

The God of Maize and Mars

Our modern world in which we live is one in which there have been huge technological advances, and human achievement in this area are continuing at an ever increasing rate. Our understanding of the world, the universe and their workings are extending all the time. Next Christmas will see the landing of a probe on Mars to search for signs of life there; theories about the 'Big Bang' explain what happened in the first tiny fractions of a second of the existence of the universe; at a different scale our understanding of DNA and the genetic structure of living organisms (including ourselves) now makes it possible to alter living things in amazing ways. And these are just a few examples among a countless number.

It is in this world and this culture that in the middle of this month we shall be celebrating our Harvest

Thanksgiving. No doubt to many, even most people, this is a meaningless and anachronistic thing to do - for, surely, it is science, technology, and human intellect that reign supreme.

Not so.

In this culture in which we live it is right, proper and vital that we remember Harvest.

Firstly, we need to give thanks to God for the good gifts of creation. For all that we see around us is all God's creation. Yes, there are

physical laws by which everything works; yes, we are able to investigate and understand these workings; but, ultimately, all that exists does so because the hand of God lies behind it; life is no fluke event. In spite of all our advances it is still God's creation, and the depths of our knowledge only scratches the surface; and in spite of all that people might like to think, we are still dependant on God. And to say 'thank you' for the many blessings we enjoy is essential.

Secondly, this thanksgiving reminds us of the need to use these gifts properly. To say thank you, to

acknowledge them as God's gifts to us, leads us on to recognise that they are not for our selfish use. We are to use these gifts - and this means not just the harvest of the soil, but the fruits of our own labour - for the benefit of all. And there are many, many people in the world for whom

this needs to become a reality.

Thirdly, Harvest reminds us of our true place in the scheme of things. Yes, we are hugely advanced, but we are only a tiny part of a much bigger whole. Humanity is not, in fact, the centre of the Universe, and we need to remember that with humility.



Fr. John

Chronicles

The Pencil Maker

The Pencil Maker took the pencil aside just before putting him into the box. "There are five things you need to know," he told the pencil, "before I send you out into the world. Always remember

them and never forget, and you will become the best pencil you can be.

One: You will be able to do many things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in someone's hand.

Two: You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become a better pencil.

Three: You will be able to correct any mistakes you might make.

Four: The most important part of you will always be what's inside. and Five: On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write."

The pencil understood and promised to remember, and went into the box with purpose in its heart.

Now, replacing the pencil with you; always remember them and never forget, and you will become the best person you can be.

One: You will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in God's hand. And allow other human beings to access you for the many gifts you possess.

Two: You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, by going through various problems, but you'll need it to become a stronger person.

Three: You will be able to correct any mistakes you might make, by repenting and being willing to change.

Four: The most important part of you will always be what's on the inside.

And five: On every surface that you walk through, you must leave your mark. No matter what the situation, you must continue to do your duties.

By understanding and remembering the example given by Jesus, let us proceed with our life on this earth having a meaningful purpose in our heart.



Healing Services

St James Church

Wednesday 17th September

7.30 pm

St Francis Church

Tuesday 9th September

7.00 pm

Anyone who would like prayers for themselves, or for others, or who would like to join us in praying for God's healing work is welcome.



Sundays @ Six at St James

*The first Sunday of the month
at 6 o'clock*

September 7th *Evening Praise*

October 5th *Iona Worship*

November 2nd *Annual Memorial Service (4.00 pm)*

December 7th *Waiting for the Saviour*



Sunday 5th October

ST FRANCIS PATRONAL FESTIVAL

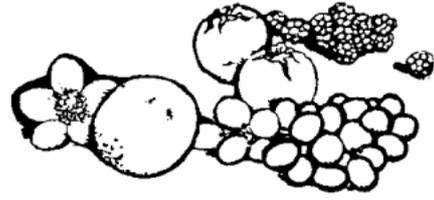
8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Patronal Eucharist

followed by Bring and Share Buffet Lunch



HARVEST THANKSGIVING



Sunday 14th September

- 8.00 am** **Holy Communion - St James and St Francis**
10.00 am **Family Eucharist - St James**
10.30 am **Family Eucharist - St Francis**
4.00 pm **Parish Harvest Tea - St Francis Church**
5.30 pm **Parish Harvest Evensong - St Francis Church**

Please speak to Gwen or Stephen if you need a lift to St Francis

Tinned tomatoes, tinned ham, baked beans, coffee, tinned fruit, tinned and loose rice, evaporated milk, plain and self raising flour, corned beef, tinned vegetables, spices, salt & pepper, dried herbs, custard powder, cornflour, sugar, brown & tomato sauce, vinegar, salad cream, orange squash, gravy powder, vegetable oil, and washing powder will be collected for the *Steppin' Stone Project* (formerly The Porch) to feed the city's homeless.

Mission Giving - at Home and Overseas

Each year the Parish gives away 10% of the voluntary giving plus the income tax rebate on gift aided giving. Voluntary giving is the money collected in both churches by envelope giving, standing order giving and the collection plates. For gift aided giving we receive 28p income tax rebate for every £1 given, this is offered to us by the Government and we are pleased to have it. This year we had £4,150 for our mission giving and a small group appointed by the PCC from both churches met to decide to whom the money would go. We give one third of the money to local charities, one third to nationwide charities and one third to overseas charities. This is how we decided to distribute the £4,150.

LOCAL Playbus scheme £25; Jubilee House (Guide centre re-building) £100; Oxford Youth Works £100; Parents and Children Together (Diocesan work) £350; Oxfordshire Association for the Blind £150 (£100 to the re-building fund and £50 general use); Child Contact Centre, Cowley £50 (where the children of broken homes can meet the non-resident parent); Douglas House, Helen House and Sobell House £100 each; Luther Street medical centre for the homeless £100; local branch of the Samaritans £100; Steppin' Stones (was the Porch, help for homeless and destitute) £100.

NATIONAL St Francis Church appeal £25 (sometimes churches with the same dedication as ours ask for money for a special appeal or an emergency); St Mungo's (homeless in London) £250; NSPCC £100; Young Refugees (The Children's Society) £500; Travelling Families (The Children's Society) £250; Corrymeala (Irish children - teaching religious tolerance) £250.

INTERNATIONAL USPG (mission work) £300; Kenya to help Lizzie's community £100; Mothers' Union Overseas £200; Selena Firth in The Cameroons (strongly supported by St Francis) £100; Mercyships (medical aid) £100; MAF (medical aid by air to the isolated) £100; Leprosy Mission £100; Christian Blind Mission £100; Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge £100; Neve Shalom (Palestine) £100; BibleLands £100.

In addition we also gave to USPG our Lent box and Lent lunches collection, this was £375.98 making a total of £675.98.





Rosanne interviews Lizzie Hartley

Only about two years ago I interviewed Lizzie, still a schoolgirl, for "The Chronicle". She is the first person to appear in the middle pages twice and she has 'grown up in the most delightful way' (to quote Maurice Chevalier) into a self-assured young lady. Fresh from her eight month African mission she is busy preparing to take up her place at Durham University, so I was lucky to 'catch her'. As many of our readers know Lizzie well, I have turned this into a question and answer format.....

R. Despite all the preparation and advice there must have been some surprises when you first arrived in Naro Maru, what were they?

L. I was expecting red soil and huge tropical plants in the middle of nowhere. Instead, just where we were, apart from the cactus trees it all looked so English – lots of grass and the trees from a distance looked like ours. The Church was incredibly English, stone-built with a 'proper' altar and wooden benches. The other surprise was everyone with mobile phones and television sets. We even had electricity in our house. It was installed just before we got there.

R. It is said that travel opens the eyes – what opened yours?

L. I just expected everyone to be poor, but they weren't. The

school I taught at was private. The parents were doctors, supermarket owners, butchers, farmers, tailors, things like that, not poor at all.

R. On your return home what has struck you with your newly opened eyes?

L. The pace of life here (everyone rushing everywhere), the size of everything. When I got home our house looked too huge and I just wanted to stay in the car, in fact I burst into tears! Also the size of the shops and the variety of things in them. In Kenya you wouldn't get rails of clothes to choose from like you do here.

R. What part of home did you miss most?

L. I missed the spiritual side of home. I didn't like the church services, especially the preaching, It was as though they were in a Victorian time warp, even the Sunday school. There seemed to be only three themes for sermons and there was lots of shouting. The intercessions I hated. Someone would begin to pray and they'd be interrupted by someone else. There was lots of wailing and each time intercessions turned into mass hysteria with every one winding each other up.

R. Did you have the opportunity to visit ordinary families at home?

L. Not as much as I'd have liked. When I was preaching I was away for 24 hours so we stayed overnight. One thing you notice is that everything takes so long. Just for a cuppa you have to milk the cow and then the kettle takes about 20 minutes to boil! I never felt clean either. You get water for washing but it's not the same as a shower. There'd be wooden sofas with padded cushions and crocheted throws in neon colours, a large low table in the middle and a black and white television in a cupboard. At seven o'clock each evening it goes pitch black and out would come the pressure lamps. Because cooking takes so long dinner would usually be served at about 9.30 pm. Meat (goat, beef or chicken) is cooked in lots of oil so you had to dip through a layer of it. There was always rice and potatoes, also maybe peas, cabbage or carrots. The helpings were huge, about twice as big as ours, so we tried to wade through as much as we could to be polite. They don't go in for breakfast much, just tea and bread with porridge for the children. We did get fruit, mainly pineapples, mango, ribena fruit and yellow oranges.

R. Tell me about young people around your age. What opportunities are there to exploit their potentials?

L. A lot of them had only gone to primary school. Parents can't afford fees for secondary school

or university. A good friend of mine, Robert, sorts peas for a living (the best ones reach our Marks and Spencer's stores). He is a good athlete but was unable to compete abroad because he can't afford a passport.

R. We see Kenya beautifully represented at sport on TV. Was there an emphasis on sport in Naro Maru?

L. Only Robert who runs regularly. One of the big phone networks sponsors races, mainly long-distance, at weekends. I wasn't living amongst one of the tribes who are best at sports. I visited Uganda and there they all supported Manchester United. There was a match on while I was there and the whole village had their radios blaring out in the street. They all love English football in Nairobi too. They all know Beckham! The little boys make footballs from plastic bags and string.

R. You took PE lessons at school, didn't you? What activities did you do?

L. We rotated classes between volleyball, 'footiball' or 'handiball' as they called it. I always joined in. I introduced a yellow card system for fouls. The first time I tried it I accidentally kicked a ball at someone and they were hurt. I ended up yellow carding myself!

R. Give us an idea for a typical school day.

L. It starts at 8am. On Mondays and Fridays they have a flag-raising ceremony with the national anthem. On Wednesdays we began with P.P.I. (school assembly). Classes would prepare presentations or

there would be a talk, or the children would quote memory verses while the Head walked around with his cane in his hand. The main lessons, 35 minutes each, were all before lunch with some P.E. as well. Music and homework happened in the afternoon. Thursday afternoon was games for everyone. On Friday afternoon there were quizzes and tests. The children were always being tested. There were prizes at the end of term for the best marks.

R. Were the children keen to learn?

L. Year 8 had switched off but the younger ones were lovely to teach, full of fun. One day I turned to write something on the blackboard and when I turned back they'd all swapped places! They called us Missie Lizzie and Missie Allie. The nearest they got to my proper name was Lizard Hotline! The cane was used for fighting, bringing sweets or biscuits to school or lateness. They would be expelled for stealing.

R. How much contact was there between school and parents?

L. We never, ever saw parents. Even the youngest walked to and from school on their own. Parents came to pick up boarders at the weekend.

R. How much did local people help to run the church?

L. They did a lot. There are lay readers to support the clergy. There are only 300 clergy in the whole diocese. Our vicar has eleven churches (some only tiny

huts), so she was very busy. The Mother's Union is quite powerful. They run services. Evangelists are employed to speak in churches and schools but local people have to help.

R. Tell me some more about attitudes within the society.

L. When you introduce yourself, if you are a Christian, you say "I'm (name) and I'm saved". I didn't realise this at first so people I met thought I wasn't a Christian. The elders of the church have pretty strong sway and rules are strict. Women must not wear trousers, they will be called prostitutes if they do (though things are a bit more flexible in Nairobi). Drinking is forbidden and smoking is 'wrong'. Gambling is also forbidden – no card games or bingo. A young couple walking together down the street is frowned upon and holding hands is considered a sexual act. The people don't seem to have any concept of moderation.

R. Has your African experience made you feel ready for anything?

L. Yes, I realise that I can cope in lots of different situations – yes I know I can cope.

R. They say Africa gets into you blood. Do you think God might call you to go back?

L. I don't know ... in a sense it's made me want to experience another culture, though once I begin work in this country I can see myself creating links.

*Come and hear more at the **Africa Evening & Party** on 29th September - see bottom of next page!*

***Alpha* at St James this Autumn on Monday evenings**

Explore the meaning of life and meet people!

Starting **Monday 13th October**

7.00 to 9.30pm at 55 Church Hill Road

Meal included

Contact Stephen on 748915 or Una 779855
if you or your friends would like to come.

Invitations and explanatory booklet available.



***Alpha* needs You! Help Required**

If you would to help with the catering or be help in other ways, please speak with Stephen.

***Alpha* Prayer Evening - Thursday 18th September Christ Church Cathedral**

For all those across the City and County who are running *Alpha* Courses this autumn.



**Sharon and Stephen
thank you for supporting Lizzie
during her time in Kenya
and invite you to**

AN AFRICAN EVENING AND PARTY

St James Church

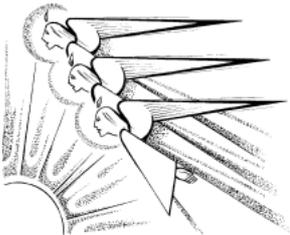
Monday 29th September at 7.30 pm

*Lizzie arrived back in England last month.
Come and see and hear about her time at
St Philip's School and Church Naro Maru, Kenya.*

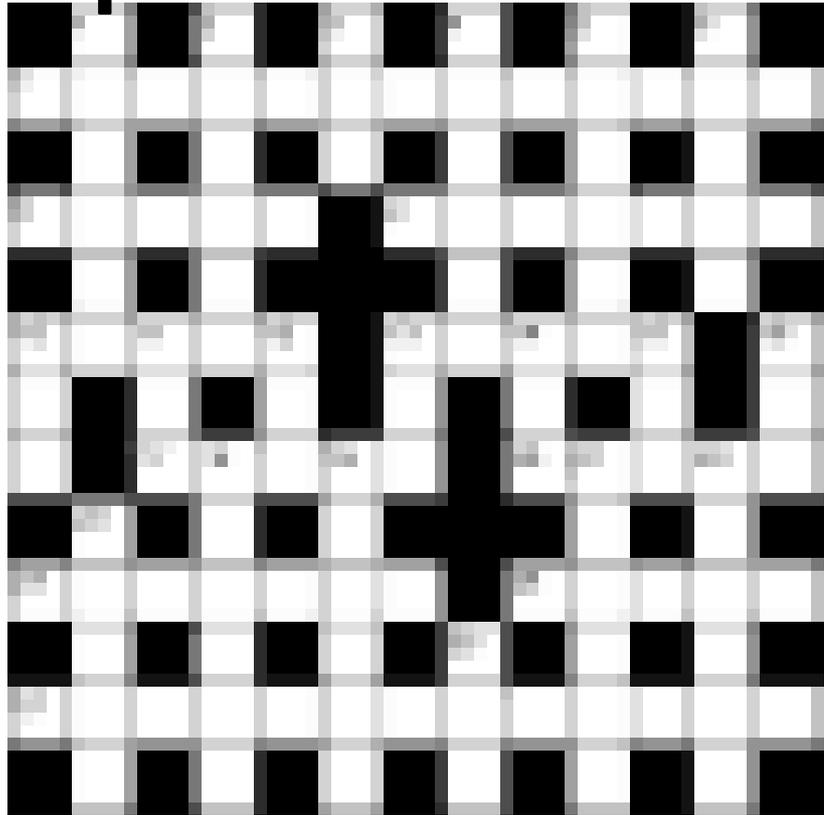
Wine and refreshments

**September 11th
St Protus and St
Hyacinth (early church)**

On this, the anniversary of the Twin Towers, here are two more innocent people who met their death in the flames of mindless violence. These were Roman martyrs mentioned in the 4th century list of martyrs. Hyacinth's tomb was discovered in the cemetery of Basilla, with his name and the date of his burial (11 September). Inside were charred bones, indicating death by fire. An inscription by Damasus says Protus and Hyacinth were brothers, and another ancient source called them 'teachers of the Christian law'.



September's Crossword



ACROSS

- 7. Something transcribed (13)
- 8. Radioactive gaseous element (5)
- 9. Animate (7)
- 10. Domestic cat (5)
- 13. Enthusiastic (5)
- 17. Manila hemp plant (5)
- 20. Confused mixture of sounds (5)
- 24. Of humble birth (7)
- 25. Tartan (5)
- 27. Accomplishment (13)

4. Capital of Austria (6)

- 5. Array (6)
- 6. Wretched hut (5)
- 10. Label (3)
- 11. Bleat of a sheep (3)
- 12. Affirmative reply (3)
- 13. Period of history (3)
- 14. Chatter (3)
- 15. Curved bone (3)
- 16. Totality (3)
- 18. Prate (6)
- 19. Wide-mouthed bottle (6)
- 21. Remove by melting (6)
- 22. U.S. inventor (6)
- 23. Scoundrel (5)
- 26. Frozen water (3)

DOWN

- 1. List of errors (6)
- 2. Bury (6)
- 3. Very skilled person (3)

August's Solution

C	A	N	D	L	E		E	F	F	A	C	E
U		U			P		A	N		A		
R	M		M	I	N	I	S	T	E	R	S	
A	B	B	A		S		T		C		T	
T				C		T		D		E		
E	N	T	H	R	O	N	E		B	O	A	R
		R		P		S		T				
S	T	A	R		A	N	T	E	C	E	D	E
E		N			L							C
X		S		U			M		N	O	A	H
T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E	R		V		O
O		P		E			N			E		E
N	A	T	U	R	E		T	H	O	R	N	S

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) Family Service (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
6.00 pm	Evening Service [<i>1st Sunday of the month</i>]

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

8.00 am	Holy Eucharist
10.30 am	Parish Eucharist [<i>Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month</i>]

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	8.00 pm	St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
	10.10 am	Mothers and Toddlers – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Days Off

Stephen has Friday off; Fr John and Mark have Mondays. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest. Sr Margaret Anne works within the parish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and on alternate Sundays.

Parish Directory

TEAM RECTOR:

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Tel: 770696

CHURCHWARDENS:

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Tel: 451417
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Helen Doling
Tel: 779626