



# Two Shires Link - Weekly News

for the Parishes of

**Tatworth, Chaffcombe, Winsham,**

**Thorncombe and Cricket Malherbie**

**September 13h 2026 (15th Sunday after Trinity)**



In Romans 14, Paul writes to a Christian community whose members do not always agree. They hold different views about food, customs and holy days. Yet Paul urges them to welcome one another and not to pass judgement, reminding them that each person belongs to the Lord.

It is easy to judge someone whose choices or opinions

differ from our own. We may quietly decide that we are right and they are wrong. Paul calls us to greater humility. We cannot always know what another person has experienced or what burdens they carry. Our task is not to stand in judgement, but to treat one another with patience, kindness and respect.

In Matthew's Gospel, Peter asks Jesus how often he must forgive someone who has hurt him. Perhaps Peter thinks that forgiving seven times sounds generous, but Jesus answers, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Forgiveness is not something we carefully count. It is meant to become a way of life.

Jesus then tells the story of a servant whose enormous debt is forgiven, but who refuses to forgive someone who owes him much less. The story reminds us that we forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven. God's mercy towards us is beyond measure, and that mercy should shape the way we respond to others.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending that hurtful behaviour does not matter. Nor does it prevent us from establishing wise and necessary boundaries. It means refusing to allow anger and resentment to have the final word. Sometimes forgiveness comes quickly; sometimes it is a long journey requiring prayer, courage and grace.

Both readings invite us to look at others with mercy rather than judgement. We will not always agree, and relationships will sometimes become strained, but every person stands before the same loving and merciful God. Having received such generous mercy, we are called to share it.

Merciful God, you welcome us with all our faults and forgive us more generously than we deserve. Help us to be patient with those who are different from us, slow to judge and ready to listen. Give us courage to begin the journey of forgiveness and grace to show others the mercy we have received from you. Amen.

### **An action for this week**

Think of one person you have judged, avoided or struggled to forgive. Pray for them by name and ask God to help you take one small step towards greater understanding or peace.

### **Services this week**

**Winsham:** 8am Holy Communion

**Thorncombe:** 10am Morning Worship

**Chaffcombe:** 10:30am Holy Communion

### **Readings**

#### **Romans 14 verses 1 to 12**

**14** Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. <sup>2</sup> Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup> Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7</sup> We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup> If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. <sup>11</sup> For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.'<sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

#### **Matthew 18 verses 21 to 35**

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king

who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup> When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup> and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." <sup>29</sup> Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." <sup>30</sup> But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" <sup>34</sup> And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup> So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

## Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love; grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

## Services Next Week

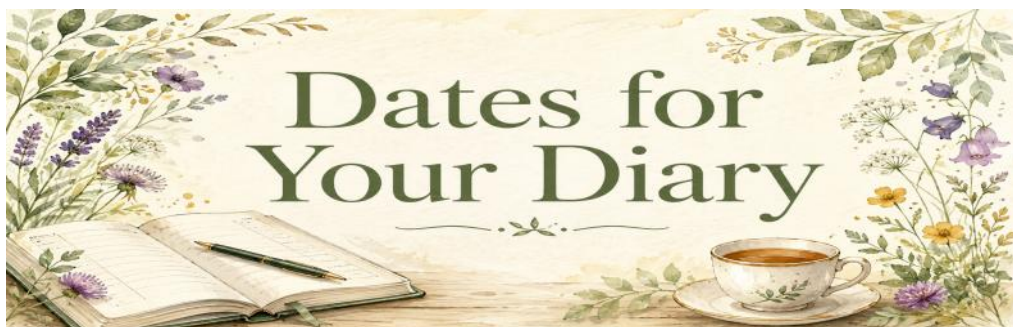
**Winsham:** 10am Morning Worship

**Tatworth:** 10:30am Holy Communion Harvest

**Cricket Malherbie:** 11:30am Harvest and Lunch



*Loving God, you are close to the brokenhearted and you hold the weary in your arms. Be near to all who are unwell, bringing them peace and strength. Be gentle with those who grieve, surrounding them with your love and the hope of eternal life. May they know they are never alone, for you walk beside them, today and always. Amen.*



### **St Mary's Thorncombe:**

27th September Harvest Celebration with flower display  
10am Service with refreshments afterwards  
2 to 4pm tea and cakes

### **Cricket Malherbie:**

20th September 11:30am Harvest and Lunch in aid of Farm Network

### **St Stephen's Winsham**

16th September Bible Study (John / Angela)  
21st September Prayer Group (Brian / Angela)  
24th September 1pm Pudding Club at Jubilee hall  
30th September 10:30am Coffee and Social at St Stephen's  
30th September 2:30pm Bible Study (John / Angela)  
4th October 10am Thanksgiving Service at St Stephen's  
10th October Harvest Supper (more details in shop)

## **Contact Us**

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### **Churchwardens**

**Tatworth:** Vacancy

**Chaffcombe:** Stan Robinson 01460 239121

**Cricket Malherbie:** Audrey Hinkins 01460 52783

**Thorncombe:** Charlotte Roper

**Winsham:** Tom Holt 01460 30302, John Webster 07989 675956