

SPS

De Trinitate

Slimbridge, St. John

Purton, St. John



50p

Trinitate 2 MINISTRY TEAM

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Please contact the Vicar.

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

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Parish Diary - March 2022

(1st) SUNDAY 6th - LENT 1

9.00am1662 Prayer Book CommunionSt. John's, Slimbridge9.30amMorning PrayerSt. John's, Purton10.00amSung CommunionSt. John's, Slimbridge11.00amMorning PrayerSt. Andrew's, Sharpness

WEDNESDAY 9th

7.30pm Lent Night Prayer St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(2nd) SUNDAY 13th - LENT 2

9.30amMorning PrayerSt. John's, Purton10.00amSung CommunionSt. John's, Slimbridge11.00amSung CommunionSt. Andrew's, Sharpness

WEDNESDAY 16th

7.30pm Lent Night Prayer St. Andrew's, Sharpness

(3rd) SUNDAY 20th - LENT 3

9.30am Sung Communion St. John's, Purton
10.00am All Age Service St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am Informal Communion Service St. Andrew's, Sharpness

WEDNESDAY 23rd

7.30pm Lent Night Prayer St. Andrew's, Sharpness 7.30pm Slimbridge PCC Meeting St. John's, Slimbridge

(4th) SUNDAY 27th - MOTHERING SUNDAY

10.00am Benefice Communion St. John's, Purton

No Services at Slimbridge or Sharpness Today!

WEDNESDAY 30th

7.30pm Lent Night Prayer St. Andrew's, Sharpness

April

SUNDAY 6th - LENT 5

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

epending on where we live, Mothering Sunday cards can sometimes be hard to find. Often they seem to have been replaced by greetings for Mothers' Day. Does it matter - Mothering Sunday -Mothers' Day? What's in a name vou might ask? Does it make any difference? Well. I think that the answer is ves. Mothers' Day - like that other Americanism Fathers' Day - seems to carry the idea of just being nice to Mum. It's a way of saying "thank you" for all that she does every other day of the year, so let's make sure she has a really nice day. Mothering Sunday has a different emphasis. It is a Christian festival; it denotes activity - that is, mothering - and gathers up all the many and varied activities implied in that one word. We recognise them and we are grateful for them.

But underlying those more obvious activities, we need also to be aware of unspoken hopes, ambitions, difficulties. drawbacks. frustrations. feelings of pain and rsona sadness, a sense of loss and even personal fail-"Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, here is ure. your son.' Then he said to the disciple, Mother-'Here is your mother.'" ing Sun-(John 19:26-27) day is more than a day for cards and chocolates and flowhowever ers. welcome they may be. Mothering Sunday is a day to acknowledge the many conflicting claims and the personal cost involved in mothering, and to be thankful that so many mothers make a success of the demands made upon them.

> We find many examples of the personal cost of mothering in the Bible. The widowed Naomi encourages her daughter-in-law Ruth, also a widow, to attach

herself to the household of Boaz in whose fields she has been working. Eventually, as Naomi obviously hopes, Boaz takes Ruth as his wife. No less astute is the mother of Moses. To prevent his being killed by the Egyptians, she places him in a basket at the river's edge. He is found and rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who then by twist of fate engages his own natural mother to be his nurse. The moment of parting eventually comes: "When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son." Hannah also knew the pain of parting. As a thanksgiving for the birth of Samuel, after being childless for so long, she brought him to the Temple to be brought up in the service of God.

The soul-searching experience of these Old Testament mothers was also the experience of Mary. Having been through the traumatic events of the Annunciation and Nativity, the presentation of her child in the Temple brought the message of the pain that lay ahead: "A sword will pierce your own soul." We see that prophecy fulfilled as Mary stands at the foot of the cross. Jesus' dying

words were for her and her welfare: "'Woman", he says, "here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'" Those words convey the very nature, the very essence of motherhood which we acknowledge and give thanks for on Mothering Sunday.

St Paul expects to find this same degree of nurture within the Christian community, and his words of encouragement tumble out in his second letter to the church at Corinth. He expresses the same message more simply and very beautifully as he writes to the Colossians: "As God's chosen ones... clothe yourselves compassion, kindness, with humility and patience." These are the hallmarks of a community which cares for and nurtures its members.

This is why the Church is generally referred to as "she". Her care and nurture are vital in the rough and tumble of life. Firstly, the Church provides us with a framework for life. There are no ready answers, but at least we are prepared to grapple with the questions. Secondly, the Church offers us the pattern of Jesus'

death and resurrection. We are bound to fail in life, but we are enabled to try again. So, thirdly, assured of God's acceptance, we can grow to become the people he created us to be.

This is the care and nurture which, at its best, the Church extends to the whole Christian family and beyond. It is a reflection and extension of what, at best, goes on within our own immediate families. On this Mothering Sunday, we give thanks first and foremost for the care and nurture provided by all loving loving mothers; we give thanks for the care and nurture offered by the Church; and give thanks for the love of God. made known to us in Iesus, which holds us and sustains us all.



Your sacrifices have saved lives

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, has thanked front line workers, parishes, and all who have made sacrifices to help protect one another from Covid-19, as England recently began to move away from 'plan B' restrictions.

Bishop Sarah, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, said: "When the first measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 were introduced in March 2020, few would have imagined that we would still be making adaptations to the way we live our lives – including our worship – two years on. It has been a very challenging time.

"People have made huge sacrifices to protect one another – not only those they know and love but strangers they might never meet. We've learnt again as society something of what it means to love our neighbour, as Jesus taught."

PRAYER FOR PEACE

A message from Bishop Rachel

Across our world there are so many places of fear, conflict, war, and the misuse of power; and today the spotlight is painfully focused on Ukraine and Russia. Archbishop Justin and Archbishop Stephen have written a prayer for those in Ukraine who suffer grievously, for all who take decisions around the world, and for the people and leaders of Russia too.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,

we pray for the people of the Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,

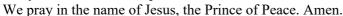
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

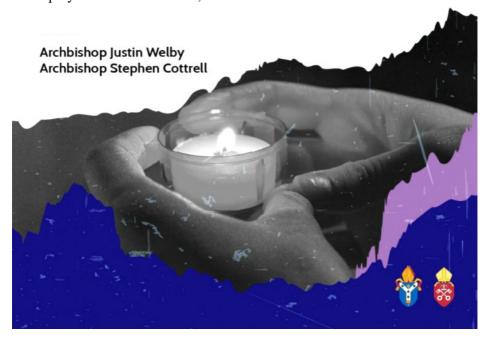
We pray for those with power over war or peace,

for wisdom, discernment and compassion

to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk or in fear, that you would hold and protect them.





Historical Snippets

Taken from the Parish archives held at St Johns Church Slimbridge;

Years ago, each of the local parish churches submitted their news to a publication called 'The Parish Magazine'. Contributors came from quite a large area including: Lower Cam; Coaley; Eastington; Frocester; North Nibley; Stinchcome; and *Slymbridge. It was printed by: O. E. Hill, Cam, Gloucestershire, for the cost of 2d (tuppence) per copy.

This month's historical snippet is taken from March 1948

*Slymbridge is the old-fashioned spelling for Slimbridge.

Rector; Rev. W. H. Thomas, M.A. Church Wardens; Mr. J. Wherrett and Mr. W. P. Hill. The Rector earnestly desires to be informed in all cases of sickness and sorrow.

My dear People, [March 1948]:

Parish Notes:

Confirmation:

The Bishop of Tewksbury will be at the Parish Church on Tuesday March 23rd at 7pm. Will members of the congregation please regard it important to be in their places four or five minutes beforehand.

Mid Lent or Mothering Sunday:

March 7th, a day for family worship.

Parochial Church Council:

Meet to consider annual reports and accounts Monday March 8th at the Rectory at 7.30pm.

Summer time:

Commences on the night of March 13th-14th. Take advantage of the light evenings to attend church.

Palm Sunday:

March 21st Procession at morning and evening service.

Lent:

Every Wednesday evening during Lent; a short service in church with a reading from Cannon Peter Green's book 7.30pm.

Holy Week:

Wednesday 24th March at 7.30pm in church: Preparation for Easter Communion.

Maundy Thursday:

Combined service for Mother's Union and Young Wives at 3pm.

Good Friday:

March 26th services: Children 10am. Three hours Devotion 12 mid-day to 3pm. Evensong at 7.3pm.

Easter Day Services:

Holy Communion 7 and 8am: Eucharist and Procession at 10.30am. Children 2.30pm. Evensong and procession at 5.30pm. Note: According to the prayer book, Easter Day is a day of obligation on all confirmed members of the church on which they are expected to make their communion. (Read the Rubric)

Easter Altar Lilies Fund:

We are hoping to have 'Arum lilies' as usual on our altars on Easter Day. Donations for the purchase of lilies may be given to Mrs. Thomas. We always have to order early, so please send in your gift early that we may know how many to obtain. The decorations will be done on Saturday 27th March and we shall be glad of the assistance of our willing voluntary workers and also for any Spring Flowers you can send us from your gardens.

Bell Ringers

The bell ringers are promoting a Whist Drive to assist in raising a fund to repair the church clock; Wednesday 31st March at 7.30pm. About £30 pound is needed to carry out this work.

The Annual Meeting:

For the election of church officers will take place in Easter week on Thursday April 1st at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

Sympathy:

We extend our sympathy with the relatives of the late Mr. Edgar Cuff who has passed to his rest after a prolonged illness so patiently borne. As he was at one time a bell ringer of this tower, the present ringers paid tribute to his memory by ringing a muffled peal. May God grant him peace.

Your friend and Rector.

W. H. Thomas.

NB: Our archives containing these magazines can be viewed by mutual arrangement with the Vicar, Church Wardens or any member of the PCC but not to be taken away.

David Carrington Vicars Church Warden



Nigel Beeton writes: "One thing that never seems to improve as we get older is the deepening mystery of the power that computers have over us, and the utter confusion that results when they do something that we don't expect!"

The Computer Swallowed Grandad!

The computer swallowed Grandad! Yes! Honestly! It's true! He pressed Control and Enter -And disappeared from view!

It devoured him completely
The thought just makes me squirm!
He must have caught a virus
Or been swallowed by a worm!

I've searched through the recycle bin And files of every kind;
I've even searched the internet
But nothing did I find.

I went to Mr Google
My searches to refine
His reply was in the negative,
'Nothing found' was Google's line.

So, if inside your inbox My Grandad you should see -Please copy, scan, and paste him And send him back to me!

By Nigel Beeton

From the Registers - JANUARY 2022

	Attendance	Gift A	<u>Envelo</u>	pes <u>Cash</u>
Sharpness:	47	£235	£95	£ 89.00
Bonus Ball: Magazine Sales:	:			£289.00 £ 94.00
For the Montl	INCOM h: £802.0		EXPENDITURE £523.16	SURPLUS (+ / -) +£278.85

From 1st Jan. 2022 St. Andrew's has received £278.85 more than it has spent

Purton:	31	£60	£60	£104.20
Donations (Gift A	1ided)			£ 20.00

INCOME EXPENDITURE SURPLUS (+/-)

For the Month: £244.20 £317.52 -£73.32

From 1st Jan. 2022 St. John's has spent £73.32 more than it has received

<u>Slimbridg</u>	<u>ge:</u> 148	£395	£0	£176.00
Wall Safe:				£ 31.68
Fund Raisi	ing: (Christmas Tre	e Festival)		£ 90.00
Christingle	Service:			£ 24.80
PCC Fees:				£229.00

INCOME EXPENDITURE SURPLUS (+/-)For the Month: £946.48 £2,519.88 -£1,573.40

From 1st Jan. 2022 St. John's has spent £1,573.40 more than it has received

Please do consider supporting our three beautiful and distinct churches.

For details on how to help speak to the Treasurers or the Vicar

See contacts on page 2

BAPTISMS

We welcomed into the Lord's family:

CALLIE RAE WILKINS (Sharpness) 20th Feb. AMELIA GRACE BENNETT (Slimbridge) 20th Feb.

FUNERALS

We commended to the Lord's keeping:

NEIL DUNCAN HAWLEY (Sharpness) 9th Feb.

ASWES

We laid to rest the remains of:

HEATHER REID WHITTAKER (Slimbridge) 4th Feb. SIMON WILLIAMS (Slimbridge) 5th Feb.

LENT 2022

Lent Night Prayer returns once again this year starting on Wednesday 9th March at St. Andrew's, Sharpness, and runs until 13th April. This is a simple, reflective format, which has been used over many years lasting for about three quarters of an hour. Our theme this year is 'Superstar'. Using material produced by 'York Courses' we have an opportunity to listen to theologians as they consider questions relating to our theme.

All Welcome

$\underline{C_{lose}}\,\underline{A_{ttention\;to}}\,\underline{T_{ext}}$

Written by Philip North

2 Timothy 4:9-end

Do your best to come to me soon, for Demas, in love with this world has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls especially the parchments.

Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm the Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him because he strongly opposed our message.

At my first defense no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them! But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the gentiles might hear it. So I was delivered from the lions mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you and so do Prudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

'To him be the glory forever and ever' (v.18)

Who's getting on your nerves right now? or to use a more colloquial expression, who's doing your head in?

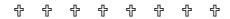
We all have an image of the perfect church, where the community is strong, the worship idyllic, the outreach dynamic, and where everyone dwells in harmony and friendship. The only problem is, that church

does not exist; nor has it ever existed. Because the thing about Christians is that we are all sinners. There will always be someone who gets on your nerves.

The last sentences of Saint Paul's Second Letter to Timothy are wonderfully authentic as suddenly the author's humanity is laid bare. He longs to see his young protege before he dies. He wants his cloak and his books. He mentions the people who are pleasing him, and he lays into Alexander the coppersmith who is getting on his nerves. This is the real Paul living in a real church where things are not all as he would like, because everyone is a sinner.

Even these very last words of the epistle have a rich message. We don't live out the Christian life in the midst of some imaginary Christian theme park. We do it in the real world and in the context of authentic relationships where things go right, and things go wrong. Even those people who get on your nerves are playing a part in your salvation.

Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Red Letter Days

St Joseph the Carpenter – 19th March

Many people know that Joseph was the father of the most famous man who ever lived, but beyond that, we know very little about him. The Gospels name him as the 'father' of Jesus, while also asserting that the child was born of a virgin. Even if he wasn't what we call the 'biological' father, it was important to them that he was a distant descendant of the great King David - a necessary qualification for the Messiah.

It's obvious that Joseph (usually described as a 'carpenter') was not wealthy, because he was allowed to offer the poor man's sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle doves at the presentation of his infant son. No

one expected eloquence or wisdom from this man's son. Jesus was born into an unremarkable family, with a doubtless hard-working artisan as His father. There would have been few luxuries in that little home at Nazareth.

Matthew begins his birth narrative with the bald statement that Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she became pregnant 'with child from the Holy Spirit'. Joseph was not apparently privy to the divine intervention in her life, and so drew the obvious conclusion: it was another man's child. However, he was not the sort of man who wished to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to 'dismiss her quietly' ~ end their engagement without fuss, we might say.

However, at that point Joseph had a dream in which he was told by 'an angel of the Lord' not to hesitate to take Mary as his wife, because the child conceived in her was 'from the Holy Spirit', and that the baby was to be named 'Jesus' ('saviour') because He will 'save His people from their sins'. On waking, Joseph did as he had been instructed and took Mary as his wife.

So far as Joseph himself is concerned, we can be pretty sure of a few things. In human, legal terms he was the father of Jesus, he was a carpenter and he had probably died before Jesus began his public ministry. The little we are told suggests a devout, decent and sensitive man, one who shared Mary's anxiety when the 12-year-old Jesus went missing in Jerusalem, and who presumably taught his son the trade of a carpenter.

Joseph has become an icon of the working man ~ there are many churches nowadays dedicated to 'Joseph the Worker.' He can stand in the calendar of saints for the 'ordinary' person, a straight-forward craftsman who never expected or chose to be in the spotlight of history. He did what he could, and he was obedient to everything that he believed God required of him. To do the 'ordinary' thing well, to be kind, caring and open to guidance: these are great gifts, and Joseph seems to have had them in abundance.

Smile for a While

Why God made mums

According to their little darlings...

Why did God make mothers?

- 1. She's the only one who knows all the passwords we use online.
- 2. Mostly to clean the house, I think.
- 3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

- 1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
- 2. I've heard it was some amazing experiment on men that got out of hand.
- 3. God made my mum just the same like He made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

- 1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and one part of mean.
- 2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.
- 3. They have a lot more hair than dads, are softer to hug, and wear woolly jumpers.

Why did your mum marry your dad?

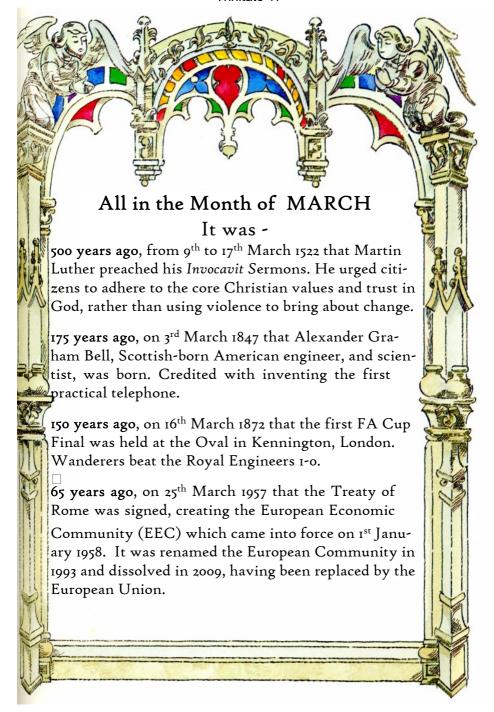
- 1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mum eats a lot.
- 2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
- 3. My grandma says that no one will ever know.

Who's the boss at your house?

- 1. Dad is, because mum says so. She just helps by reminding him what to do each day.
- 2. Mum. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
- 3. Dad was, until Mum found what he had written on Facebook about *Granny*.

What would it take to make your mum perfect?

- 1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
- 2. Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.
- 3. She would understand why the dog needs to sleep with me at night.



Rural life

The door is open; the table is set. . .

A priest who revealed on Twitter that no one had turned up for a Sunday communion service in a village church won praise for his honesty from fellow clergy.

The Assistant Curate of Emmanuel church, Bridlington, and Barmston with Fraisthorpe, in Yorkshire, the Revd Richard Townend, wrote on Twitter: "A sad start to the day... the door was open, and the table was set but no one turned up for the service at the village church in our benefice. We are actually meeting as a PCC tomorrow to discuss its future".

His post attracted hundreds of likes and comments, as he was posting under the national Twitter handle 'OurCoELike', which is taken over by a different person each week. Many people commented, including one who suggested that he should "maybe pray more".

But the Precentor of Southwell Minster, Canon Richard Frith, responded: "Thanks for your honesty in tweeting this. Tough times for all of us. Solidarity and prayers".

Mr Townsend sad that All Saints, Barmston, had a regular congregation of about six people, and was struggling to find any church officers or PCC members. An old building, it was difficult and costly to heat and was situated half a mile outside the village. Since COVID, some people have moved away, some have died, and people haven't come back to church. This is a church that is struggling; so I wasn't surprised, which was sad in itself".

The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Reverend Graham Usher, said: "The diocese of Norwich has an amazing selection of parish churches. While many churches are thriving, some don't have the people or the financial resources to help maintain them. This means that there may be some tough decisions for this and future generations to make, as well as creative possibilities that we need to trial".

The Storm

Eunice and Franklin passed through the country at the end of February creating havoc in their wake. A number of churches reported damage to roofs and a couple lost the tops of their spires. Thankfully the storms didn't cause any damage to our churches other than the dislodging of a 'dead tree' in St. Andrew's churchyard. But of course storms — or tempests as our ancestors would often call them — are not new as we can see from Slimbridge records. . .

A letter written by William Frith, Churchwarden of Slimbridge, to Daniel Defoe.

Defoe had been held at Newgate Prison and within a week he witnessed the 'Great Storm of 1703', which raged through the night of 26-27 November. It caused severe damage to London and Bristol, uprooted millions of trees and killed over 8,000 people, mostly at sea. Writing in a national paper he asked for people to write to him about their experiences and eyewitness accounts. The event became the subject of Defoe's book 'The Storm' (1704).

Sir

The Dreadful Storm did this Church but little Damage, but our Houses were terribly shaken hereabouts, and the Tide drowned the greatest part of the Sheep on our Common; as it likewise did, besides many cows, between this Place and Bristol. In the midst of this Churchvard grew a vast tree, thought to be the most large and flourishing Elm in the Land, which was torn up by the Roots, some of which are really bigger than ones Middle, several than a Man's Thigh; the Compass of them curiously interwoven with the Earth, being from the surface (or Turf) to the Basis, full an Ell in Depth, and Eighteen Foot and half in the Diameter, and yet thrown up near Perpendicular; the Trunk, together with the loaden Roots, is well judg'd to be Thirteen Tun at least and the Limbs to make Six Load of Billets with Faggots; and, about Two vears since, our Minister observ'd, the circumambient boughs dropped round about Two Hundred Yards; He hath given it for a SINGERS SEAT in our said church, with this inscription thereon; Nov. 27 AD 1703. Miserere & c.

Slimbridge near Severn Dec. 28, 1703

William Frith, Church-Warden,

Out of the Silence . . .

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

Isn't it strange how things creep up on us! For me, first a sixtieth birthday and suddenly it's the seventieth that's in the offing! As a Benefice we're in a similar position – we've known for a long time that our own dear Bill would retire and for the last few years that it would be in 2022 but suddenly out of the blue (it feels like that but of course it's not) we're in 2022 and Bill will be retiring to a very well-earned rest in late summer. The joyful thing that brought it home to me was when a neighbour (who I've watched grow from babyhood) asked if I would preside at her wedding in 2023. I was thrilled and went to do what I always do (because I never have and never will be 'running' this parish) I contacted Bill to get their preferred date put in the diary. As I wrote the e mail I realised I had to preface it by saying, "I know you won't be in charge any more but . . . " and so began the sequence of thoughts, meditations, meetings and events recorded in my journal since then.

At first, sadly, instead of rejoicing for Bill and Julie I allowed myself to be overcome by a total and very self-centred panic about what I could and couldn't do when the time came, and I am aware that many of you, both as individuals and PCCs, may have done the same thing as the reality of the situation has hit home. Panic is not of God! The minute we panic we exclude him from the situation, as Julian of Norwich says,

"Our enemy tries to depress us by false fears which he proposes. His intention is to make us so weary and dejected, that we let the blessed sight of our everlasting friend slip from our minds."

It has taken the good Lord almost thirteen weeks of knocking on the door of my heart to quieten those fears and he has done so by sending me off to speak to a variety of people (starting with Bill himself of course) the last of whom, Archdeacon Hilary (who will be in charge of our situation when Bill goes) was just today, the 1st March. Poor Bill is standing in his office as I frantically type – the printer whirring hope~

fully as he awaits this article. If this magazine arrives late this month you'll know whose fault it is!

Here then from my most recent journal a brief precis of the journey from panic to peace on which God has led me. I commend allowing God in to lead to you all, but especially to any of you who, like me are, or have been, panicking. Prayer, in the end is always the answer, because it invites God into the situation and he ALWAYS answers.

November 25th 2021

Yesterday began,

"Prayer is the breath of the soul."

Ole Hallesby

and as I walked about my business I was wrestling in prayer – not so much 'breathing', as Ole would have it, but gasping in my anxiety and the squirrelling thoughts about the expectations and assumptions people may have about my role at the time of the change of regime next August. A real battle raged within me - to place my anxiety at the feet of God, leave it there and await his guidance or to do something (I knew not what!). I visited the folk I needed to visit, did my usual chatting to those you sent to me along the way, Lord, and finally arrived home to the amazing answer to my prayer, an e mail message inviting me to my Episcopal (Bishop's) Review – a chance to talk and share with the Bishops and their team about my present and future ministry. Perfect timing! But then your timing is always perfect, Lord, it's just that I don't always trust you. Sorry and thank you.

December 8th 2021

Today's prayer focus seems to be 'wisdom'. I shall definitely need your wisdom today, Lord, as I spend time with the sad and the dying, the lonely and the weary or mind and spirit. Psalm 62, set for today, contains a favourite piece of Godly wisdom which is especially relevant to me as I mull over things and worry,

"On God alone my soul in stillness waits."

Sometimes on the best days, it is true. On others, like today, it is something to aspire to from the depths of panic and anxiety or from a desire to 'organise myself out of darkness! It's of a piece with another text vital to me,

"Settle it in your minds, therefore, not to meditate beforehand what you will say or how you will answer for I shall give you a word and wisdom."

Luke 21:14

I do NOT find that easy!

Thursday 13th January

"Peace is a journey of a thousand miles and it must be taken one step at a time."

This has NOT been a peaceful week!

Lyndon B Johnson

- Last Friday I slept very little, suddenly overcome with the many practicalities of Bill's departure in August.
- On Saturday morning this was used by you, Lord, as I was encouraged to ask to have a meeting with Bill about it all
- During the intervening days working on my Episcopal Review paperwork I was able to begin to articulate not only my own position but also that of the 3 church communities as I saw it
- I'm also on 'parental care duties' at present and will have to spend time up there
- Yesterday's meeting with Bill made a lot of things clear for both of us. He had remembered and was supportive of the fact that my not taking over in any way at his departure (which has been in my Working Agreement for the last few years) is in line with my voluntary/support status as an Associate Priest and Self Supporting Minister
- I can now incorporate all this into my discussions with the Bishop's representative, Andrew Braddock, with Archdeacon Hilary when I meet with her, and can begin to feed it into conversations with people in our congregations and communities as I go about my existing ministries (which will continue) – the Churchwardens of course know already as signatories to my Working Agreement.

Thursday 3rd February 2022

Words today which speak of your provision yesterday, Lord, the highlight of which was my Episcopal Review with Andrew B. I am affirmed in my position regarding the coming vacancy as long as (and this is my P.S. not Andrew's) I continually pass it before your loving gaze, Lord, to check it out.

First from Ray Porter in my Bible reading notes, "Fear leads to exaggeration of dangers.

Faith puts it in perspective.

Faith does have an element of risk, but fear paralyses.

Fear judges by appearances but faith looks to God." and then from Andrew himself whose summary of our meeting was waiting for me when I got home from Gloucester. . .

"Episcopal Review Summary – Andrew Braddock

In her preparatory paperwork and our conversation, Mary expressed her anxieties about the changes coming to the benefice following Bill's retirement and how these relate to the deanery strategic planning process. It will be very important that Mary does not have unreasonable expectations placed upon her, that she continues to be appreciated for the ministry she can offer, and that the benefice as a whole recognises its collective responsibility to meet the challenges of a time of change: Mary is not being asked to be the interim incumbent. Holding to the clear parameters set out in her working agreement will be important, and it might be helpful for these to be more *widely shared** so that parishioners have reasonable expectations."

This magazine article is part of that "*wider sharing" but those with whom I've already shared have been so kind and understanding.

Tuesday 1st March 2022

I feared a poor night's sleep last night as all my former panic raised its ugly head again after a busy and worrying week of Community Chaplaincy and ahead of today's meeting. But now, in your mercy Lord, I am back from a session with Archdeacon Hilary aware that it has been very useful for both of us. She affirmed the supportive responses I have received from Bishops Robert and Rachel since my Episcopal Review, and I have been able to forewarn her of my position and also of the fact that there is much worry from the Church communities and PCCs (no detail of course as this is the job of Bill and the members of those committees). At least she is aware and won't be taken by surprise when the time comes. She has asked me to send everyone her love and tell you that she looks forward to working alongside us all. Thank you Lord.

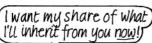
More next month

With love, many blessings and three short phrases (a sort of mantra) to hold onto during difficult times – they have helped me enormously. 'Prayer not panic', 'Honesty not self-justification', 'Wait on God.' Mary Tucker

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told stories about a lost sheep and a lost coin, then one about a man with two sons. The youngerson said to his father...





The younger son took his money and went to another country.



Then his money ran out and there was a famine.



The only job he could get was feeding pigs

property between his sons, He was so hungry he would



Then he came to his senses

I'll go to my father, say sorry, and ask him tor a jobas a workman!



He set off for home

His father sawhim coming, ran to him and hugged him.



Father, I am so sorru. I am not good enough to be your son ...



But his father sent servants to get clothes for his son and prepare a feast to celebrate his return.

The older son came back from work and heard the noise.



The older son was so angru he wouldn't go into the house ..



For years I've slaved for you and you've given me nothing He returns after wastina your money and you give him a feast!



My son, all I have is yours, but we should) celebrate because he was lost and now he has been found

Continuing Rhyming History of Britain House of Hanover 1714 - 1901

The years till 1763

Bengal 1757 Saw Britain's Navy all at sea,

Quebec 1759 Involved in daring expeditions
Montreal 1760

To snaffle Frances' acquisitions.

But Europe, too, was in a state

Frederick II
Of Prussia
Because of Frederick the Great,

Who's ruthless Prussian musketeers

Were goose-stepping through frontiers

(Who knows where they would all have gone,

But for that man Napoleon?).

And so the Seven Years' War began -

Which was, in fact, how long it ran.

The thought of combat mortified

Pacific Walpole, so he died.

That great colonial, William Pitt,

Earl of Chatham

1708-78

Became the driver for a bit -

Or, to pursue the metaphor,

Stoked up the engines of the war.

Impossible to have about,

Impossible to do without,

George II George hated him, but had no choice His mood expressed the country's voice
(Though others, more admit than he

(Though others, more adroit than he, Looked after the diplomacy).

James Muirden

THE WAY I SEE IT!

Angela Tilby considers the current Russian conflict

Recently I found a photo I took in 2012 of the cathedral in Chersonesus, near Sevastopol, in Crimea. At the time I was on a cruise of the Black Sea and this fold-domed church was a highlight - near where Vladimir the Great had been baptized in the year 988 - triggering the baptism of the whole of Kyiv: 'rich and poor, beggars and slaves'. The cathedral was rebuilt in the 1990s, and opened for worship in 2004, so when I visited, it was relatively new. There were freshly painted icons in every corner and even a smart new sound system. Visitors streamed in and out, lighting candles, praying.

Unbelievable though it may seem to us, it is this Christian past, shared by Russia and Ukraine, that has been used as part of the excuse for the current invasion. President Putin claims that Ukraine and Russia are one people, with one memory and one faith. But while some in Ukraine agree, many have recently abandoned the spiritual leadership of the Moscow Patriarch to join the Greeks.

Here in the West we have been slow to react. Not quite believing that our often-stated beliefs in freedom and democracy could be rolled over so quickly and so brutally. We sometimes forget that our democracy has spiritual foundations, and that it can become fragile when these are forgotten. It is easy to signal support for democracies round the world, but not always so easy to match actions to words. Everyone seems now to be regretting our readiness to accept influence and investment from non-democratic powers but why did we do so in the first place? Underneath the crisis of security is a crisis of belief. What really undergirds our much-trumpeted Western values? We know many Russians as well as the Ukrainians envy our freedoms. But we have to ask ourselves, does our democracy make our poor more equal, our children better fed and educated? And how free today Is our speech really, and how easily are we manipulated? Do our institutions work for the good of all, or do they just perpetuate lazy thinking and past privilege?

In the crypt of the cathedral at Chersonesus is an icon of the Virgin of the Sign. As it happens we have in Portsmouth, where I live, an icon on the same theme in our cathedral. Mary holds up her hands in prayer. Like a medallion on her breast the child Jesus holds up his hand in blessing. There can be no support from the Christian faith for this invasion. But we can only denounce Russia's action on the basis of truth, honesty, justice and mercy: the spiritual foundations of the freedom we treasure

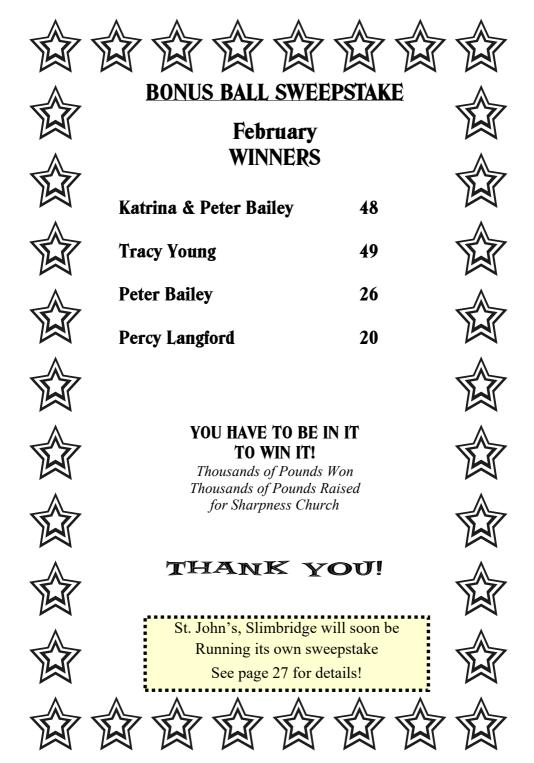


St John's Church Slimbridge.

- are re-launching the Bonus Ball Sweepstake to provide a regular income towards the upkeep of our beautiful and ancient parish church at Slimbridge as well as giving you the opportunity every week to win. For a weekly stake of £1 payable in advance quarterly or annually (or monthly if you prefer) you will have your own number between 1 and 59.
- Each Saturday, the person with the number corresponding to
 the National Lottery Lotto bonus ball will win half of the total
 weekly stake with the other half going to the church. This is
 equivalent to £29.50 when all 59 numbers are in play. This
 means the church will benefit by up to £1534 each year.
- To join, please email, text or phone the coordinator, Ros Davies, with your name, the first line of your address and your first three choices of bonus ball number. Numbers will be allocated on a 'first-come, first-served' basis so don't delay in contacting Ros. The first draw will be on **Saturday 2 April** to give time for all 59 numbers to be allocated and for everyone to have paid their first instalment.

Contact details:

Slimbridge.bonus@btinternet.com or 07481 018988



LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE

On how to sabotage a music festival

The Rectory St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

It seemed such an innocent suggestion. A local farmer announced he wanted to arrange a Spring music festival. I could already hear Mozart string quartets being played in our Lady Chapel, and arias from Donizetti operas being sung *al fresco* in the Glebe field, while we sipped champagne in the warm Spring sunshine and admired the flowers.

Unfortunately, our farmer was thinking of a heavy metal weekend in one of his fields. The teacups began to rattle when village talk turned to portable lavatories, mobile catering vans and using the churchyard for overflow camping space. Then the police arrived to discuss crowd control and drug policy. At James the Least of All we tend more towards congenial dinner parties, with drugs labelled Bollinger or Glenfiddich.

That was the point when Colonel Trubshaw began to search out his old shotgun. His wife even stopped serving coffee after Mattins, in order to patrol the perimeter of their estate with their arthritic spaniel. On the other hand, Miss Little went a little mad. She exchanged her usual tweeds and brogues and pearls for a red bandana, long patchwork dress and peace beads. She must have enjoyed the 1960s.

It was time to take action, so I told our farmer that St James the Least of All would support him to the hilt. Our ladies would of course do flower arrangements for the stage, and our sidesmen would greet the campers as they arrived. We would provide a full choral Evensong on Friday night, to help set the tone for the weekend. When the farmer gasped something about heavy metal, I was able to reassure him. "Heavy metal? We're doing that Saturday morning from about 6am, when our bellringers will give a three-hour exhibition of change ringing." The farmer pleaded something about singing, and I was able to reassure him on that point as well: "On Sunday we'll do a Songs of Praise, and not to worry, your campers can choose their favourite hymns from 'Ancient and Modern'."

I was thanked profusely, but the following week, our dear farmer wrote to tell me he had decided to graze sheep on his field after all. Shame about that.

Your loving uncle,

WORD-SEARCH

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Backpage Picture



As life gets back to something like normal and people begin to travel around again here is a 'picture from the past' - well a 'poster from the past' to be correct.

It one of Great Western Railways (GWR) travel posters encouraging tourists to take the train to their favourite destinations - in this case Gloucester!

'De Trinitate is published monthly By Revd. Bill Boon at Sharpness Vicarage A an electronic version of this magazine is available in pdf - contact Bill Boon for details.