

SFS

De Trinitate

Slimbridge, St. John

Purton, St. John

Sharpness, St. Andrew

AUGUST 2020



50p

Trinitate 2

MINISTRY TEAM

VICAR: Revd. Bill Boon Email: bill.boon@btinternet.com
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**For Baptisms, Confirmations, Home Communions,
Wedding Arrangements etc...**

Please contact the Vicar.

Benefice Website: www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/

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Vacancy - Slimbridge Warden

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Sharpness with Purton

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You may recall that last month I reported that we were awaiting instructions from our bishops on how we would proceed regarding the Sunday opening of our churches. As luck would have it they gave the green light to restart Sunday worship just after the parish magazine had gone to print and so I was not able to advertise our services. Nevertheless, we held our first Sunday services on the 12th July – some 18 weeks after we had closed – and I'm pleased to say that we were well supported by those who came along. Of course restrictions still apply – we cannot sing during services and social distancing is in force. From the 24th July face coverings are advised, although not mandatory in church. so it's a personal choice if you wish to wear a face covering in church or not. I've listed below some updates we have recently received:

BAPTISMS

Baptisms (Christenings) are now allowed to take place in church with a maximum of thirty people attending. Godparents are not encouraged to gather with the parents at the font but maintain social distancing. A baptism candle can be given.

WEDDINGS

Weddings can now take place again with a maximum of thirty people present. As Banns are currently not being called couples will require a Common Licence to fulfil legal requirements. Organists can play; however, singing is still not allowed.

FUNERALS

Funerals up until now have taken place in crematoriums or simply at gravesides. From July we can hold them in church with a maximum of thirty people attending. This number should be made up of family household members, relatives, and close friends. An organist can play if required. Singing is not allowed

Parish Diary - August 2020

(1st) SUNDAY 2nd - TRINITY 8

9.00am	1662 Prayer Book Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Morning Prayer	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(2nd) SUNDAY 9th - TRINITY 9

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(3rd) SUNDAY 16th - TRINITY 10

9.30am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Informal Communion Service	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

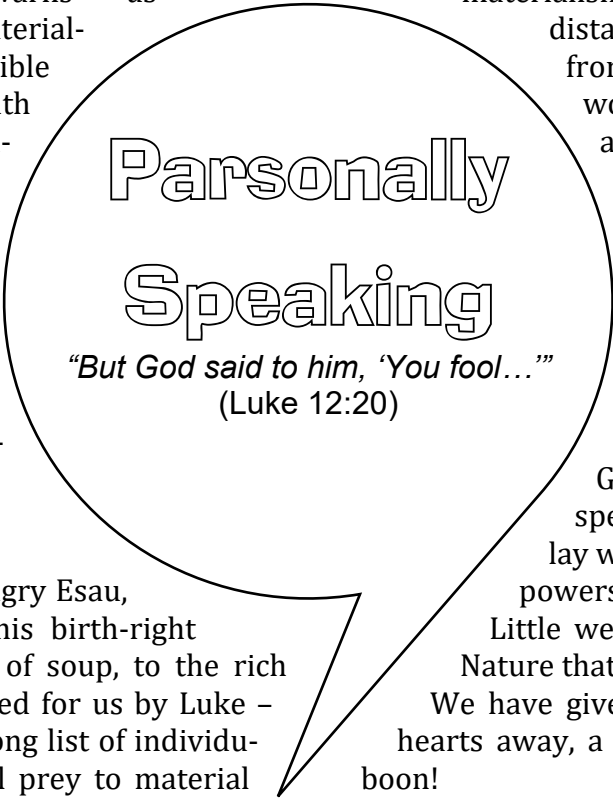
(4th) SUNDAY 23rd - TRINITY 11

10.00am	Benefice Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness
	<i>No Services at Purton or Slimbridge Today!</i>	

(5th) SUNDAY 30th - TRINITY 12

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

“The world is too much with us,” observes the poet William Wordsworth, in his poem which starkly warns us against materialism. The Bible abounds with such warnings in the form of stories about people who succumb to materialism’s superficial charms.



From a hungry Esau, who sells his birth-right for a bowl of soup, to the rich fool, recalled for us by Luke – there is a long list of individuals who fall prey to material temptation. There is also a collective materialism – the kind that afflicted Sodom and Gomorrah, and led the people of Israel and Judah to turn away from the God of their forefathers to follow false gods offering fleshly delights. It seems that materialism is a curse that afflicts every age and generation, and is as timeless as it is topical.

Wordsworth criticizes the world of the First Industrial Revolution for being absorbed in materialism and distancing itself from natural world around us. He writes:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I’d rather be

A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Herein lies the paradox at the heart of the Christian faith. Christians are called to be in the world but not of the world – to live life with a different set of values, to march to the beat of a different drum.

This high ideal is possible only if we accept the radical gap between life in Christ and our old life. We are called to live by heavenly values and display the love, patience, understanding and forgiveness of God in our daily lives – to live out and to make real the prayer “Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven”. The world is too much with us, indeed, but we are not called to see the world as evil and turn our backs on it – rather as Christians we are called to transform it by the way we live in Christ and love others as he loves us.



*August*

Reopening of church buildings for public worship

Following the recent Government announcement that church buildings were able to reopen for public worship from 4th July, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who leads the Church of England's Recovery Group, said that the months since lockdown began "have been an extraordinary time - the first period without public worship and the sacraments in England in more than 800 years."

She said also that there will have been "real joy" as people began "to come together again - if even at a physical distance - but I also know that many will be understandably cautious at this news."

"We will not be returning to normality overnight - this is the next step on a journey. We've been planning carefully, making detailed advice available for parishes to enable them to prepare to hold services when it is safe and practical to do so. It is important to say that the change in Government guidance is permissive, not prescriptive."

"I would particularly like to thank clergy and lay leaders for all they have done during the time our buildings have been closed."

Bishop Sarah warned that there will still be restrictions, "and we must all still do everything we can to limit the spread of the virus... The online services and dial-in worship offerings we have become used to will continue."

"This has been an incredibly difficult time for the whole country, especially for those who have been ill, who have suffered financial hardship, the loss of livelihoods and indeed, for many, those they love. We know that is not over and the Church has a task ahead to bring consolation and hope."

"Churches and cathedrals have risen to the recent challenges, finding new ways of meeting for worship, of serving our neighbours, and of reaching new people with the love of God. The challenge before us now is to take the next steps carefully and safely, without forgetting all that we've discovered about God and ourselves on the way."

Trinitate 9

<i>Corinthian:</i>		11.	0
<i>Hoopla :</i>		12.	4
<i>Clock Golf:</i>		4.	6
<i>Cake making competition and prize money:</i>	2.	19.	3
<i>Treasure Hunt:</i>		9.	6
<i>Tea service competition:</i>	1.	5.	0
<i>Teas:</i>	3.	9.	3
<i>Donations:</i>	2.	17.	9
<i>Mother's Union Stall:</i>	9.	12.	9
<i>Flower Stall:</i>	2.	3.	9
<i>Pony Rides:</i>		2.	6
<i>Jumble sale:</i>	1.	8.	6½
<i>Fancy Stall:</i>	1.	16.	0
<i>Ice Cream:</i>	2.	5.	3
<i>Proceeds of Dancing Classes:</i>	3.	19.	0
<i>Sale of Balls:</i>		6.	0
<i>Fortune Teller:</i>		11.	6
<i>Pound Stall:</i>	4.	2.	7
<i>Children's Plays:</i>	1.	18.	2
<i>Mallet Competition:</i>		1.	4
<i>Coins in Bath:</i>		13.	11½
<i>Peas Competition:</i>		17.	10
<i>Hen & Chicks Competition</i>	1.	7.	2
<i>Cockerel & Chocolates Competition</i>	2.	8.	2
<i>Gate:</i>	4.	2	3
<i>Sweets Competition</i>		15.	4
<i>Cheese Competition</i>	3.	18.	6
<i>Doll Competition</i>	1.	4.	6
<i>Bowling for a pig;</i>	9.	3.	0
<i>Iced Cake Competition</i>	3.	0.	0
<i>Chocolates</i>		6.	0
<i>Sweet Stall</i>		15.	10
<i>Dance</i>	6.	4.	10½
<i>Tombola</i>	1	13.	6
<i>Total:</i>	<i>£87.</i>	<i>3.</i>	<i>9½</i>

It has taken quite a time to type all this information up but it certainly reveals just how much work the church put into their 'Summer Fete'. No doubt it was truly a whole village affair.

David Carrington
Vicar's Warden.

The Lockdown Lifts

*There's life in the town!
No longer 'locked down'!
The people stroll out in the sun
The majestic trees
Sway in the light breeze
Like they wanted to join in the fun!*

*Like light after dark!
We can walk in the park!
Buy our tea, and sit out on the grass!
We can chat to our friends
As our loneliness ends
And we smile at the strangers we pass!*

*Yes there are still queues
Which cease to amuse
But things are no longer so black!
As they sing in that song -
You miss what is gone,
But it's great when at last it comes back!*

By Nigel Beeton



From the Registers - June 2020

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Gift Aid</u>	<u>Envelopes</u>	<u>Cash</u>
<u>Sharpness:</u>	0	£60	£190	£0
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
For the Month:	£250	£53.42	+£153.98	

From 1st Jan. 2020 St. Andrew's has spent **£1,529.82** more than it has received

<u>Purton:</u>	0	£60	£0	£0
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
For the Month:	£60	£75.10	-£15.10	

From 1st Jan. 2020 St. John's has spent **£1,782.45** more than it has received

<u>Slimbridge:</u>	0	£455	£0	£0
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)	
For the Month:	£455	£1,360.41	-£905.41	

From 1st Jan. 2020 St. John's has spent **£225** more than it has received

*The above figures reflect the fact that our churches were closed up to the end of June and therefore not receiving their usual funding.
However, as can be seen there are still bills to pay.*

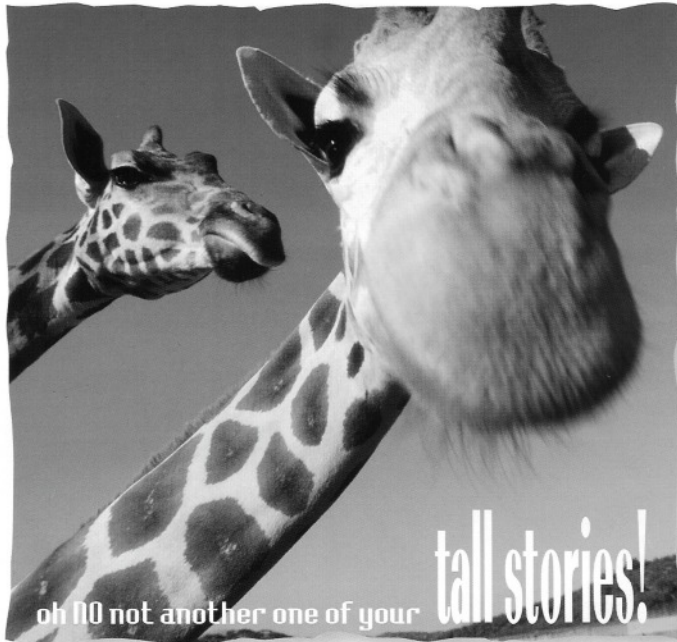
ASHES:

We laid to rest the remains of:

NATALIE ANNETTE TURL (*Berkeley Cemetery*)

23rd July

Creature Feature



Close Attention to Text

Written by Vanessa Conant

Luke 21:29-end

Then Jesus told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.



For Jesus, summer spoke of a coming redemption and the signs of its imminence were leaves on the fig tree. Throughout the Bible, the fig tree is spoken of as a symbol of Israel. Where previously, Jesus has cursed a fig tree for failing to bear fruit, now he is inviting the alert and attentive to watch for new leaves and know that the Son of Man will soon return, a hope that pulses through Luke's gospel and is expressed here as an approaching nearness, a true proximity.

The question for Jesus' followers - both then and now - is how to wait in the midst of anguish, perplexity and terror, which Luke's Gospel also promises? Looking around the world, and throughout history, there have been many seasons of distress when war has

ravaged nations and the heavens are shaken. We may well wonder how long we have to wait for Jesus' promised return: How much more sorrow must we endure, how much turmoil and uncertainty?

Perhaps here is an invitation into action and contemplation: a challenge to find patterns of prayer and attending that can help us to hold the tension and pain of longing, as well as acting for justice that can challenge the turbulence and cruelty of this world. Our spiritual practice, rather than intellectual belief alone, will help us wait in the 'not yet' and create space for us to glimpse the new leaves of summer.

Creator God
you made us in your image:
may we discern you in all we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Women in majority of deacons ordained last year, report shows

Women made up the majority of deacons ordained in the Church of England last year for the first time, according to the latest statistics.

A total of 570 deacons were ordained in 2019, with women making up just over a half, or 51% of the new intake.

Deacons are the first of three orders of ordained ministry. Whilst all clergy continue as deacons throughout, the majority are also ordained as priests at the end of their first year of ministry.

The statistics show that women made up around 32% of the 20,000 active clergy last year, with a growing proportion of senior posts such as Bishops, Archdeacons and Cathedral Deans, occupied by women, from 25% in 2018 to 27% last year.

Women were in the majority starting training for ordained ministry for the third year running, with equal numbers of men and women sponsored to train for 'incumbent' posts – such as Rector or Vicar - over the last two years. However currently only 25% of incumbent posts are occupied by women.

The number of stipendiary, or paid clergy, remained stable, at 7,700, between 2018 and 2019, following a period of decline. There were 7,830 Readers or licensed lay ministers compared to just under 10,000 in 2010. Readers and licensed lay ministers are not ordained but can lead worship and preach in churches, among other roles.

The statistics show the number of stipendiary clergy from black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds stood at 3.8%, while 7.8% of people entering training for ordained ministry last year were from a BAME background.

Out of a total of 550 people beginning training for ordained ministry last year, nearly a quarter, or 24%, were under 32 years old and more than two fifths, 44%, were aged under 40.

The Rt Revd Chris Goldsmith, Director of Ministry for the Church of England, said: "In recent years there has been an increasing diversity among our clergy, but we will not be content until those in public ministry truly reflect the whole church and the communities which they serve."

Smile for a While!

Some miscellaneous observations on modern life...

Fools rush in where fools have been before.

Success is relative - the greater the success, the more relatives.

You must have learned from others' mistakes. You haven't had time to think all those up yourself.

People like criticism - just keep it positive and flattering.

It's okay to let your mind go blank, but please turn off the sound.

Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

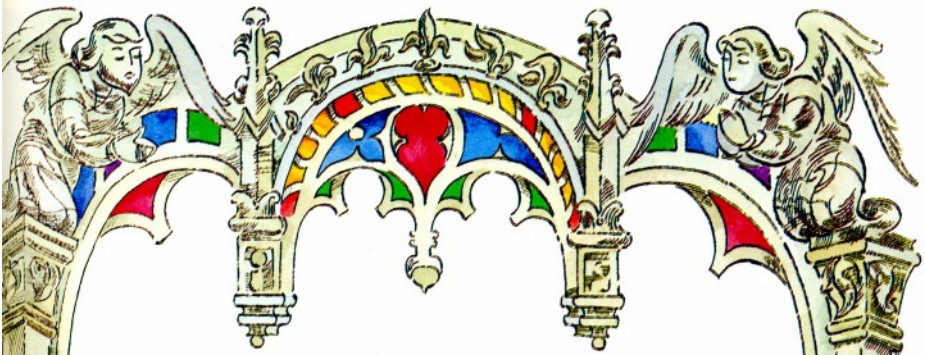
Misers aren't much fun to live with, but they make great ancestors.

Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even if you wish they were.



Sick of preaching

Our new vicar had just been prescribed bifocals. The reading portion of the glasses improved his vision considerably, but the top portion of the glasses didn't work so well. In fact, he was experiencing dizziness every time he looked through them. He tried to explain this to the congregation on Sunday: "I hope you will excuse my continually removing my glasses. You see, when I look down, I can see fine, but when I look at you all, it makes me feel sick."



Quotes of the Month

Musings on our Christian faith. . .

It is impossible to have the feeling of peace and serenity without being at rest with God. -

Dorothy Pentecost

Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden, but sin is forbidden because it is hurtful. - *Benjamin Franklin*

If you want your neighbour to know what Christ will do for him, let the neighbour see what Christ has done for you. - *Anon*

Make sure it is God's trumpet you are blowing. If it is only yours, it won't wake the dead, it will simply disturb the neighbours. - *W Ian Thomas*

Comfort for new curates - when God ordains,
He sustains. - *Anon*

Update on church and cathedral monuments

The Church of England has more than 16,000 churches and 42 cathedrals, almost all of which are home to memorials and monuments to individuals from a period spanning more than a thousand years.

A recent statement put out by the Church of England explains: “Monuments and memorials tell us a lot, not just about individuals, but about who and what was valued by the society that put them up.

“What we value and seek to memorialise now is not the same as it was in any other historical period. A prominent memorial in a church in some cases is a mark of the esteem in which the person was held in their community and beyond. In others, it will reflect a donation given to the church at the time by an individual or family – or a combination of the two. In addition to this there are millions of gravestones in churchyards.

“The events of the past weeks in response to the tragic death of George Floyd have brought into focus the question of monuments to individuals who have participated in systemic and targeted discrimination or exploitation based on race.”

The Church of England’s Director of Church Buildings and Cathedrals, Becky Clark, says: “Action is being taken by parishes and cathedrals across England to consider monuments which have links to slave trading or the exploitation of people. Some churches have previously acknowledged and exposed this legacy, but many are just beginning this work in response to the spotlight shone on these questions by the Black Lives Matter movement.

“While it is not possible to provide a single answer, which could apply to all circumstances and which would satisfy all legitimate viewpoints, we must be as one in acknowledging the real and justified anger of those who believe monuments in churches and elsewhere must be reviewed.

“Key to determining what should be done in each context is the creation of a dialogue within communities. This must be open and honest, and acknowledge that there are monuments in our churches and cathedrals to individuals and events whose destructive impact is still being felt by people living in the UK today.

“Meaningful dialogue needs to engage with this reality, recog-

nise that these voices have often not been listened to in the past, and make decisions that allow these unjust experiences to form a recognised part of both the history and future of our churches.

“The local and national church should play a leading role by helping to lead and facilitate the conversation, not purely as a discussion around historical monuments, but also how we, as a broad and diverse society, value and represent people of all ethnicities and backgrounds.

“As the Archbishop of Canterbury has said, we can only forgive the actions of the past when we have justice in the present, and statues and memorials need to be seen in both the context of the past and the present.

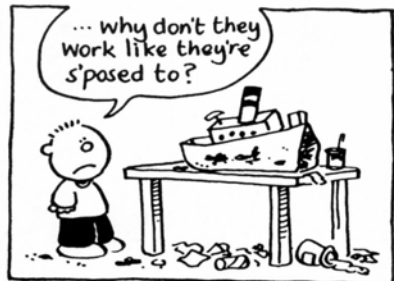
“Dialogue alone is not sufficient. It must have real outcomes. These may include re-interpretation, or in gaining permission for the alteration or removal of mon-

uments. The outcome and possible follow-up action will be different in each case, and will depend on the particulars of the monument or memorial itself, recognising the rights of descendants as well as the artefacts as heritage assets.

“Although these decisions will be taken locally, dioceses and national bodies like the Church Buildings Council have a part to play in facilitating those conversations and we have been offering advice and support to churches as they confront the complex challenges of the past and the reality of the present.

“In doing so, we must seek to confront and understand the past whilst recognising the reality of how it impacts people living today.”

the mouths of babes



Out of the Silence . . .

The monthly journal of the journey of a Priest, Contemplative and Community Chaplain beginning to emerge from lock-down!

Well here we are – back in church on a Sunday for those who feel able, a wedding in the offing for me to do - which is exciting, but all with rules and advice changing all the time. It's this constant change that is in some ways even more disconcerting than the total, simple lock-down we began with, so once again I'm going to share with you extracts from my current journal (I always used to look back a few years for material) about the effects of this uncertainty. One thing at least we can all hang on to and that is the certainty, presence and faithfulness of our God, though as you will see we all have moments (or most of us do) when even that feels doubtful!

Tuesday 14th July 2020

In some ways lock-down was easy. There was no debate. The rules were clear. But this 'easing' is difficult and when it flares, as it did on Sunday evening, into potential family conflict around what is and is not safe it's tough. It's particularly tough as I was the 'buffer zone', the peace-keeper, the repository for people's fears and anger at others. I barely slept on Sunday night and yesterday morning sat here exhausted and feeling hopeless and abandoned. My crying out and desperate prayers for help seemed to be hitting a brick wall – a huge empty silence, that enormous absence that many have described but which I rarely experience. It was only seeming absence and the prayer is heard. Julian of Norwich's words read last night, just before I slipped into a profound, deep and dreamless sleep, were particularly apt for you did hear, you are guiding and intervening, you were not absent or unmoving . . . as she says you hear our prayer

“. . . no matter how we feel.

So he says this, 'Pray inwardly, even though you find no joy in it. For it does good, though you feel nothing, see nothing, yes, even though you think you cannot pray. For when you are dry and empty, sick and weak, your prayers please me, though there be little enough to please you. All believing prayer is precious to me.'

Thank you, Lord, for your faithful presence; thank you for restorative sleep; thank you for your promises for the future – bless me, and those I care for this day as care and love sometimes boil over into fear and

anger but all, whether we perceive it or not, under the shadow of your wings – always and ever ‘underneath are the everlasting arms’.

“Give thanks to the Lord for he is gracious, his faithfulness endures for ever.”

Psalm 106

Wednesday 15th July 2020

Such a peaceful day yesterday – busy, much achieved, but a ‘deep peace such as the world cannot give’ and then another good night’s sleep. Spoiling myself this morning – curled up in my arm chair for this quiet time with you – there is a distinct possibility I shall fall asleep which is why I don’t usually do it but should I snooze today I would accept it as a gift from you.

“The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness . . . the merciful goodness of the lord is from of old and endures for ever . . . ”

Psalm 103

Reading more Julian of Norwich – words that exactly explain how I can get myself into such a state of anxious stress as I did

“This is our Lord’s will: that our prayer and our trust should be equally generous. For if our trust is not as generous as our prayer we cannot worship God to the full, and we hinder and harm ourselves.”

O how true, how true! It is still hard for me, in difficult times, to maintain the trust in your compassionate love, Lord, that I should – should for my own peace of mind and from my own experience of your faithfulness but I’m not there yet – you’re working on it! Further words of comfort from J. I. Packer

“What matters supremely is not the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it – the fact that he knows me . . . I am never out of his mind. All my knowledge of him depends on his sustained initiative in knowing me.”

Monday 20th July 2020

Thank you! Thank you! How lovely to wake with the sun only just beginning to cast cool, gold beams and long grey shadows and feel thanks.

The whole family get together yesterday went off safely and in a remarkably relaxed manner – the ‘brothers grim’ unstressed (apparently) and being charming to each other and everyone, and even me, who

is not a keen party-person, enjoying the company though retreating every now and then into my socially distanced bubble with radio and earphone to see how the cricket was going!!

The highlight for me was the moment when my brother, overhearing my conversation with my new ‘nephew-in-law-to-be’ who had asked how church was going, misheard my relating that we’d had to have two pigeons shot as ‘having two parishioners shot’!! I laughed until I cried and assured him that though church life, like any other family, could have difficult moments – shooting each other had not yet come into it!

The clock strikes 6 and, tea in hand, I turn to the new day, the new week with all its joys and challenges in your name and with your blessing I know.

More next month

With love and many blessings

Mary Tucker



Keep the Doors Open

This was the title of an article printed in last month's magazine by John Inge. Following the publication – although not directly connect to it – Den Bannister sent me this message -

“There was a discussion in the letters page of the Telegraph this week about the significance of religious buildings to the community. I think you probably know my views and I thought a quote from the philosopher Sir Roger Scruton was particularly apt”.

“The buildings the Church of England maintains are not just symbols. They are part of our national identity. They define our spiritual condition even in the midst of scepticism and unbelief. They stand in the landscape as a reminder of what we are and what we have been; and even if we look at them with the disenchanted eyes of modern people, we do so only by way of recognising that, in their own quiet way, they are still enchanted”.

Surely our churches have a special place in the hearts and the minds of those who live within their boundaries. At Slimbridge we have a building that has been loved for over 800 years and in our imagination we can perhaps bring to mind those villagers who in March 1208 had their lives up ended when, like every church in the land, their place of worship was closed.

Records show that Gilbert and William – Benedictines from the Priory at Stanley, St. Leonard – were chaplains serving St. John's, Slimbridge. King John was on the throne and he, like Kings before him, had a great influence over the Church. However, there was a growing desire – mainly from Rome - that Pope Innocent III should carry out a reformation that would place him above the King in matters concerning the Church, thus centralising the authority in Rome. Things came to head at the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hubert Walter, when the Pope would not support the King's candidate for the post. Retaliation against Innocent III led to an Interdict (a Church censure) being placed on England in March 1208 which banned all clergy from taking services and thus closed places of worship.

The doors would remain closed for the next five years during which time there was much ecclesiastical upheaval. The Interdict created a great burden for much of the population but although there were fears it never resulted in a rebellion against the King. Eventually King John negotiated terms for a reconciliation and a Golden Bull (a public decree) was issued in May 1213. The full effect all this had on the church at Slimbridge is not known, but it's interesting to note that it would not be until 1274 that the parish had a permanent priest in place – Simon de Berkeley.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 7: 1-10, Matthew 8: 5-13

When the Romans invaded Israel, they used soldiers to keep order. For the centurion in Capernaum it was more than just a job...

The centurion had a young servant who was in great pain and dying.

When he heard that Jesus was near, he asked the town leaders to ask Jesus for help.

The leaders told Jesus..

This man deserves your help. He loves our people.

He has even built us a meeting place!

This could have been a tricky situation, for Jews never went into the houses of non-Jews.

But Jesus said..

I will go and heal the boy.

But the centurion knew that, as a Jew, Jesus could not go into the houses of non-Jews so as Jesus got near, he sent some friends to him.

He says he isn't worthy enough for you to come to his house.

But he says he understands authority and knows you have it. You only have to say so and his servant will be healed.

Jesus was amazed!

I have never met anyone in Israel with as much faith.

He said to the friends ...

You may go now. What he has believed has happened.

When the friends got to the house they found the servant completely healed!

The Way I See It

John Bell considers modern prejudice

One of the sad behavioural phenomena of recent years has been the increase of vitriol, including even death threats, directed at public figures by people who disagree with what they have say. This used to happen mostly for elected politicians, but it now affects school-children like Greta Thunberg for raising environmental concerns, medical experts such Anthony Fauci for advising the wearing of masks; and recently the philanthropist Bill Gates revealed that he was being demonised for encouraging preventative vaccination.

I've been trying to identify the reasons behind the vindictive nature of the invective directed at these people. I think that one possibility is a fear of the power wielded by unaccountable individuals. I certainly share this apprehension. For there are a number of prominent unelected people, mostly men, whose wealth exceeds the GDP of small nations and whose tentacles of influence regarding information on social media or the spread of industrial power stretch around the globe. But Thunberg, Fauci and Gates are not in this category.

Another possible reason is the prevalence of Fake News – something both condemned and exhibited by certain populist politicians. Fake news can encourage people to doubt the truth about which non-political figures are passionate. But it might all come down to the fact that truth is not always popular or comfortable, especially if it challenges long-held assumptions or comes with a cost. If the Christian faith has any light to shed on this, it would be a perception which is not specific to that tradition, namely that the hallmark of what is true should be that it is liberating rather than constricting; it should shed light rather than conserve ignorance.

The maxim Jesus articulates is, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free”. At one time it was claimed that the brains of black people were smaller than those of whites, that punishment was a possible remedy for dyslexia and autism in children, that rape

was an offence encouraged by women, that people who spoke minority languages were uncultured. Challenging these prejudices with the truth was never a popular activity. But acknowledging the truth is liberating both to the oppressed and to their oppressors.

Slimbridge Parish Council

NOTICES

The Parish Council continues to meet remotely via Zoom, the agendas are published on the website with the Zoom link if anyone wishes to join.

The defibrillators have now been fitted in the parish and will be registered with the ambulance service any day now. They are located at the phone box on Cambridge Village Green, outside the Village Hall and outside the Legion building. This is a great success and thanks goes to those who have donated towards these - Friends of Slimbridge Parish Church, the Little Vintage Show, the Slimbridge Fete group and also Rosie's Wood. When it is possible we will arrange for training courses to be run on first aid and defibrillators, however if they are needed to be used please don't worry as the defibrillator talks you through the process as to what you need to do.

The Solar Farm Fund is now open for applications to Slimbridge Parish community groups. If you have a project that you wish to apply for funding that will benefit the community in some way, please go to the Parish Council website for application forms or contact the Clerk. Applications are open until 21st October with the Community Advice Panel to review these afterwards and put recommendations to the Parish Council for the meeting November 16th. Applicants will be notified of their applications after this date with funding being awarded in December / January 2021.

Friends of the Willow Trust Charity

I would like to share with you all an update on how The Willow Trust Charity has been progressing over the winter period.

As you all may know, this is the charity which The Sharpness PCC support. I had a lovely letter from the Trust Administrator Mrs E A Rowland thanking us all so much for our ongoing support, which as you all know has been a very challenging time for all charities.

Since beginning 30 years ago, The Willow Trust has given fun and freedom to some very seriously ill children and adults alongside their carers too, who never dreamt a day of freedom could be possible. The guests of all ages enjoy steering the boat which gives them increasing self-confidence and helps to bring extra pleasure to their day.

Over the winter months the boats have had extensive overhauls. John and Buzz, the skippers of both boats, have been helping with the extensive works. The Spirit of Freedom II has had a new canopy fitted over the back of the boat.

The soil tank, water tank and fuel tank have all been cleaned, scraped and sanded. The boats have been painted and many more jobs besides. The boats have undergone extensive surveys by The Maritime and Coast-guard Agency and have been issued with their Passenger Certificates for the season ahead. The training of all volunteers has now been completed and many groups of disabled and seriously ill children and adults have been booking in, for their day with the trust. The season usually starts in the early part of April, but everything was put on hold in March due to Covid 19. All groups and volunteers had to be cancelled which was very disappointing for all.

Even though the boats are quietly sitting on the moorings at Saul Junction, they still have core costs to cover and fundraising has been increasingly difficult too.

The support that people give keeps the morale of the trust very optimistic for the time when they get the green light to put everything back into action.

Katrina Bailey.

If anyone would like to donate to this amazing charity, details are below.

www.willowtrust.org

11A Whiteway Court,
Whiteway Farmhouse, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 7BA
01285 651661.



BONUS BALL SWEEPSTAKE



WINNERS



Currently Suspended!

We hope to restart in September as church funds are desperately low. To enable this to happen it's important that those who are registered to play ensure that their £4 – for September – is paid. Money can be dropped off at the Vicarage.

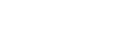


YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

*Thousands of Pounds Won
Thousands of Pounds Raised
For Sharpness Church*



THANK YOU!



LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE
On the perils of leaving the pulpit

The Rectory
 St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

When the churches reopen for public worship (whenever that is!) I hope you will come and take Evensong one Sunday. But, thinking of your visit last August, I would prefer you used the pulpit when preaching. How could Colonel Brockle complete ‘The Times’ crossword and Miss Balmer her knitting with you constantly walking up and down in front of them? They found it most disconcerting, as out of politeness, they were obliged to listen to you. It was a unique experience they do not wish to repeat.

Those few who defy Anglican tradition and sit at the front of the church were also placed in the dilemma of trying to decide whether they should keep turning in their pews as you paraded down the nave and then rotating back to the front as you re-emerged up the side aisle. It did Lady Plumtree’s vertigo no good at all. It also allowed people to see that you were wearing suede shoes. For many of our worshippers, the most appalling of heresies are as nothing when compared to brown shoes under a cassock.

I appreciate you made heroic efforts and got your sermon down to 30 minutes, but that is still 20 minutes longer than they anticipated and 29 minutes longer than their attention span.

No, use the pulpit in future; that is the reason why stonemasons 600 years ago put twenty tons of marble in our church in the first place and it would be a shame to disappoint them. It also means that from a distance of 100 yards and a height of 20 feet, no one can tell that the glass of water I use liberally while preaching is in fact a gin and tonic.

I concede that our pulpit has its dangers. I have known several bishops come to grief as their robes wrap themselves around the newel post as they ascend the steps. One, unable to untangle himself, was obliged to preach while half-way up the steps and with his back to the congregation, while our verger was dispatched to find a pair of scissors.

Perhaps, before your next visit, we may install a mechanical floor in the pulpit, so that after 10 minutes, it slowly lowers you into the crypt while the congregation can get on with singing the last hymn before getting home in decent time.

Your loving uncle,

PUZZLE PAGE

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h	r	o	m	a	n	s	z	d	u	l	v	m
q	i	n	v	a	d	e	d	x	o	m	g	k

Romans
loves
pain
healed
asked
leaders
people
anyone

Jesus
help
invaded
friends
understand
amazed
servant
tricky

faith
believed
centurion
authority
house
deserves
Capernaum
Israel



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A an electronic version of this magazine is available in pdf - contact Bill Boon for details.