

## ***Listening***

### ***You are not listening to me when ....***

- You do not care about me;
- You say you understand before you know me well enough;
- You have an answer to my problem before I've finished telling you what my problem is;
- You cut me off before I've finished speaking;
- You finish my sentences for me;
- You feel critical of my vocabulary, grammar or accent;
- You are dying to tell me something;
- You tell me about your experience making mine seem unimportant;
- You are communicating to someone else in the room;
- You refuse my thanks by saying you really haven't done anything;

### ***You are listening to me when ...***

- You come quietly into my private world and let me be;
- You really try to understand me even if I'm not making much sense;
- You grasp my point even when it's against your own sincere convictions;
- You realize that the hour I took from you has left you a bit tired and drained;
- You allow me the dignity of making my own decisions even though you think they might be wrong;
- You do not take my problem from me, but allow me to deal with it in my own way;
- You hold back your desire to give me good advice;
- You do not offer me religious solace when you sense I am not ready for it;
- You give me enough room to discover for myself what is really going on;
- You accept my gift of gratitude by telling me how good it makes you feel to know that you have been helpful.

*(From The Bloemfontein Samaritans in South Africa)*

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## ***From the Vicar***

There's now a new regime at the Vicarage – a “Clear Desk Policy”. And as a change from the woes of the world (of which there are currently far too many, both important and urgent) I want to share some thoughts from this local near-miracle that has just happened.

The bald fact is that I've had piles of papers growing over the years, creeping over the desk area and insidiously devouring it -- hand-written notes from various meetings which I had meant to write up, digest and perhaps elaborate on; possibly useful items, or insights into a hundred and one areas of life or hobby; appeals from various charities, all of which have some real value; and no doubt one or two items which I had overlooked.

Fortunately these last were very, very few, e.g. I did find one outstanding (but only 5½ months old) invoice relating to the repairs at St Lawrence's – but I hadn't been sent a reminder, and I'm pleased to report that that invoice was duly sent to our Loss Adjuster and has now been settled.

I did come across quite a few names – as I say, the piles went back over many years - people whose marriage or funeral services I have been privileged to lead or attend. They all got a prayer, some more than one! - which seems a good outcome. Maybe you were one of those remembered.

I did unearth innumerable lists of things I had meant to do – are you a list person too? In my case, it was gratifying to find nothing of importance undone years later. Either the important jobs must have been dealt with from a later list, or the remaining jobs were indeed left undone, but were clearly not important. I have always known as a principle that “urgent” and “important” are not the same thing – and that time can put a kinder gloss on what others think must be done today or this week. Of course, the vast majority of the items on my desk were consigned to the WPB – sorry, the recycled paper box! Just a few, more confidential, items had to be shredded.

So, I have mused on how much of what we do is likewise ‘binned’ by others, and what are the priorities I need to set myself – and if you haven't similarly reflected, maybe the new-school-year month of September could be the time.

Finally, I have wondered how long the new regime will last. Will you promise to pray for me to keep to it? If not for me, for Elspeth who also has to work on what was left of that desk.

With all blessings,

Michael

**Church Textiles**

Wonderful news! The Insurers have agreed to cover the substantial cost of replacing the long kneeler by the altar rail and the two sanctuary kneelers with hand-made, individually designed kneelers which will be in keeping with the long tradition of distinctive, personalised textiles at St. Lawrence.

Philip Sanderson, Design Director of The Tapestry Studio at West Dean, Nr. Chichester has been contracted to design and weave three matching kneelers for our Chancel. He has visited the Church, taken many photographs in and around the area and discovered the history of the church, all of which have informed his design process. His previous commissions have included designing and weaving a large scale wall-hanging for Portcullis House, the new Government building at The Palace of Westminster, a 15-metre-long tapestry commissioned by Surrey County Council for the Surrey History Centre in Woking, and an altar frontal for Chelmsford Cathedral. Weavers at The Tapestry Studio are currently part way through a 12 year commission for Historic Scotland to recreate the 500 year old Unicorn Tapestries for Stirling Castle. The staff at The Tapestry Studio are excited about our Kneeler project because this commission is a new direction into 3-Dimensional design, whereas the tapestries are generally 2 dimensional and hang. Philip's designs and other details about West Dean, a non-profit making educational charitable trust, can be found at [www.westdean.org.uk/tapestrystudio/](http://www.westdean.org.uk/tapestrystudio/) or there is also a visual display of some work by The Studio on a board at the back of the church.

The Altar Kneeler is due to be completed by Easter 2007 and the Sanctuary Kneelers by the end of May 2007. Preliminary ideas for the kneelers have been discussed and the process continues until we are happy with the proposed designs, which will reflect the history, location and ethos of our delightful church and the church family. The Diocesan Advisory Committee recommend that when changes to the church have to be made these changes should be forward looking rather than copying existing or historic styles. We are confident that the new kneelers will embrace the future without forgetting the past.

I feel very privileged to be involved with a commission by this first class professional studio to design and make our kneelers. The result will be a unique, practical and beautiful work of art which will enhance our lovely church and one of which, I feel sure, the congregation will approve, as too would The Wilkinson family with their obvious love of beautiful textiles.

*Roz Morris*

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**A Prayer for Travellers**

God be with you in every pass,  
Jesus be with you on every hill,  
Spirit be with you on every stream, headland, ridge and lawn  
Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,  
Each lying down, each rising up,  
In the troughs of the waves, on the crest of the billows,  
Each step of the journey you go,

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**Lessons from Real Life**

I've learned that the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.

I've learned that when you're in love, it shows.

I've learned that just one person saying to me, "You've made my day!" makes my day.

I've learned that having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world

I've learned that being kind is more important than being right.

I've learned that you should never say "no" to a gift from a child.

I've learned that I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help him in some other way.

I've learned that no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act silly with.

I've learned that sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

I've learned that we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

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**A Thought**

Carry each others burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ

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we hope you will be pleasantly surprised, as well as made thoroughly welcome. And in the process bring great joy to God who loves to see his family together. And if there's something you'd like to contribute to worship that day, let us know.

The following Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, we shall be remembering the Church Army, one of the great evangelistic agencies of the Church of England. Our parish has had good links with the Church Army, not least because my predecessor (Peter Simmons), and his predecessor-but-one (Canon Donald Lynch) were both officers in the Church Army – which clearly thought St Lawrence's to need some evangelisation! The collection at this service will therefore be for the Church Army.

*Michael*

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***From the Registers at St Lawrence's***

12<sup>th</sup> August Burial of Ashes of the late Peggy Susan Oben, who had died on 18<sup>th</sup> July aged 82.

15<sup>th</sup> August Funeral of the late Victoria Elizabeth Clare Richards, late of Southborough, who died aged 36. We offer her son Sam, her parents Wendy and Brian, and the rest of the Richards and Sandison families our deepest sympathy in their grief.



Though not recorded in our registers (the service didn't take place in church) we also note the death and funeral of May Mary Drawbridge – and we offer her sons Trevor and Peter our deepest sympathy and prayers in their loss.

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***Some Prayer Topics for this month***

- Those who will be starting a **new school or college**
- **St Lawrence School** as it honours its reprieve from closure, welcomes new pupils, and starts its hall extension works
- **Ellen Wakeham** as she starts her ordination training
- Godspeed and safety for the **builders, glazier and cleaners** as they continue the major restoration work on our chancel and vestry.

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***Volunteer Stitchers Needed***

As part of the restoration of the church fabrics following the fire last year, we will need to have a new seat cushion and kneeler for the minister's chair and some higher congregational kneelers. We have some funding for such new items from the generous donations given in memory of Philip Attenborough, which we propose to use to buy some personalised needlework kits from The Royal School of Needlework.

So I am now looking for people who would like to help stitch these needlepoint kits. If YOU would like to be part of this group, which would meet weekly on Tuesday afternoons at my home, please call me on 01732 810227.

*Roz Morris*

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***Scrabble***

A couple of months ago, we provided a few anagrams for crossword/scrabble lovers.

Here are a few more provided by John Lambert, to whom our thanks.

- STALE LAMB = MEAT BALLS
- CONTINUE A POEM = ONCE UPON A TIME
- FEEL VERY LOW = YELLOW FEVER
- GIRLS LET TEACHER = CALL THE REGISTER
- HE FOLDS A THING = SLEIGHT OF HAND

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***Would you like to bake a cake for Christian Aid?***

Sevenoaks and District Christian Aid Committee are having a **Cake Stall** in support of Christian Aid at Riverhead Carnival on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September. We need lots of cakes and savouries to sell. If you would like to bake something, please bring it to the Vicarage by the Saturday or contact Elspeth Cooke (761766) to arrange collection. Thank you for your help.



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**Thank you ....**

... to David Walton who gave a piano recital in aid of Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust. Thank you, also, everyone, who came, and contributed to a total of £187.31, which with Gift Aid is worth £235.35.

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**St Lawrence Harvest Celebrations**

**Harvest Supper**

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September at 7 pm**

The Harvest Supper is always a very enjoyable community occasion and all are warmly invited to come. The supper will be held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00 pm in Stone Street Village Hall. Tickets (£8 adults, £4 children under 12) need to be bought in advance and can be obtained from Elspeth Cooke (761766) or Rosemary Cole (763107).



Profits from the evening will be donated to FARM AFRICA.

**Harvest Festival Service**

**Sunday 1st October at 9.45 am**

The following day, Sunday, 1st October the **Harvest Festival Service** will be an All-age service at 9.45 am at St Lawrence Church.

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**Sevenoaks and District Branch of the W.E.A. 2006-2007**

Courses will begin in the week beginning September 25<sup>th</sup>, some lasting for 10 weeks and some continuing in the New Year, running for 20 weeks. There are to be some Saturday Day Schools as well. Our brochure will be in your local library, if you have not already received one. Our TRY BEFORE YOU BUY policy allows you to attend the first session before committing yourself to the enrolling for the full course. You may also ring Joyce Allen, Branch Secretary on 10959 522915 or Dorothy Palmer, Asst. Branch Secretary on 01959 522936.

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**Friends of Kent Churches 'Bike' Ride**

Every year, on about the second Saturday of September (this year it is indeed 9<sup>th</sup>) volunteers seek sponsorship to visit by cycle as many churches as possible in Kent – and in the process raise funds 50% for a church of their choice and 50% for Friends of Kent Churches, a registered charity which supports particularly small rural churches. Last year the Friends allowed sponsors also to walk between churches. Each of our two churches will have refreshments for such visiting sponsors. Is there anyone amongst our readership who would like to sponsor their own local church? For more details please contact Hilary Darque (Tel 453929)



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**Ellen Wakeham**

We wish Ellen all our love as she starts this month her training at theological college (Westcott House in Cambridge) to become in three years time an ordained minister in the Church of England. As a 24-year old and without some of the securities of life which older candidates have, it'll be a challenge – not least in that she can expect 40 years of changes after ordination – quite some thought. Ellen has elected and been accepted to do a theology degree at the university in Cambridge and will be affiliated with Corpus Christi college, which will be in parallel with her training – we are sure she will rise to the occasion, but are sure she would more than welcome our prayers. And if anyone would like to help sponsor her (not least because of its own financial constraints, the diocese doesn't pay all costs during the so-called holidays when she is expected to take up placements), please have a word with Michael.

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**Two Special Sundays in September**

Are you one of those, or do you know someone, who once used to come ... but have stopped coming to church? The reasons may be many: too busy, lost the habit, took offence at something this vicar once said - or, worse, something the last-but-one vicar said – or just feel you aren't good enough for church (NB no one is, but God welcomes all – remember the parable about the special care for the lost sheep?) Then could we please invite you to what nationwide is being billed as "Back to Church Sunday", September 17<sup>th</sup>, when