

sPs

De Trinitate

Slimbridge, St. John

Purton, St. John

Sharpness, St. Andrew

FEBRUARY 2021



50p

Trinitate 2
MINISTRY TEAM

VICAR: **Revd. Bill Boon** **Email:** bill.boon@btinternet.com
The Vicarage Sanigar Lane, Newtown (01453) 811 360 *Day off - Monday*

COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN: **Revd. Mary Tucker**
Hinton Cottage, Hinton. (01453) 811 105
Email: marycountry12@gmail.com

READER: **Mr. Stilman Davis**
Orchard Lea, Churchend, Slimbridge. (01453) 890 783
Email: stilman.davis@tolutim.co.uk

WORSHIP LEADERS:
(*Slimbridge*) **Mr David Carrington**
Email: davidwsp1@yahoo.co.uk

(*Sharpness*) **Mrs Carol Bailey** (01453) 810 850

**For Baptisms, Confirmations, Home Communions,
Wedding Arrangements etc...**

Please contact the Vicar.

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

CHURCHWARDENS

Mrs Margaret Price (<i>Purton</i>)	The Mill House, Purton	(01453) 811 250
Ms Katrina Bailey (<i>Sharpness</i>)	8 Jubilee Way	(01453) 810 850
Mr David Carrington (<i>Slimbridge</i>)	8 Lancelot Court	(01453) 890 031
<i>Vacancy - Slimbridge Warden</i>		

Parochial Church Council Officers

Sharpness with Purton

Mrs Carol Bailey (<i>Secretary</i>)	8 Jubilee Way	(01453) 810 850
Mr Peter Crews (<i>Treasurer</i>)	67 Oldminster Road	(01453) 811 370

Slimbridge

Mrs Pamela Storey (<i>Secretary</i>)	<i>The White Lion. Bristol Road</i>	Email: pamelastorey@btinternet.com
Mr Pieter Koole (<i>Treasurer</i>)	April Cottage, Shepherds Patch	Email: koole.pieter@googlemail.com

Parish Diary - February 2021

(1st) SUNDAY 7th - 2 BEFORE LENT

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	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(2nd) SUNDAY 14th - SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

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 21st - LENT 1

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 28th - LENT 2

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

PLEASE NOTE...

ALL SERVICES SUSPENDED

DURING CURRENT LOCK-DOWN

A Call to Prayer

Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell are encouraging people of all backgrounds to set aside time each day for prayer – if possible stopping wherever they are at 6pm each evening.

It follows their call for people to pause, ‘reflect on the enormity of this pandemic’ and pray for the nation and all those affected. The call followed news that more than 100,000 people have died within 28 days of a positive Covid-19 test.

Each evening throughout February Archbishop Justin will lead a prayer session on Facebook Live from 6pm on his [Facebook page](#).

He is encouraging people to post prayer requests in the comments section and he will pray with them.

In a letter to the nation the Archbishops wrote: "We encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God.

"We also know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and cry out for the healing of these inequalities."

They added: "One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether you're someone of faith, or not, we invite you to call on God in prayer.

"Starting on 1 February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love."

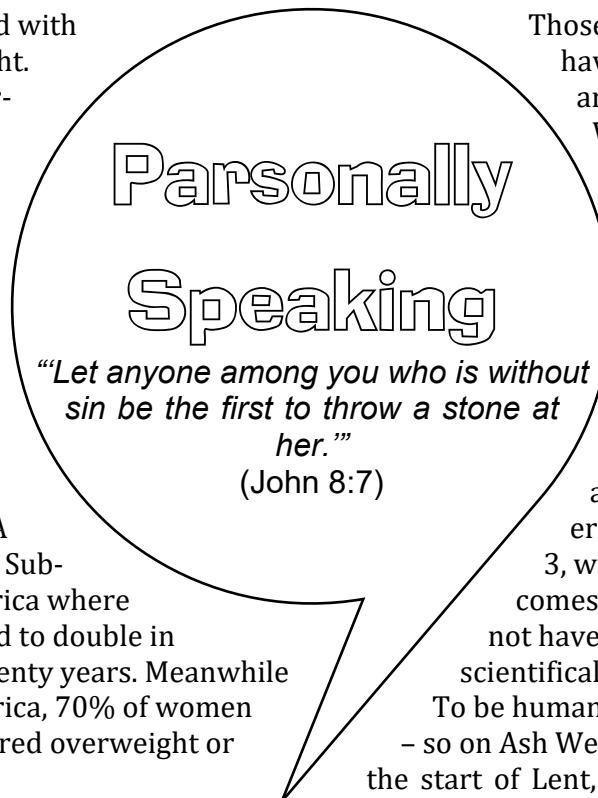
The call to prayer is also being supported by a number of prayer organisations and denominations including the Methodist Church of Great Britain and 24-7 Prayer GB.

Prayer resources are available [on the Church of England website](#).

How many pounds do you hope to lose on your Lenten Fast? While such large numbers starve the world over, millions of others are preoccupied with losing weight. And not surprisingly: Around 60% of adults in the UK are medically considered overweight; the figure's about 70% for the USA and 27% in Sub-Saharan Africa where it's expected to double in the next twenty years. Meanwhile in South Africa, 70% of women are considered overweight or obese.

Of course, the object of a Lenten Fast isn't to lose weight, but while we're on the subject, the quickest way to lose weight is simply to rub your hands together. Every time you do this, microscopic fragments of skin fall away and take their place in the dust of the earth. No-one knows how much domestic dust is made up of human flesh, but the average human

sheds 500 million skin cells per day, the replenishment of which is a staggering feat of human biology.



Those of you who have attended an Ash Wednesday service will be familiar with the words, "Dust you are; to dust you will return." The ancient writers of Genesis 3, where this text comes from, could not have been more scientifically correct. To be human is to be dust – so on Ash Wednesday, at the start of Lent, we're reminded that we are only human.

St. John, in writing his Gospel, tells us the story of the Teachers and Pharisees who bring in a woman caught in adultery. They treat her as an object of disgust and challenge Jesus to join them in condemning her. They also want to prove that he flouts the Law of Moses, which according to them, requires her stoning. It is a typical

move by the Pharisees to place Jesus in a difficult spot. To condemn her will undermine his own teaching in sight of the people – not to condemn her actions will put him directly at odds with the Jewish Law

What Jesus does, however, is quite the opposite. In defending the weak and rescuing the oppressed he fulfils the Law completely; by enacting grace and opening up reconciliation he is entirely true to himself. And so he says to them: “Let anyone without sin be the first to throw a stone.”

By posing this question Jesus invites the accusers to get in touch with their own humanity and realise that through it, they belong together with the woman they accuse. At the same time, by protecting the woman, Jesus affirms her own human worth. By refusing to condemn, he offers her the same space for reflection that he gave her accusers. All are human; all have choices; all are responsible for their actions.

This is precisely what St Paul calls “the ministry of reconciliation”. Both the woman and her accusers are challenged to face the reality of their own human weakness. Both have the chance to humbly thank God for his grace, and then live renewed lives in his power. They even, if our imaginations dare stretch that far, have the chance to reconcile with each other – if they allow themselves to be truly converted.

Through the coming of Christ, all things, and all relationships, are and can be reconciled. It's not simply about me getting myself right with God through accepting his grace. This is merely the momentous beginning. It's then about me becoming reconciled with myself, my past, present and future, my fears, hopes, expectations and disappointments: my own humanity. And when I see my humanity as something in common with all others – with all of us on the same, level, playing field – then I can seek reconciliation in my relationships also.

On Ash Wednesday we remember that we are “but dust”. We are not super-human, about to save the world through our Lenten efforts, but “only human”. And it is precisely as humans that we all need God's ongoing work of reconciliation.





CHURCHWARDEN'S

Slimbridge Warden, David Carrington writes:

It is quite some time now since we have used this space, but I was asked to give a tribute to my fellow Churchwarden Roger Meredith who sadly died so suddenly on 9th December 2020.

O
R
N
E
R

Back in the early nineties, I was Churchwarden alongside Derek Tocknell, but due to the fact I was also District Commissioner for Cotswold Vale District Scout Council (DC) at that time - and may I add running my own business - I just had to step down from the warden's office.

In 2000, Roger (who had known Derek for many, many years), stepped up to offer his services as Churchwarden alongside Derek. Sadly, Derek passed away in March 2001. Roger then carried on faithfully for the next 8 years alone as no one could be found to fill the vacancy that Derek left. However, it should be said that Doreen Hobbs, who was Verger for many years, aided by husband Geoff, gave great support to Roger as he went about his duties. Roger's wife Brenda also became involved in helping to run the church and took on many roles at a time when our new Vicar the Rev. Boon was needing support. Having now relinquished the role of DC and when Doreen was finding things difficult not only supporting Geoff but also with severe back pain herself, I was asked if I could stand in. Later in 2009 I was officially appointed as People's Warden while Roger continued as Vicars Warden.

The Office of Churchwarden is a legal post and so needs the Bishop's approval. This meant that Roger and I attended a special service every year held either in the Cathedral or in one of a number of churches around the Diocese to formally acknowledge and confirm our appointments.

Working closely together for eight or nine years meant that Roger and I really got to know each other and between us, took on many tasks to help keep our church here in Slimbridge in some semblance of good order.

We had the idea of raising some funds for church by making improvements to the tower access to enable us to conduct Tower Tours. The big hurdle was that the tower access had been condemned for many years as unsafe. As a tradesman carpenter, I said to Roger, if you will help, I can fix this and by using reclaimed timber from a yard in Gloucester we could minimise the costs and make it secure and fit for purpose. He said he was up for it so together, we spent nearly every day for the next month or more making the access safe. With his health condition Roger struggled at times but never let it affect helping to complete the task we had set ourselves. When we had finished, we invited Ec-

Trinitate 8

clesiastical Insurance to come and approve the work. The inspector agreed it was safe and that we could go ahead with Tower Tours.

Without Rogers help and I must say his encouragement, this would never have happened. So in May 2010, Tower Tours got under way including teddy bears being parachuted down from the church tower parapet for the children raising over £250 pounds.

Unknown to us, we had been recommended by a member of our community for recognition and subsequently, invited to attend a special ceremony at the Cathedral to be acknowledged and join all those other people within the Diocese who had in some way, helped their local community.

When we attended together with our wives, we were introduced to Prince Edward and his wife Sophie. We have a picture of Roger talking to Prince Edward. Neither of us sought recognition but it was a special day that we and our wives appreciated very much.

Throughout this time, Roger was suffering with emphysema. Often, I would be there to make sure he was alright, as walking was a big problem as he soon got out of breath. I took him several times to London for appointments for treatment but knowing there was no road back, at times it was difficult for him to keep his spirits up. Knowing this, I used to call for him quite regularly for what we decided to call a 'Boys Breakfast' but as he gradually got worse we started instead to have 'Boys lunch ' as he had to spend at least two hours on his oxygen machine every morning before he could face the day. We spent many happy hours on these outings, "putting the world to rights" as we would say. We developed quite a banter and thoroughly enjoyed our times together.

As Churchwarden, you are allowed within your brief to lead morning service. Roger had said if you do it, I'll support you, and so began my involvement with the monthly Family Service. Often we would include a sketch which Roger was particular good at and thoroughly enjoyed doing. We were often both ably supported by two other church members Huvin Thompson and dear Dr. Brian Jones - who has since sadly passed away and I must say, very much missed. Equally all three really engaged in expressing the theme of the chosen scripture of the day. It was a joyous time and I know Roger very much enjoyed taking part particularly when having to improvise. There was obviously a hidden actor therein.

In the more recent times, I would often pop in to see Roger to have a catch up. I still valued his input despite the fact he could no longer attend church due to his deteriorating condition. I know too that both he and Brenda also greatly appreciated Rev. Bill and Rev. Mary's visits.

A few days before he died, I had called Roger and as we chatted away on the telephone - Lockdown denying any 'one to one' contact - as we always did for at least some twenty or thirty minutes. He said he had just been out to start his

car, running the engine for a while in readiness for when he could go out again once this pandemic was over. It was to be the last time we spoke. It was early in the morning of 9th December, Brenda called to say that Roger had died very suddenly at about 4.30 am that morning. Obviously, she was in a state of shock at the suddenness of his death. Only the day before he had had a hair cut by a friendly neighbour who was devastated to hear the news. I called round later to try and bring some comfort to her but found it very difficult in these unfortunate circumstances.

Roger was a one off. I shall miss the jovial way he had as we would chat away and of course, I appreciated very much his words of wisdom and as a sounding board. I was also pleased to tell him that Sue Gibson had agreed to take up the role of 'Peoples Warden'. He was absolutely delighted with this news and said "she will be excellent", and wished Sue well. In retrospect, I am so pleased that Roger knew this before he died. It almost feels like a rite of passage now but I am thankful that he was so delighted and had wished Sue well.

In closing, I felt privileged that both Tricia and I were invited to join Brenda to attend his funeral. The service at Gloucester Crematorium taken by our own Vicar Rev Bill who gave such a personalised eulogy of Rogers years with us. Both he and Brenda have been such a strength to our church community, I know that when she is ready, Brenda will start to help again but at this time, needs all our support and love through her bereavement.

Roger had his moments - don't we all - but the one thing he was passionate about was the upkeep of our village church and I hope that his contribution will go down in its history as significant. Further, I hope that others will now come forward to help where Roger tragically left off.

God Bless you Roger, I shall not forget the many happy times we shared and thank you for being just you.

David



Roger with Prince Edward
in the grounds of Gloucester Cathedral

*Mary Tucker shares a hymn to guide us through Lockdown.
It was written by Chris Liley, former Archdeacon of Lichfield and can be
sung – alone ~ to the tune: Finlandia.*

Be Still My Soul

Be still my soul, we face uncertain days,
Walking together, yet we`re still alone;
What will become of those familiar ways,
Those feats through which our former lives have shone?

Be still my soul, we face uncertain days,
Yet still in hope our journey onward plays.

Abide my soul, God`s work continues still;
Abide my soul, tho` dark the days may seem,
Amidst the storms that seem to cloud our will,
Are hidden signs connecting ways unseen,
Abide my soul, God`s work continues there,
And e`en dark days may bring new gifts to share.

Be bold my soul with open eyes we see
That myst`ries grow, that cells of life proceed;
Self-focussed some, conflicted they may be,
Still many flourish for that greater need,
Be bold my soul, with open eyes we`ll know
A new creation which these things will show.

Endure my soul, God`s work continues still;
That work we saw in Christ, new ways did show;
The same self giving on that cursed hill
Walks with us now, true host where we shall go,
Endure my soul, God`s work continues still
Christ`s cross shaped pattern, we will now fulfil.

Be sure my soul, we`ll find our place again
And play our part in God`s creative lure,
No longer needing certainty`s false fame
Taking together roles that will endure.
Be sure my soul, we`ll know our place to be
As on we move to new humility.

From the Registers - December 2020

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Gift Aid</u>	<u>Envelopes</u>	<u>Cash</u>
<u>Sharpness:</u> 69	£343	£127	£207.00
Donations: <i>(General)</i>			£218.00
Bonus Ball:			£236.00
Fabric Fund:			(£150.00)
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:	£1,131	£207.02	+£923.98

St. Andrew's finishes the year receiving **£2,381.12** more than it has spent

<u>Purton:</u>	£60	£40	£204.23
Wall Boxes:			£ 63.02
Donations: <i>(General)</i>			£ 50.00
Fabric Fund:			(£1651.67)
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:	£417.25	£110.65	+£306.60

St. John's finishes the year spending **£556.65** more than it has received

<u>Slimbridge:</u> 42	£435	£	£222.43
Donation: <i>(General)</i>			£100.00
S.E.C.			£4000.00
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS (+ / -)
For the Month:	£4,757.43	£1,615.12	+£3,142.31

St. John's finishes the year spending **£608.72** more than it has received

On behalf of Sharpness & Slimbridge PCCs
 I thank all of you who have so generously
 donated throughout the year towards the
 work and upkeep our three churches in the
 Benefice

FUNERALS:

We commended to the Lord's keeping:

ROGER GREGORY MEREDITH (*Slimbridge*)

5th Jan.

ASHES

We laid to rest the remains of:

RICHARD THOMAS GRIFFITHS (*Sharpness*)

29th Jan.

2020 at a Glance.

Traditionally I enter the annual figures of the previous year into the February magazine as a way of showing how well the benefice had preformed in the past year. However, I need not tell you that 2020 was the year to forget. Not in the history of our churches – well Sharpness and Purton at least, Slimbridge will have experienced similar years in its long history – have things faired so poorly. We could not have foreseen what was to come when we advertised the coming events back in February 2020. In the end, of course, nothing went to plan. We were able to hold just 31 restricted Sunday services – no singing permitted – but all the planned Baptisms and Weddings were either cancelled or rescheduled to 2021/2.

At Sharpness we saw an average weekly Sunday attendance of 10 – this figure rose to 23 when all other services were added. Purton's Sunday figures were 8 rising to 9 when other services were included. At Slimbridge the average Sunday figure was 13 rising to 15 when looking at weekly attendance. Our one and only Baptism of 2020 took place at Slimbridge – the service took place in February before the Lockdown in March – and there were also three funerals. All our other seven funeral services were held at Sharpness with no funerals at Purton. The only Benefice wedding of the year was at Purton

As you would expect such a disruption in the running of our churches had an impact on income, however, as you can see from the figures on page 11 we didn't fair too badly. Having said that it should be noted that Sharpness and Purton did not pay their full Parish Share (fee to the Diocese) for the year – and may not be able to fulfil it this year either. I would like to thank all of you who have continued to support our churches during these difficult times. Please do consider ways of making regular donations – either envelopes or direct bank payments can be arranged – this is the only way we will be able to keep our doors open. Finally let us all pray for a much better 2021!

Close Attention to Text

Written by Kate Bruce

Hosea 8

Set the trumpet to your lips! One like a vulture is over the house of the Lord, because they have broken my covenant, and transgressed my law. Israel cries to me, ‘My God, we – Israel – know you!’ Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him.

They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes, but without my knowledge. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. Your calf is rejected, Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? For it is from Israel, an artisan made it; it is not God. The calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads, it shall yield no meal; if it were to yield, foreigners would devour it. Israel is swallowed up; now they are among the nations as a useless vessel. For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild ass wandering alone; Ephraim has bargained for lovers. Though they bargain with the nations, I will now gather them up. They shall soon writhe under the burden of kings and princes.

When Ephraim multiplied altars to expiate sin, they became to him altars for sinning. Though I write for him the multitude of my instructions, they are regarded as a strange thing. Though they offer choice sacrifices, though they eat flesh, the Lord does not accept them.

Now he will remember their iniquity, and punish their sins; they shall return to Egypt. Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his strongholds.



“Israel has spurned the good” that is the will of God. Politically, they behave as if God is irrelevant. Spiritually, they engage in religious DIY, creating and worshipping ornately decorated lumps of wood.

All this is happening against the backdrop of the Assyrian conquest of much of Israel in 733 BC. In verse one, Assyria is pictured as a vulture of reign over Israel as a consequence of their faithlessness. What might be seen as a purely secular event is declared to be an act of God.

If we take God seriously, we cannot divide the world into sacred and secular, excising God from public life as though God is somehow separate from politics, economics, social policy and cultural perspective, as though God neither sees nor cares. We cannot lock God up in a Victorian box pew and let him out for an hour on Sunday. It is imperative that the church does not forget that God is active in the world. In societies that, at best, often banish God to the margins, the church must be robust in praying for our politicians, civic leaders, military heads and business directors, praying into all areas of public life - and allowing our intercessions to shape our subsequent actions. As the psalmist puts it: 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it', (Psalm 24: 1).

God of all mercy,
your son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
freedom to the oppressed;
anoint us with the Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.

Dogcollar



Red Letter Days

Matthias the Apostle, the chosen one ~ 24th February

Have you ever been in the position where someone is desperately needed – and you fit the bill perfectly? It is almost as if all your miscellaneous qualifications that never made much sense before now make PERFECT sense. And you sense that you have been chosen by God for the task....

If so, then Matthias is definitely the patron saint for you! Matthias came into the picture shortly after the suicide of Judas. The early Church was missing an apostle, and so the remaining 11 apostles prayed for guidance on who to choose as a replacement for this key role.

The qualifications for the job were specialised: the person had to have been a follower of Christ from His Baptism to His Ascension, and a witness of the Resurrection. There were two possibilities: Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. How to choose?

Again, Matthias' experience may mirror yours: the decision was out of his hands, and up to others. In this case, the apostles drew straws – and the ‘lot’ fell to Matthias. He had been chosen to replace Judas! The tragedy of Judas’ betrayal had led to an opportunity for service by Matthias – and he was well prepared for the task. Are you prepared for any task that God might suddenly open before you?

Like the other apostles, Matthias had been in Jerusalem and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and he went on to do a good job. It is said he preached the Good News first in Judea, and then maybe in Cappadocia and by the Caspian Sea. It is thought he was martyred by the axe or halberd, and his relics eventually ended up being taken to Rome by the empress Helen.

Matthias is an encouragement to us to be faithful in small things – because you never know what the future might hold!



Smile for a While!

Seen on a birthday card:

Forget about the past,

You can't change it.

Forget about the future,

You can't predict it.

Forget about the present,

I didn't buy you one!!



Diabetic

A fellow nurse at my hospital received a call from an anxious young woman. "I'm diabetic and I'm afraid I've had too much sugar today," she said.

"Are you light-headed?" my colleague asked.

"No," the caller answered, "No, I'm brunette."



Miscellaneous observations on modern life

As any member of a church committee will tell you, after all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done.

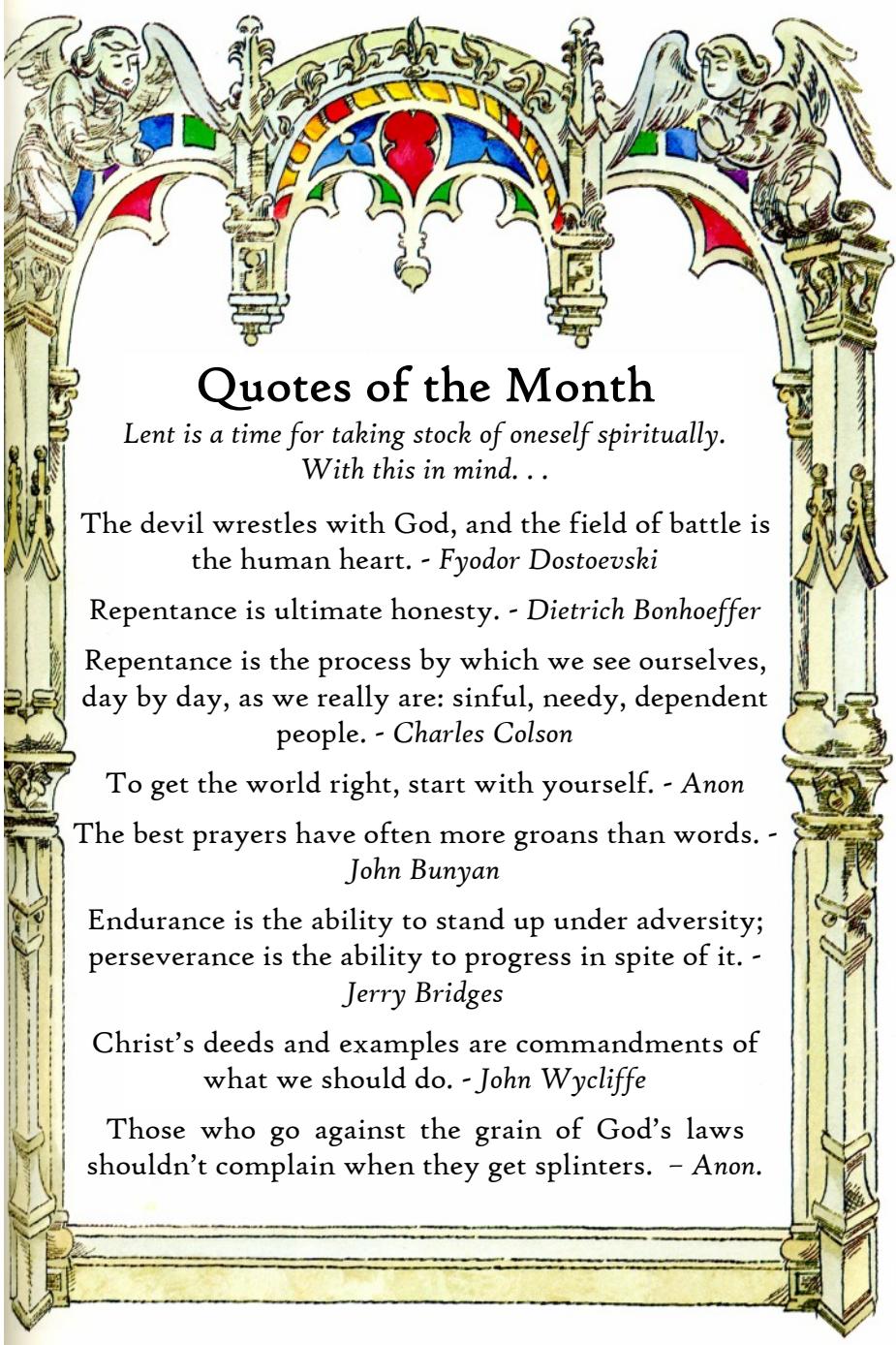
I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink lager all day.

If I wanted to hear the pitter-patter of little feet, I'd put shoes on my cat.

A closed mouth gathers no foot.

I really don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.



Quotes of the Month

*Lent is a time for taking stock of oneself spiritually.
With this in mind. . .*

The devil wrestles with God, and the field of battle is
the human heart. - Fyodor Dostoevski

Repentance is ultimate honesty. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Repentance is the process by which we see ourselves,
day by day, as we really are: sinful, needy, dependent
people. - Charles Colson

To get the world right, start with yourself. - Anon

The best prayers have often more groans than words. -
John Bunyan

Endurance is the ability to stand up under adversity;
perseverance is the ability to progress in spite of it. -
Jerry Bridges

Christ's deeds and examples are commandments of
what we should do. - John Wycliffe

Those who go against the grain of God's laws
shouldn't complain when they get splinters. - Anon.

St. John's, Purton

During the Christmas season these names were placed in the church
each one remembering the life of a loved-one no longer with us.
Gone from our sight they are not gone from our hearts. . .

Fred & Lottie Browning	Graham Annis
Lionel and Hattie Smith	Kit & David Organ
Mervyn Church	Peggy Barnett
Charlie Smith	Arthur Brewin
John Galliott	Jane Brewin
Roger Blake	Sally Hyam
Roy & Joan Smith	Rowland Clarke
Pamela & Roger Baldock	Mabel Motram
Beryl Williams	Pauline Cooke
Bevan Family	Colin & Rene Cooke
Malcolm & Margaret (Margo) Phillips	Patrick Veale
Pritchard Family	Polly Pyatt – love Ken
Meredith Family	Polly – love Shiela & Grenville
Bovett Family	Polly – love Les
Roberts Family	Maureen Fryer
Budgie Reece	Michael Fryer
Sally Cole	Arthur & Pamela Woodward
Tom & Masie Potter	Peggy & Wilfred Mills
Velma Smith	Elizabeth Melhuish
Betty Wiltshire	Curly & Rose Spiers
Reg Smith	Kenneth Cottle
Dora & Elton Hughes	John Burness
Ernie & Cecilia Chapman	Stanley Phillips
Glenda Chapman	Michael John Parsons
Rodney Summers	Ted Lord
Cliff & Nellie Summers	Nan Tucker
Ted & Beattie Spill	Les Hill
	Victor & Phyllis Collett

Trinitate 19

Ivor & Ruby Smart	Rev Bernard Taylor
Derrick & Evelyn Nelmes	Lewis & Iris Allen
Alfred & Kathleen Schlichcing	Norman Allen
Douglas Mears	Velma & Howard Neal
Bill & Lucy Mears	Edith Gummery
Gilbert & Kate Tudor	Walter Gummery
Ken & Gordon Tudor	Lynn Gummery
Sylv, Belge Phillips & Ian	Ivor Gummery
Cissie, Jim & Sue Workman	Robert Gummery
Enid & Elsie Denning	Victor Forward
Terry Gordon Hyam	Adelaide Forward
Beat & John Wakefield	Shirley Everett
Pat & Bill Ford	Christine Brown
Doris & Fred Ford	Roy Ward
Eileen & Leo Browning	Marjorie Ward
Jack & Florrie Wakefield	Phyllis Pullin
George & Beattie Snaith	Angela Shipp
Winston Reece	Clive Allen
Hecules Rockford & R.J.	Frederick & Lilyan Cooper
G.T. & Rapsie	George & Eliza Price
Hartley & Agnes Taylor	



Out of the Silence . . .

The monthly journal of the journey of a Priest, Contemplative and Community Chaplain.

Once again as we continue to find ourselves in what can no longer really be called ‘unprecedented times’ (they’ve been with us too long now for that to feel right) I still can’t do what I always used to do and that is to look back in my journals to years past. Instead, once again, I take this month’s offering from last month’s journal but that’s not as easy as it sounds because I use my journal, not just for recording specifically ‘ministerial’ type thoughts, but as a place to let off steam – to pour out my frustration and/or fearfulness and/or general fed-up-ness. Though it helps me just to ‘write it all out’ and I have shared some of it with you over the past year I decided this time to find a place where I gave God a bit of a rest and actually shut up long enough to listen to him. It must have been quite a relief for the Almighty!!!!

Sunday 17th January 2021

Today is your day Lord and, as I pledge it to you especially in praise and thanks for your love and strength in difficult times. As always you give it back to me for rest, a day without 'To Do' lists, a gentle day. I will listen, listen to you as you speak, as you speak through the liturgy, through the Psalms, the readings, the wise words of others and through the silence of this early morning time together with you.

“With you, O Lord, is the well of life
And in your light shall we see light.”

Psalm 36

"Eternal Spirit of the living God
 be for us the fountain of water
 flowing through us this day;
be for us the living wind
 searching out our hidden parts;
be for us the warming flame
 refining and transforming our desires
 that lovingly and truthfully
we may pray and we may live."

Sheldon Community Morning Prayer

“The dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet in the way of peace.”

Benedictus – Song of Zechariah

Trinitate 21

“God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us.”

Psalm 67

“The Lord is gracious and merciful
long suffering and of great goodness.
The Lord is loving to everyone
and his mercy is over all his creatures.”

Psalm 145

“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’”

John 8

You speak through your creation also for, as I rise temporarily to make a second pot of tea (!!) a clear, distant horizon is filled with the colours of promise, the promise of a new day, of new beginnings.

The Bible reading from Matthew 6, the famous ‘birds of the air and lilies of the field’ one, begins with Jesus’s words,

“Therefore I tell you do not be anxious about your life . . . ”

and ends,

“. . . do not be anxious about tomorrow . . . sufficient to the day are the troubles thereof.”

I’m listening, Lord, I’m listening but, I have to say, “That’s easier said than done at the moment!”

You answer . . . of course you do . . . in Psalm 130 and the prayer that accompanies it,

“Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord,

Lord hear my voice . . .

. . . I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him
in his word is my hope.

. . . wait for the Lord

for with the Lord there is mercy;
with him is plenteous redemption.”

“Father we commend to your faithful love
those who are crying from the depths;
help them to watch and pray
through their time of darkness
in sure hope of the dawn of your forgiveness and redemption
through Jesus Christ . . . ”

Today's dawn is dawning – the sky brightening in confirmation of your eternal promises and faithfulness – I wait.

A closing prayer brings me full circle, thankful for your speaking to my intention to offer this day to you, Lord.

“O God who loves us,
We offer this day into your keeping;
Our plans into your providence;
Our concerns into your love;
Our words into your silence;
Our activity into your stillness.
Look upon us in your steadfast love
And grant us your saving health,
That we may be instruments of your healing
And all may grow into wholeness in your praise. Amen”

Sheldon Community Morning Prayer

and as the sun bursts over the horizon,

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
God’s mercies never come to an end,
they are new every morning.”

Lamentations 3

And finally . . . I had put everything away and prepared to begin the day only to find you had one further word of reassurance for me,

“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him.”

Nahum 1:7

“Why would God promise a refuge unless he knew we would need a place to hide once in a while?”

Neva Coyle

More next month

Keep separate, keep safe

With love and many blessings

Mary Tucker

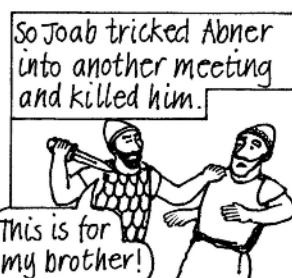
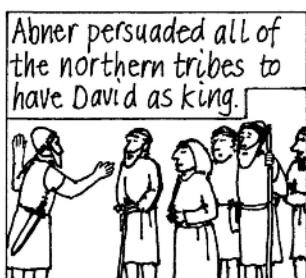
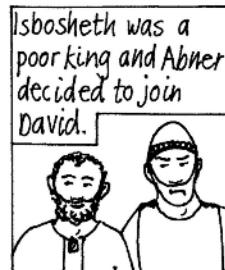
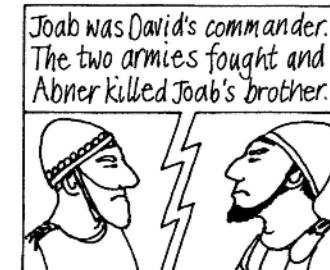
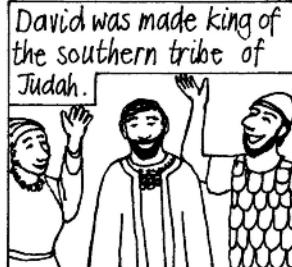
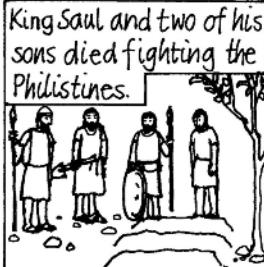
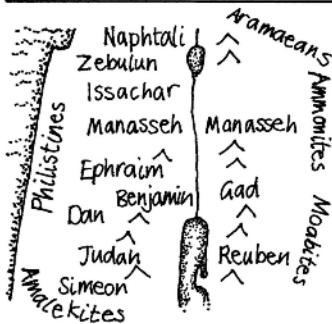


Bible Bite

It can be read in the Bible in Josh 13:8-20:48
1Sam 31:1-5, 2Sam 2:4-24, 3:12, 17-27, 4:5-15

A short story from the Bible

When the Jews reached the place that God had promised them, each tribe was given land to live in. But they were surrounded by enemies.



THE WAY I SEE IT!

Professor David Wilkinson considers the power of prayer

The call for a nation to pray together has a long history. As historian Dr Natalie Mears and other colleagues here at Durham University have detailed, it goes back to the tenth century when King Aethelred ordered prayers for God's help to withstand a Danish invasion. So in issuing a call to daily prayer to reflect on the enormity of the pandemic – to be kept each evening from the start of February at 6pm - the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are following tradition.

Up to the end of the second World War there were over 500 national days of prayer called by monarchs, governments and Archbishops. Their purpose was to seek God's help or to give thanks in times of war, uncertainty and outbreaks of disease. Winston Churchill supported the idea, but there was often significant opposition expressed in pamphlets and satirical cartoons and even some clergy avoided the occasions. Queen Victoria didn't see the point of a national call to petitionary prayer and doubted that 'the Almighty would alter the course of his providence at the request of the Privy Council'.

Another Victorian who struggled with the concept of prayer was Charles Darwin. In 1851, his daughter Annie died at the age of ten despite her father's desperate search for effective medical treatment and fervent prayer. It was this experience of unanswered prayer that was one of the key factors in moving Darwin away from Christian faith.

For those who have faith, prayer has many such struggles and mysteries, not least during a pandemic. If God is good and takes seriously our prayers, then why are my prayers not answered – for healing the people that I love and for the world to be a better place? Others may say with Danish philosopher Kierkegaard, 'The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays'. Yet in my own Christian faith, prayer despite its difficulties continues to be something more, a sense that in some way

prayer changes things. Perhaps it is because I see in the death and resurrection of Jesus that death does not have the last word, and that God does act in this world.

So, at six each evening I will pause for prayer, alongside my usual evening of watching the grim reality of the news and then the escapist comedy of The Simpsons. And for those who don't like the language of prayer, the Archbishops' call can be seen as nightly ritual to remember lost loved ones, to be thankful for key workers, and to focus on our responsibilities in helping to protect others. Not a bad thing to do, in between considering the news and finding things to distract our minds from it



Creature Feature



A Continuing Rhyming History of Britain

House of Stuart

1603 - 1714

Opened for business
21 June 1694

The Bank of England, which fulfills
The countries need to pay its bills,
Was founded now, to help advance
The cash for things like fights with France.

New customers were so impressed
To see a rate of interest
Of 8%, they fought like mad
To give it all the gold they had.
This money, in its turn, was lent
At profit to the government -

Immediate deposit
£1.2m

Which, ever since the scheme was born,
Had been sublimely overdrawn.

Origin of the
National Debt

William and Mary's reign had been,
In practice, Williams; for the Queen
Had no administrative say.

Whenever he was called away
(Which happened often), all she'd do
Was sign things where they told her to.

Queen Mary Died
28 Dec 1694

But when this gentle lady died,
Her loss was found on every side,
For as the undisputed heir
She'd been a cordon sanitaire
Between her husband and the men
Who wanted James brought back again.

Fenwick Plot
Feb 1697

James Muirden

Ash Wednesday

David Winter draws on a memory of the Passover in Jerusalem

Ash Wednesday (17 Feb) introduces the Christian preparation for Easter, which normally coincides with Passover, the major Jewish celebration of the year. It's near Easter because Jesus was crucified at Passover, having just shared this very meal with His disciples.

Passover celebrates and recalls the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. Led by Moses they crossed the Red Sea and 40 days later entered the 'Promised Land.' They shared the Passover meal at their last night in Egypt and have kept it all for nearly the past three thousand years or so that have followed.

Many years ago, when I was in Jerusalem to produce a radio programme, I was invited to join a Jewish family for their Passover meal. It was a great occasion, very like our Christmas, a family event with deep religious significance for those who seek it.

At the meal in Jerusalem, we ate modest lentils and unleavened bread – Matzos as we now call it. We also drank plenty of wine but not from the cup at the end of the table. That is 'Elijah's cup', only to be drunk from when the prophet comes to announce the arrival of the Messiah. At the last supper Jesus instructed His disciples to drink from that cup after supper, which may have shocked them at the time. The Messiah had come!



BONUS BALL SWEEPSTAKE

January WINNERS

June Crews	37
Muriel Forward	53
Heather Milliner	27
Chris Curry	56
Val Hogan	42

**YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT
TO WIN IT!**

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

There is ONE number currently vacant!

THANK YOU!

*We will try to keep the Bonus Ball going during February -
but it will depend on players getting their money in.
Since the game began £30,651 has been raised to fund
St. Andrew's, Church.*

LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE

On why our church does not need health or safety...

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was entirely commendable, and I do know that sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave – which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over – and if it happens when preparing for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus *is* slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the church, but it is very slow – and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit from America to commemorate his death at Agincourt – which is probably just beyond remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling in the north aisle are solved with a row of buckets – and even you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look really rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is certainly an issue – although it looks so attractive in Spring when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls while he was with us. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle,

PUZZLE PAGE

Find the spaces and fill in the grid with the words below

O										A
C										D
E										D
A										A
N										L
S										L
V										R
A										E
N										C
I										E
S										D
H										E

SCIFI
STARVE
RAC
EXHORT
ASH
PLOTTING
HOPHNI
APROCRYPTHA

OFFER
ONSPEC
TYPICAL
ISLAMIST
DAUBIT
SOVEREIGNLORD
CURE
VISITED

CBI
CROSSEXAMINED
OMAR
FURROW
NOACCOUNT



Sue Gibson School of Gardening

Shepherd's Patch, Slimbridge

3-Term Courses in:

- **Garden Design (beginners)**
- **Garden Design & Management (improvers)**

Saturday Workshops on:

- **Pruning Shrubs & Roses (spring)**
- **Pruning Shrubs, Roses & Perennials (summer)**
- **Growing & Training Fruit in Small Spaces (summer)**

**Call Sue Gibson
on 01453 890820
www.iteachgardening.co.uk**

Backpage Picture



Was it really 25 years ago that this picture was taken - well, yes it was! The date was Tuesday 30th January 1996 and here I am with Bishop David Bentley, Bishop of Gloucester; Rev Curwen Rawlinson, Rural Dean of Dursley (also Rector of Uley); Graham Smith, Chairman of Dursley Deanery. I had just become Priest-in-Charge of Sharpness with Purton & Brookend - at this time Slimbridge had not linked with Sharpness. In fact that will not happen until the April of 1997.