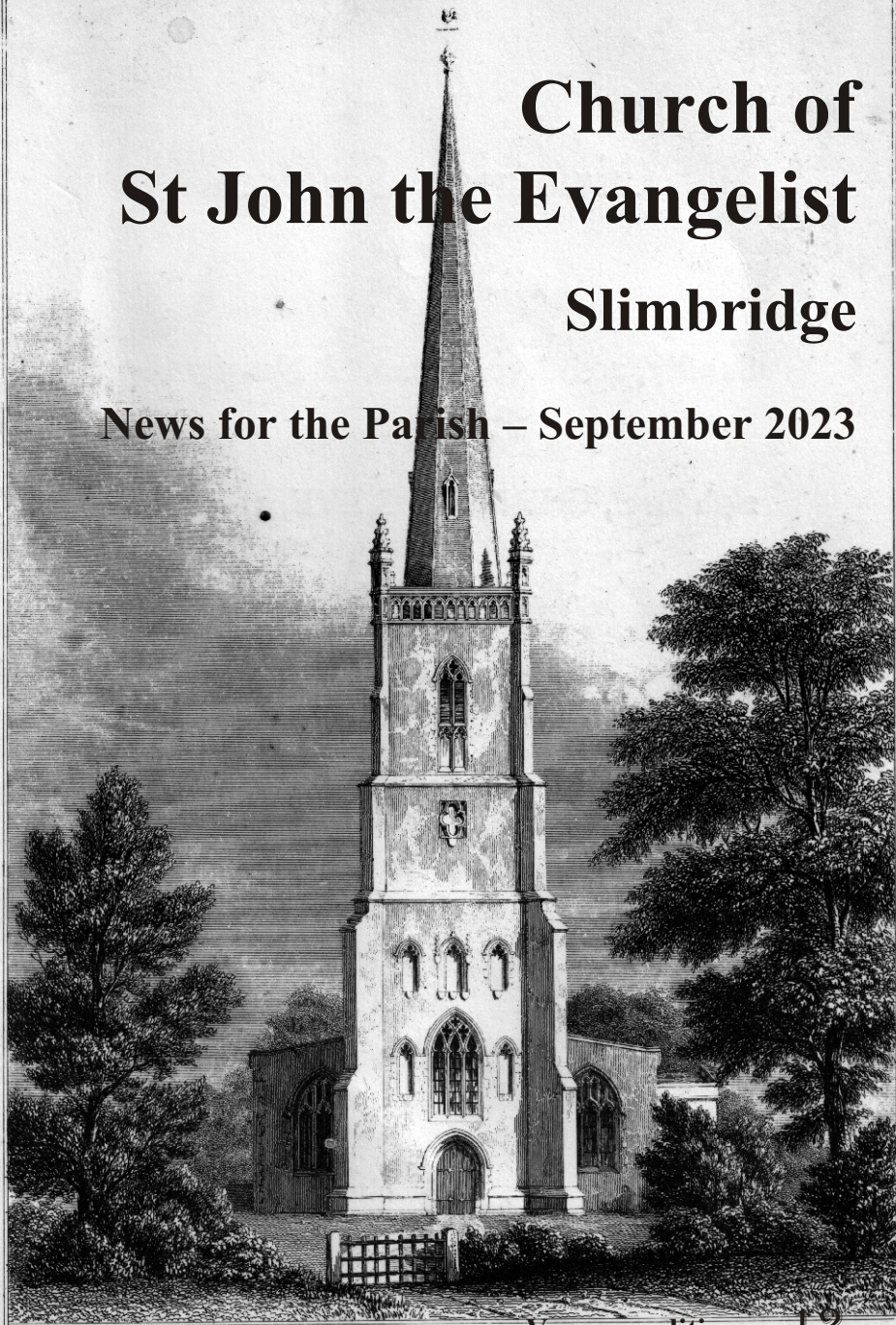


Church of St John the Evangelist

Slimbridge

News for the Parish – September 2023



Vacancy edition – 12

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as a donation towards the cost of printing**

Contacts for Slimbridge Parish Church

Parochial Church Council

Church Wardens	David Carrington 01453 890 031 Sue Gibson 01453 890 820
PCC Secretary	Pamela Storey, email pamelastorey@btinternet.com
PCC Members	Pat Cope, Elizabeth Ferigno, Ann Jones, Eric Jones, Huvin Thompson, Stilman Davis (<i>ex officio</i>)

Ministry Team

Supervising Priest	Graham Stacey, Area Dean, 01453 709 859
Reader	Stilman Davis 01453 890 783
Worship Leader	David Carrington 01453 890 031

For Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, please contact the Ministry Team.

Music in church	Ursula Toher 0775 950 2792
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Contributions welcome

Please send new material to Stilman Davis (email stilman@tolutim.co.uk) by the 20th of the month.

Greetings

School begins this month, a fact which had me thinking about my schooldays. Examinations are part of school, aren't they? I would say that they are the scariest part of being at school. However, when the philosopher said, "The unexamined life is not worth living," I don't think he meant sitting in a large hall with only pen and paper in front of you and a set of questions to which there are set answers. So, Socrates, what part of life should we be examining?

In one of the courses I took we were required to keep a journal. In this journal we were to write down thoughts about our course work and reading, interesting conversations, random musings about the subject. But another thing we were to record (if we could) were our dreams. This came to mind as I have had very interesting dreams all fading quickly as consciousness rises. However, I thought I would share this one. There is nothing very personal – in fact, it could have been a scene in one of those films on "horror night" on television.

The scene in the dream was that I was in large cavernous room – it could have been anywhere. It was ornate with lots of stone, and a great many candles. But everything was dimly lit so there wasn't a lot of detail. I was being confronted with words about loyalty. When I thought I was loyal, the light grew. When my loyalty was doubted darkness descended on me in the scene. When I reflect on it, I find it was a lovely vignette which should guide me through the day. Loyalty, after all, does light up one's life, doesn't it?

Why don't we consider dreams more often? Not just the dreams of sleep, but the dreams of aspiration as well. Are all of them really so ephemeral that we need not pay any attention to them? Dreams are visions. They might happen in the fantasies of sleep during the night. They might happen in our waking lives as we think about ultimate possibilities, when we have a sight of what we really want in our lives.

Shouldn't we examine all our dreams more closely? I recommend keeping a journal. It would be something to leave our friends. I have my website where I record my visions in my addresses. Would your social media page be where you would like to record your visions?

Stilman Davis

Three parishes, working together

An FAQ

Why is there currently no permanent vicar in Slimbridge?

It is common knowledge that Slimbridge and Sharpness with Purton have been without a vicar since Bill Boom retired in August 2022. It is usual for there to be a period of vacancy when a vicar leaves. This vacancy allows the church community space to reflect and re-gather themselves before they begin to look for a new vicar. Vacancy periods can be as short as 9 months, but they can be a lot longer.

Is Slimbridge going to get a new vicar?

No, and yes.

Slimbridge and Sharpness with Purton have been working together for a number of XXXX years and had been allocated a full-time vicar. However, as part of a broader review in the deanery, this allocated full-time vicar post will not be replaced. [Our deanery, Wotton Deanery, is 37 parishes affiliated together from Thornbury to Sharpness, Dursley to Wotton, Badminton, Chipping Sodbury and all the surrounding area]. However, there is a plan...

What is the plan?

There is a temporary plan and a longer process.

The temporary plan is that Sharpness with Purton will work with the churches of the Berkeley Benefice [a benefice is a small group of churches legally bound to work together]. Slimbridge will work with the Lower Cam and Coaley benefice.

These temporary arrangements will make sure that there is a 'vicar' with pastoral responsibility to oversee ministry and mission in the parishes. Rev'd Steve Godsell of the Berkeley benefice will oversee Sharpness with Purton and Rev'd Graham Stacey of Lower Cam and Coaley will oversee Slimbridge.

How long will the temporary plan be in place?

This is primarily dependent on broader situations in the deanery, such as the current vacancy in Dursley. This means there are lots of people involved in the conversation, and carrying those out carefully and sensitively will mean that it appears to take a long time. However, be assured that we are working towards a more settled solution as fast as we can.

What is the permanent plan?

This is being worked on, and it would not be right to say anything here that might lead people to jump to conclusions. When the details are worked out, then they will be communicated appropriately.

What does this mean for me in the church community?

On the one hand, it means there will be lots of variety in the type and style of services and gatherings. Different people will be involved in making sure the life of our church community continues and flourishes. On the other hand, you may see the vicar slightly less than you are, or were, used to.

However, this does not mean the vicar is not available. Please do not hesitate to contact the vicar for anything you feel you need to. The vicar would rather hear from you than just presume that everything is alright.

What does this mean for the parish community?

Primarily, the difference is that Slimbridge will now have someone who is your vicar. You'll occasionally see Graham around in the village, and you, too, are free to contact him as and when needed. The contact details are in this magazine.

This is the parish church, which means it is your church. Your church for seasons of joy in new life at the birth of a child, celebrating love in the vows of marriage, and seasons of loss when it is time to say goodbye to a loved one. The church building is open everyday in daylight hours. If you ever felt that chatting to the vicar might help, then you only have to ask.

Graham Stacey

EcoChurch Resourcing, upcoming events

EcoChurch resourcing events are currently focussed on informal gatherings in coffee shops, in various locations across the Diocese. They are opportunities to

bring questions, to share joys and frustrations, and to find out what others are doing nearby. Often conversations develop about what could be done by working together. Ecumenical partners are welcome to join the conversation – we have close links with other churches through GCEJN so it seems appropriate to do this together.



Pop in for as long as you are able to join the conversation with Cate Williams (our Environmental Engagement Officer). If you need to come late or leave early, that is absolutely fine. We look forward to dreaming together about what could be possible in our churches and communities. The next dates are as follows:

- Tuesday 19 September 10.30-12noon at Amberley Shop on the Common, Holy Trinity Church, Amberley, Nr Stroud, GL5 5JG
- Monday 23 October 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm at St Andrew's Church, Chedworth. This is a special EcoChurch Resourcing: Eco-Church drop-in with sustainable heating demo

The idea is to find a date with a few people in each place and then open it up to anyone who'd like to join the conversation. Cate welcomes invitations from any location across the Diocese.

There is no need to book but if you have time please contact Ellie Griffiths-Edwards <EGriffiths-Edwards@glosdioc.org.uk> or telephone Church House on 01452 410 022 if you have any questions.

from the diocesan website

Events in the Diocese

Explore our diocese by bike or on foot and raise money for GHCT

Ride + Stride happens on Saturday 9 September, when people from worshipping communities across the Diocese will visit as many churches as possible, on foot, by bike or on horseback, to raise funds for Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT).

If you're thinking about taking part, but need a bit of inspiration, here are some ideas, from epic journeys through to shorter strolls.

Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust

GHCT has created some cycling and walking routes to help explore some of our Gloucestershire and Bristol churches, from Cirencester to the Ampney Churches, to the St James' Quedgeley route created by Paul Bridges.

Cathedrals Cycle Route (CCR)

There is a cycle route that stretches across England for almost 2,000 miles, taking in all the English Cathedrals.

Our local routes are from Oxford Cathedral to Gloucester (CCR 31) which is a 54-mile route and then on to Hereford via route (CCR 32) which is a 29-mile section.

There are many ways to complete this route, both on-road and off-road, but however you arrive at a Cathedral you will be welcomed. Each cathedral will carry a CCR stamp and cycle ribbon to collect. Medals will be available to purchase for each cathedral-to-cathedral section (with all profits going to charity). A coveted CCR Finishers Medal is available to all those who have completed the full 42 cathedrals (CCR passport or ribbon collections may be required).

Sustrans National Cycle Network: Route 41

Route 41 is a charming long-distance cycle ride through the beautiful English countryside. It also offers you the opportunity to visit lovely towns and cities such as Bristol, Gloucester and Stratford-upon-Avon. Route 41 includes woods rich with wildlife, impressive architecture and wonderful views. It is just over 120 miles and takes around 10 hours on a bike and 40 and a half hours on foot.

Churches Conservation Trust

You can find downloadable walking routes from the Churches Conservation Trust including routes around Sapperton, Cirencester and the Cotswolds.

Send your Ride + Stride stories to kowen@glosdioc.org.uk or contact Church House 01452 410 022

Building safe and caring communities

Tuesday September 5, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

One day workshop

This workshop explores the practical actions we can do to build safe, inclusive, and caring communities. The ethos of the workshop is about building on what a community has and is proud of. The workshop includes:

- Guiding principles and key steps for successful community participation
- Case studies of different community-building approaches
- Identifying the challenges and barriers to community engagement and what we can do to address them
- Practical and accessible planning tools for empowering local communities.

The workshop will be delivered through a combination of group discussions and activities, presentations, and case studies. A full set of handouts and PowerPoint slides will be available after the training. To book, email safeguardingtraining@glosdioc.org.uk or telephone Laura Evans at the office on 01452 410022

from the diocesan website

The Difference Course

Tuesday September 26, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Cooke Room, St Mary DeCrypt, Southgate St, Gloucester GL1 2DR

Responding to Archbishop Justin's vision for the church to be a reconciling presence in the midst of conflict, this course explores what it means to follow Jesus in our lives.

Navigating a divided and complex world can be hard. We encounter this in our relationships, in our communities and in our wider systems and structures. Many of us long to make a difference, but often we don't know how to respond or where to start. This is why leading practitioners and thinkers have been brought together to create Difference – equipping us to cross divides, navigate disagreement and pursue a just and flourishing world. Over five sessions we will listen to stories of people facing conflict, consider the way that Jesus engaged with difference and division in the context of prayerful discussion.

For more information go to

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/the-difference-course/>

or telephone Church House on 01452 410 022

from the diocesan website

Events in the Parish

First Saturday Coffee Morning

On Saturday 2nd September the coffee morning will be raising funds for Little Otters, the governor led playgroup based in the grounds of Slimbridge School, which runs playgroup and pre-school sessions.

Usual time, 10-30 until 12.00 in the village hall. Everyone welcome.

Pamela Storey

St John's Church Bonus Ball Sweepstakes

Recent winners

29 July	25	Doreen Hobbs, Neil Howarth
5 August	2	Jeannette Akers, Nia Wills
12 August	44	Pamela Storey, Ron Price
19 August	8	Tricia Carrington, Fiona Hanstock

All numbers are currently in play on both cards. If you are a quarterly payer with a number on the second card, hopefully you have recently paid your next instalment of £13. If not, I will be in touch.

If you are a quarterly payer with a number on the first card, please would you pay your next instalment of £13 by Sunday 1 October.

Many thanks.

*Ros Davies (text: 07481 018988 or email:
Slimbridge.bonus@btinternet.com)*

Singing for Fun

A heads-up that we will be holding an Autumn Singing for Fun session in the Village hall on Monday 9 October, from 13:30 till 15:00. Weekly winter sessions will also be held in the Village Hall, starting on Monday 8 January.

Ros Davies

Notes from the Tower

Steady progress is being maintained by our learner ringers on regular Friday night practice attendances. It is hoped that it will not be too long maybe before four or five bells, rather than a single one as at present, will be calling out mellifluously to the people of the parish on a Sunday morning. Of course more learners or others who would like to return to ringing after a break, are always welcome on a Friday night at 7.30 p.m. Who knows, maybe we could look forward to all six bells announcing worship on a Sunday morning in the New Year. Please feel free to contact me on 890469 for more information.

The ringers, their helpers and instructors have been encouraged by the positive response from the parish to having the bells ring out again. To have Slimbridge represented in ringing at towers across the country to mark the Coronation of King Charles III, not to mention the ringing some weeks later for the Sunday when many parishioners enjoyed “walking the boundaries” of the parish, are two examples of how our bells have added greatly recently to the togetherness they can convey. Happily too, ringers and volunteers have been helping maintain and repair the instruments they play here at St Johns. Bells and fittings, like all things over a hundred years old, need a little regular TLC and ringers now appreciate the recent improvements they have been able to make. The fifth in particular rings much more smoothly following diagnosis of failing gudgeon pin bolts. All bolts were tightened with one shearing during this process and needing to be replaced completely. Sadly there are indications that a number of more major areas will soon need attention and which cannot be tackled by local ringers. These will require significant fund raising efforts to address professionally and keep the bells, and ringers, happily sending out their message.

Huvin Thompson – Bell Captain

Worship at St John the Evangelist, Slimbridge

Please join us whenever you can.

September	time	Worship
3rd	09:00 10:00	BCP Matins CW Morning Prayer
10th	10:00	CW Morning Prayer
17th	10:00	CW Eucharist
24rd	10:30	Worship Together with Cam and Coaley at Slimbridge

BCP – Book of Common Prayer

CW – Common Worship

Morning Worship and Praise – Free form worship based on *Roots*