

MARSTON NEWS

The News-Letter of St. Nicholas Church, Marston, Oxford
delivered to every home in the Parish

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"The summer is ended, and we are not saved" is what the Prophet of old once wrote. But many of you, alas, will wonder whether our summer in 1956 ever started, let alone ended: our hearts went out to many with young families who were not able to enjoy the sands and sunshine as they had hoped.

But when Jeremiah wrote those words, they were meant as a warning to those who put off doing what they know they should do. Some are content to stay in the ways which they know are wrong; opportunities are lost, the season of action is soon over, and a cold and melancholy winter succeeds. The harvest is not reaped unless the seed is first sown at the right time.

Many of us will know how true this is in our work and homes—as well as in our gardens! It is also very true of our spiritual lives: don't wait until death or disaster before you call on God! At the harvest time the farmer counts his gains and assesses his prospects. May our joyful Harvest Services on Sunday, October 7th, be not only an occasion for praising God for all His mercies in nature but also for spiritual stocktaking and for drawing on His mercies in grace. Looking forward to seeing you all sometime over that week-end.

Your sincere friend and Vicar,
GORDON D. SAVAGE.

OCTOBER

The Harvest. "Harvest Supper" on Friday evening, Oct. 5th; Decoration of the Church, 10 a.m. onwards on Saturday, Oct. 6th; Harvest Services on SUNDAY, OCT. 7TH, at 8.15, 11.0, 12.0, 3.0 and 6.30.

"Marston Market". This popular weekly effort comes to an end for the winter on SATURDAY, OCT. 13TH, when there will be a SUPER MARKET from 10.15 to 11.0, when all the chief organisers of the effort will be present and when we hope to have an all-time record. Certain surplus fruit and/or vegetables from the Harvest Services, after our usual gifts to those in hospital, will be available for sale.

Concert. In response to popular demand, the first-class Concert Party which came to us in April is coming again with a fresh programme on

SATURDAY, OCT. 27TH, at 7.30 p.m. at St. Nicholas County Primary School. Come and have a good laugh, and at the same time help the Restoration Fund. This is a clean, good-humoured concert party, providing a rollicking time for the whole family.

Laity Challenge. All supporters of the Laity Challenge are invited to the Annual General Meeting in Oxford on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 20th. (Details in Church porch.)

New Look or "Renewed Look". September has been a month of delightful surprises for those who pass the Church and notice changes. First the rusted clock face disappeared. Then it returned, looking more beautiful than it ever did. Next, the scaffolding was taken down from the tower, revealing the restoration of the stonework in all its beauty. In the meantime, at the last minute a modern lightning conductor was hidden into the flag-pole, and brought down the north side of the tower, with just a small piece of the conductor apparent on the south side of the Church, at the top of the flag-pole, giving it a "finished" appearance. Next the clock was seen to be going again after its long rest. Whilst all this was going on, two parties of our men had been doing other work. One had been mowing the churchyard and beginning the work on footstones and kerbs authorised by the Faculty received earlier this year, and the other had done very valiant work, over many long hours, painting the lower room and entrance porch of the Reading Room. "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" is what Ecclesiastes says, and how true it is, in more than one way! How thankful we are to see the completion of a number of enterprises, and how thankful we are to the good people who first began them!

"Operation Firm Faith". The letter from the Bishop of Oxford will be read at 11 o'clock and 6.30 on Sunday, Oct. 21st, and all who have the care of children are earnestly invited to come and hear it. In the Sermons that day, an outline of the plan as it affects the families of our parish will be given. At the evening service all the Sunday School teachers, together with helpers from Wycliffe Hall and University, will be present, and most of them hope to remain for the informal gathering in the Reading Room after Service.

Old People's Week, Oct. 1st to 6th. See notice in porch.

Home-call. Our sympathy to Mrs. Vernede and Mrs. Starmer-Smith on their recent losses, and to the relatives of Mrs. Emma Ward and Mrs. Ellen Lawrence.

Some of the Vicar's Outside Engagements, for your prayers and thought: Oct. 4th, Cumnor Mission; Oct. 8th, Culham Governors; Oct. 9th to 12th, Canterbury Convocation; Oct. 12th, speak at Oak Hill Theological College; Oct. 13th, speak at Corpus Christi College; Oct. 14th, preach at Farmoor; Oct. 16th, address Oxford Clerical Society; Oct. 17th, Council on Foreign Relations; Oct. 18th to 19th, Women's Church Work; Oct. 22nd, Oxford Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.

(List of recent gifts, of baptisms and other news held over until next month.)

Two Schoolboy Howlers:

"False doctrine means giving people the wrong medicine."

"Churches are supported by the tribulations of the members."

A Verse to Treasure: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: My God, in Him will I trust" (Ps. xci, 2).

REPORT OF THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE RESTORATION FUND

In March, 1956, there was in the Fabric Fund a total of £334, mainly raised in 1955 towards repair work on the Church, including some urgent repairs already then in hand to the guttering, including painting of all gutterings and the renewal of wood destroyed by death-watch beetle. It was realised that very considerable restoration work on the exterior stonework of the Church was also urgently necessary, and an Appeal for at least £2,500 was launched.

Parishioners and friends of St. Nicholas Church will want to know what has happened during the first six months of the Appeal, how the money has been raised, and how much, and plans for the future.

The amount raised during the six months April 1st to September 30th was £985 15s. 2d. This with the £334 in hand makes the total to date £1,319 15s. 2d., over half-way to the final target.

The Response to the APPEAL LETTER has been encouraging, and sums varying from 2/6 to £25 have been received. Some of the letters have been interesting and touching. We have had donations from Australia and Canada, and many parts of the British Isles. An old lady of ninety wrote, "I would like to send a donation to you as that is my old home where I was born . . . I loved the old village . . . I have not been there for some time as I don't get out very far. My old home was close by a pond, a little thatched cottage which is pulled down now. We were a great family and I went to the dear old Church to Sunday School when I was four years old, I think." Some copies of the Appeal letter are still available for those who have lost them or who wish to send copies to friends.

A very successful FETE was held on the last day of June and raised over £284, resulting in a net sum of £258 19s. 6d. being handed to the Restoration Fund, as fully detailed in the September issue of *Marston News*. Once again it was noticeable how many were the willing helpers, how generous was the response, and how very happy was the atmosphere.

SMALL COLLECTING BOXES, the shape of a Church (and incidentally bearing a strong resemblance to St. Nicholas), have been given out to all who ask for them. About 100 boxes are in the homes of the parish, and they bring in a small and steady sum. In addition, small WEEKLY GIFT ENVELOPES, similar to the Weekly Offering Envelopes, are used by some people. COLLECTING TINS have been placed in all public houses in the village, in shops, and with the different local organisations.

Church organisations have been active too. The MOTHERS' UNION and the YOUNG WIVES' GROUP have been ingenious and original in their money-raising efforts. Small sales of work, pockets full of cash in a patchwork apron, snowball tea-parties and a "sausage sizzle" have raised nearly £25. And the CROMWELL CLUB, the Youth Club of the Church, gave a Folk Dance Display. A CONCERT PARTY, of the old-world variety type, was a marked and appreciated success: it packed the hall of St. Nicholas County School during the Easter holidays and brought in over £43. There is the promise of at least two more concerts during the winter.

One of our Marston family from north of the border with a touch of genius made an innocent and tentative suggestion that "it might be a good idea to have a little stall for three-quarters of an hour each Saturday morning to sell surplus garden produce and home-made cakes and jams", and the result has been a unique way of raising a regular sum every week throughout the summer through the MARSTON MARKET. The result has exceeded the lady's wildest hopes. Each week there is a regular stream of customers, and

there have never been too many home-made cakes! Anything between £3 and £6 is taken each week, and the total now stands at £86 9s. 1d. The MODEL OF THE CHURCH which has been on view at the various Restoration efforts has raised over £11, and the PHOTOGRAPHS of the Church taken by Mr. J. A. Swain from almost every angle both before and during Restoration have greatly added to the interest in the work.

And what are the future plans? Almost before you receive this report there will be a HARVEST SUPPER, on October 5th, and all our offerings at the HARVEST THANKSGIVING this year, October 7th, will be for the Fund. A CONCERT, similar to the one after Easter, but with a different programme, will be held at St. Nicholas County School on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH: be sure to book the date! Christmas Cards and Calendars and post-card views of the Church and village should be available quite soon. One enterprising lady is planning to bring a BARREL ORGAN to Marston for the day to help the effort.

Various members and friends of the Church have been particularly helpful, too numerous to mention in detail. There is the family which has provided, made and painted the Indicator Boards; mention has been made of the photographer who has not only taken the photographs but also given the Church all profits from all sales and given the copyright to the Church. We are also deeply indebted to the big party of friends who so faithfully distribute not only the *Marston News* to 800 homes each month but also all notice and appeal literature, and who also deliver a quite considerable "post" to all parts of the parish every week.

Lastly, "thank you" to all who have given in money, in time, in work and by your prayers, so that St. Nicholas Church, our very own church, may not only be worthily and beautifully restored, but may also continue in the days to come to be a place where people find peace with God, joy in worship and lasting fellowship.

The next £1,200 will not easily be raised, and we do need the help of every single person in Old Marston. When you have read this report you may care to ask for another copy of the Appeal Letter or ask to have a Collecting Box or a supply of Weekly Gift Envelopes.

Secretary of the Restoration Fund: MRS. CARTER, Eaglesfield, Jack Straw's Lane, Headington. Tel. Oxford 4067.

Treasurer of the Church: MR. B. G. OLIVER, Marston Road Post Office, 11 Old Marston Road.

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Church Services: Every Sunday, 8.15, Holy Communion; 11.0, Morning Prayer; 3.0, Children's Church; 6.30, Evening Prayer.
(Full details of all other services, Holy Days, etc., in Church Porch and on Notice Boards.)

The Meeting for Prayer every Monday at 8, at Church School. 2, Tu., 2.45, Pram Service; 7.45, P.C.C. 3, W., 7.45, Young Wives. 5, F., Harvest Supper. 6, Sat., 10.0, Marston Market; Decorate Church. 7, Sun., Harvest. 9, Tues., 7.0, Women's Institute. 13, Sat., 10.0, Marston Market. 17, Wed., 7.45, Young Wives. 18, Th., St. Luke's Day. 21, Sun., Hospital Sunday; 6.30, "Bring a Friend". 23, Tu., 2.45, Mothers' Union. 27, Sat., 7.30, Parish Concert. 30, Tu., Mothers' Union in Oxford. 31, W., Young Wives.