn't it time to reclaim this period around Halloween as a celebration of, and for, all God's children?

What about an All Saints' party next year, an excuse for fancy dress saints and holy apple-bobbing? For the whole community. The kingdom of heaven? It takes all sorts.

Rev. Ian Finn

CHURCH & VILLAGE EVENTS : November 2006

ALL SAINTS DAY



- Wednesday 1st 10.00am Eucharist at Stansfield church with hymns—all welcome
- Thursday 2nd 10.00am Eucharist ALL SOULS DAY—we remember the faithful departed (Ousden)
- Saturday 4th 10.00am Traidcraft Coffee morning in the Benefice Hall
- 7.30pm Bumpstead Boys concert in Wickhambrook church
- Sunday 5th 2.00pm Confirmation meeting in the Benefice Hall
- Saturday 11th 8.00pm Elvis at Denston (see inside for details)
- Saturday 18th 2.00pm Ousden church Christmas Fair in the Village Hall
- Sunday 19th 3.00pm Stradishall Evensong + PCC meeting
- Sunday 26th 10.00am Benefice service at Stradishall church
- Guest preacher—the Archdeacon of Sudbury
- Wednesday 29th 7.30pm Clare Deanery Synod meeting at kedington church
- Sunday 3rd December ADVENT SUNDAY—the start of the Churches year!



Benefice Services for November 2006

November 2006	St. Nicholas DENSTON	All Saints STANSFIELD	St. Margaret STRADISHALL	All Saints WICKHAMBROOK	St. Margaret COWLINGE	St. Mary LIDGATE	St. Peter OUSDEN
Tuesday 31st			10.00am HC				
ALL SAINTS		10.00am HC					
Thursday 2 nd							10.00am HC
Sunday 5 th 4 th b. Advent	10.30am Matins BCP Fiona Evans	9.30am Matins BCP John Dennis		9.30am HC CW IMF	11.00am HC CW IMF	9.30am Matins BCP Ann Jones	
Tuesday 7 th							
Thursday 9 th							
Sunday 12 th 3 rd b. Advent							10.00am Benefice HC BCP IMF
Tuesday 14 th						10.00am HC	
Thursday 16 th		10.00am HC					
Sunday 19 th 2 nd b. Advent	9.30am HC BCP IMF	8.00am HC CW IMF	3.00pm Evensong BCP IMF	9.30pm Family Paul Bevan	9.30am Morning Prayer Angela Finn	11.00am HC CW IMF	11.00am HCext BCP Philip Draycott
Tuesday 21 st	10.00am HC						
Thursday 19 th					10.00am HC		
Sunday 26 th CHRIST the KING			10.00am Benefice HCCW IMF + Archdeacon				
Tuesday 28 th			10.00am HC				
Thursday 30 th							10.00am HC

Elvis comes to Denston Village Hall

Saturday, November 11

"ELVIS NIGHT"

Elvis live on stage

8.30pm!

Doors open 8pm



Licensed bar * Dancing * Raffle

Tickets £5 in advance, £6 on the door

Contact Karen Fellows 01440 820310

PLEASE BOOK EARLY

Proceeds in aid of Village Hall funds

RUBY AND HER HORSES



THE BUMPSTEAD BOYS

'Ruby & Her Horses'

A true life Suffolk narrative
in story song & screen

All Saints' church, Wickhambrook

Saturday 4th November 2006.

7.30pm for 8.00pm

Tickets £7 including light refreshments

01440 821120

CONFIRMATION 2007

We have been given a date by the Bishop for a Confirmation in our Benefice next year.

Sunday 15th April 2007, 10am at Wickhambrook church.

Classes are to begin soon. **MEETING 5th November 2pm**

Young people from the age of 9 years old and upward, and any adults who wish to be Confirmed, are asked to contact the Vicar as soon as possible to express their interest in being Confirmation.

As the service is in our Benefice we need to make a special effort to find as many candidates as we can for this wonderful event. Please do ask around your family and friends and let them know Confirmation class is to begin.



2



Traidcraftshop

**BANSFIELD
BENEFICE**

Saturday 4th November 2006

10.00am—12 noon

In the Benefice Hall, Wickhambrook.

A full range of Traidcraft produce for sale.

Coffee morning too!

Visit our Benefice web site
www.stedmundsbury.anglican.org/bansfield