

ST. JOHNS CHURCH DONISTHORPE

# GRAPEVINE

OCTOBER 2026



Dear Friends

Welcome to October at St. Johns. October is a month for our rural senses, according to The Campaign for Rural England. Trees begin to turn colour, leaves rustle on the branches and tumble down on windy days. There are smells of wet and decay as plants start to die back, of fungi in the woods, of damp moss and ferns. Fruits are ripe in hedgerows: crab apples, brambles and damsons, food for birds and foragers. We are fortunate indeed to live at the centre of The National Forest and experience autumn first hand

October and November traditionally mark that season in the church calendar of remembering, with our Remembrance and Lights of Love Services.

But thanks to Google, I have discovered that Churches in America celebrate something this month that we miss out on here. They recognise October as Clergy Appreciation Month. It's a time when they pause and celebrate the faithful leaders who guide their communities with prayer, preaching, presence, and care.

It has biblical precedence and recognition too - St. Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians 5: 12 – 13

*“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other”* (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, NIV).

The C of England only rarely marks the event and it is not officially or traditionally part of the C of England calendar so I thought at least locally that I would like to record our thanks and appreciation of all at St. Johns and indeed the congregations of all the Woodfield Churches for the hard work and dedication of our Ministry Team for keeping our church(s) alive and worshipping. The Woodfield Ministry Team is made up of 7 ordained ministers (Vicars) all but one of them non-stipendiary, 4 Lay Readers and 2 Pastoral Assistants

Clergy carry profound responsibilities. They stand with us in moments of joy and in seasons of grief, offering words of hope and gestures of grace. This month offers us a holy invitation to acknowledge their ministry and to encourage practices that keep them renewed.

Most of our clergy are retired, so their extensive contribution to our church's ministry is voluntarily given and much down to their commitment to and calling from God.

## **A Prayer of Blessing for**

**Rick, Leslie, Edwina, Brenda, Sue, Alison, Chris and Norma, Diane, David, Debbie, Joan and Judy**

*Dear Lord*

*We give thanks for these people who guide, comfort, and inspire us.*

*Grant them rest for their bodies, renewal for their spirits, and joy for their journey of service.*

*Bless us with wisdom to support and encourage them, that together we may continue to proclaim Your love with boldness and grace.*

*Amen.*

## FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

**MONDAY MORNING CUPPA** – In need of some company and fellowship? Come along **every Monday morning** for friendly cup of tea/coffee. 10.30am onwards. All welcome.

**LUNCH LIGHT** our group that supports folk who are bereaved, plan to meet in church on **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October between 12.30pm – 2.00pm**. So, if you have lost a loved one and would like some company, a chat and a bite to eat, why not drop in or Telephone Janet 07968421872, if you want to know more and would like to join us, or if you wish to help out. There is a charge of £5

**COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH** will meet in church on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October between 9.30 and 11.00am**.

## OCTOBER SERVICES and EVENTS ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM. (all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated).

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup>                                                     | <b>St John's Prayer Group meeting Winnie Meadows home at 10am</b>                                                                                  |
| Sunday Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup>                                                       | <b>Donisthorpe (MP)</b> , Measham, Normanton & Snarestone (HC), Swepstone (Harvest Praise), Packington (Breakfast Church),                         |
| Monday<br>Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup> 12 <sup>th</sup> 19 <sup>th</sup> 26 <sup>th</sup> | <b>Monday Morning Cuppa (in church) 10.30am</b>                                                                                                    |
| Tuesday Oct. 6 <sup>th</sup>                                                      | <b>Coffee &amp; Chat at St. John's Donisthorpe at 9.30am</b>                                                                                       |
| Sunday Oct. 11 <sup>th</sup>                                                      | <b>Donisthorpe (HC)</b> , Appleby (HC), Packington (Harvest Festival <b>10.45</b> )<br>Measham (MP Lay Led)                                        |
| Sunday Oct. 18 <sup>th</sup>                                                      | <b>Donisthorpe</b> (Lay Led Worship), Measham (Breakfast Church), Normanton (Harvest Praise), Appleby (Sunday People), Swepstone (HC), Norton (MP) |
| Sunday Oct. 25 <sup>th</sup>                                                      | <b>Donisthorpe (HC)</b> , Packington (HC), Appleby (Family Worship), Measham, (MP & Baptism).                                                      |
| Wednesday Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup>                                                   | <b>Mid- week Holy Communion (Edwina's home.)</b>                                                                                                   |
| Friday Oct. 30 <sup>th</sup>                                                      | <b>Lunch Light at St. John's Donisthorpe (12- 30 – 14.00)</b>                                                                                      |
| Saturday Oct. 31 <sup>st</sup>                                                    | <b>Lights of Love Service 3.00pm at Packington</b>                                                                                                 |

## A REMINDER THAT ST. JOHN'S IS OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER EVERY WEEK:

St. John's Church is open **Tuesdays-Thursdays 10am – 4pm** for private prayer/meditation. Do feel free to go in and enjoy this quiet space.

### PEBBLE POOL PRAYERS.

At the front of church throughout the year, there is a prayer corner and we have a pebble pool there – drop a pebble into the pool for those people you care for or have concerns for, say a prayer and then we in turn pray for all those concerns at our next Sunday service.



## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: 8<sup>th</sup> November at 10am at St John's Church, Donisthorpe

The Service of Remembrance takes place in church, followed by the laying of wreaths at the Remembrance Gates in Church Road at 11.00am with another 2 minutes silence and short Act of Remembrance. It's important that we remember and seek to work for peace for the future.



## LIGHTS OF LOVE - SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE:



### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 2pm St. Johns Donisthorpe

This is a simple service of hymns, prayers and readings, during which we can remember those whom we've lost and to whom we still want to say 'We love you'.

There's a chance to light a candle and say a prayer for your loved one. You are welcome to come along if this would be helpful to you. As always we are offering a choice of services across our Team of churches.

As follows:-

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October at 3.00pm Packington Church

so if you can't make the one with us, try to make one of the others if that is more convenient.

## REFLECTION - How is faith a process?

*By Pastor Tom Sharpe*

Mark 4:30-32 Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

Faith grows over time. Jesus compares it to a mustard seed—the smallest of seeds that becomes one of the largest plants in the garden. So how does faith grow? God strengthens our faith as we listen to Him through His Word. As His Word shapes and changes our lives, our faith continues to mature and grow.

Faith also grows as we live out God's Word. Life brings both blessings and hardships. At times, God uses difficult experiences to shape and refine us, even when the process is painful. At other times, He blesses us in ways that stir gratitude and help us recognize His work in our lives. When we face every season with His Word as our foundation, our faith grows stronger.

There will be times when we fall short as God works to grow our faith. Yet the good news is that God has given us grace through Jesus Christ. Our standing before God does not depend on how well we grow, but on what Christ has done for us through His death and resurrection. When we fail, we need God's forgiveness. And because we are justified through Christ, God does not abandon us. He continues to strengthen us and help our faith grow. May God grow our faith like mustard plants.

## CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

### Who Are You, Really? Finding Your True Identity in Christ

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" — 2 Corinthians 5:17*

### The Labels We Carry

When someone asks, “Who are you?” most of us instinctively reach for labels. We mention our job, our family, our background, our nationality, our church, our hobbies, or the roles we fill each day. Those answers are not wrong. They are part of our story. But they are not the whole story.

For centuries, even names carried identity. A person might be known by a family line, like Erickson or Janssen, or by a trade, like Taylor or Smith. Identity was tied to where someone came from and what someone did. In many ways, that is still true today. We often measure ourselves by productivity, reputation, relationships, and achievement.

### **A Deeper Question for Every Christian**

But Scripture invites us to ask a deeper question: Who am I in Christ? That question reaches beyond personality, career, culture, and circumstance. It speaks to the very foundation of our lives. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that anyone who is in Christ is “a new creation.” That means Christian identity is not about adding a spiritual label to an otherwise unchanged life. It is about being made new from the inside out.

### **You Are More Than What You Do**

It is easy, even for believers, to let earthly labels become ultimate labels. We may define ourselves by success or failure, by how others see us, by our family history, or by what we can accomplish. Yet none of those things can carry the weight of our souls.

In Christ, our identity rests on something far stronger. We are not merely workers, parents, students, leaders, neighbours, or friends. We are beloved children of God. The old has gone, and the new has come. That truth is not meant to sit quietly in the background of our faith; it is meant to shape how we live, love, serve, forgive, and endure.

### **When False Identity Leaves Us Empty**

When we build our identity on temporary things, our peace becomes fragile. If our worth depends on achievement, then failure can crush us. If our identity depends on approval, then criticism can undo us. If our security depends on comfort, then change can shake us. Even our service to God can become distorted when we begin measuring our value by how much we do instead of resting in who we are in Him.

The gospel offers better news. In Christ, we do not have to earn our place before God. We are loved, forgiven, and held by grace. Our failures are not the final word. Our accomplishments are not the foundation. Jesus is.

When our identity is rooted in Christ, we receive gifts the world cannot provide:

- grace when we fall short;
- peace that does not depend on perfect circumstances;
- security in knowing God is with us;
- confidence that we belong to Him.

So, the next time you are tempted to define yourself by what you do, what you own, what others think, or where you have fallen short, remember this: in Christ, you are a new creation. Your truest identity is not fragile, temporary, or earned. It is received by grace. The old has gone. The new has come.

**Reflection:** What label have you been carrying that Christ is inviting you to surrender? Spend a few moments asking God to help you live from your true identity as His beloved child.