



Church of St John the Evangelist

Slimbridge

News for the Parish – November 2023

Vacancy edition – 14

Price per copy £1-00

or a yearly subscription of £10-00

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 (*ex officio*)

Ministry Team

Interim minister Rev'd Graham Stacey, Area Dean, 01453 709 859

Reader Stilman Davis 01453 890 783

Worship Leader David Carrington 01453 890 031

*For Life Events (Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals),
please contact Graham Stacey.*

Music in church Ursula Toher 0775 950 2792

War and Peace

As I am writing this, on day 19 of the latest escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict, we are just realising the scale of the present and impending humanitarian catastrophe taking place there.

I am in no way qualified to comment on the narrative of why we are where we are. No doubt, even the public historical records and the collective memory are only a part of the story, and even that will be biased. There are multiple layers of national, international and local interests, along with personal stories of experience, hope and despair. The same is true of the war in Ukraine and, indeed, any other area of conflict.

However, in the face of the current news and the numerous areas of conflict unreported in the mainstream media, two things come to mind...

Firstly, the a need for open hearts and open hands.

Despite the history of any situation, be that a long-time dispute between nations or a recent tension between friends, open hearts and hands means we approach each other open to the possibility of love - heart - and letting go - hands. Love is the great equaliser; it is in the giving and receiving of love that we come to accept each other not just as equals but as co-dependants: we depend on each other. It is easy to accuse, discriminate or belittle the unknown, the distant, and the other. It is much harder once they are there, right in front of you, mirroring back your humanity, your broken and fragile humanity. It becomes impossible once you see yourself in them and realise you are you because they are they; a communion if you like, a love between persons.

As we open ourselves to the other, we have to, at the same time, let go of ourselves. In order to really encounter the other, I have to step aside; the ego has to step down from its pedestal to be humble. I have to let go of the idea that I am right, that I know more, that I am more than the other. Instead, I have to be ready and open to deeply seeing the person in front of me, learning from them who they are and letting them affect and change who I am so that love becomes a possibility. Without such letting go, love will not be or flourish.

Secondly, it takes time.

Almost all love takes time, especially love after tension, dispute or trauma. However, our 'modern' life is often led with such speed even if we ourselves feel like we are physically moving slower. Forgiveness, healing, wholeness, friendship, and love do not happen at this speed.

I am not naive enough to think that all disputes can be resolved, all hurts forgiven, and all wounds healed. We are where we are as broken and damaged humans; it seems aggression, violence, and needless death are part of that package. However, I do think that we can be and do more than we are. As we observe the humanitarian and ecological disasters emerging in and around Palestine and Israel, let's be careful not to point the finger at any one side or another. Remember that every story and news report is always biased and often has a hidden agenda that we may or may not agree with - even this local magazine article.

Most importantly, and prayerfully, remember that every life lost was a life loved, just like you.

God of all Humanity,

In a world full of fear, open our hearts to your love.

Though we walk in desolate valleys,
open our minds to your hope.

As we seek paths in the darkness, open our eyes to your light.

We turn away from hatred, towards love.

We turn away from intolerance, towards understanding.

As sisters and brothers, we commit ourselves to compassion.

Together, not alone, we pray for peace.

Amen.

Graham Stacey

Violence in Israel and Gaza

Bishop Rachel wrote on the diocese website:

I urge people across the diocese to pray for peace amid the horror of the violence in Gaza and Israel, and I support the Archbishops' statement published on Saturday 7 October:

“We are grieved and deeply concerned at the violence in Israel and Gaza, and we unequivocally condemn the attacks by Hamas. We pray for those who are mourning, those who are injured, and all those fearing for their safety. We pray for restraint on all sides, and renewed efforts towards a just peace for all. The way forward must be for both sides to build confidence in a secure future through which Israel and its people can live in security within its internationally recognised borders, and Palestinians have their own state and live in their lands in security, and with peace and justice.”

On Saturday I was in contact with The Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell, the Dean of St George's in Jerusalem, who has since shared a prayer which has been endorsed by Archbishop Hosam Naoum, the Archbishop in Jerusalem:

‘O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children – for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

PRAY WITH US

God of light and salvation, our refuge and our strength,

We pray for the people of Israel and Palestine amid the escalating violence.

We pray for those killed and injured by rockets from Gaza in southern Israel. May your rod and staff comfort them. We pray for those who are grieving. May they know your ever-present help.

We pray for the protection of those who have been taken hostage by Hamas. As they walk through this dark valley, may they fear no evil.

We pray for the civilians of Gaza. May they know that their help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth.

And we pray for those in leadership in Gaza and Israel. May you guide them along the right paths. We ask all this in union with Christ and trusting in the power of your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

From the Diocese

Creation Care

A series of seminars led by the Revd Dr Mark Siddall

Thursday October 26, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

These seminars will be led by Revd Dr Mark Siddall who, before becoming Priest-in-Charge of St James Church Kingsway and Quedgeley, had an international career in Climate Research.

This seminar series is based around *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World* by Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo. It aims to equip preachers and church leaders for the years and decades ahead by studying the scriptural, theological and missional imperative to Care for God's Creation. The text is aimed at final year undergraduate and MA students and so expect a rigorous level of engagement, which will expose you to a range of approaches and scholarship on this subject.

It will help to have read the book before you attend.

Date	Chapter Numbers	Title of session
26th October	1 and 2	Methodology
9th November	6 and 7	Scripture
23rd November	9 and 10	Eschatology and Good News
7th December	11 and 14	Human vocation in Creation

Read more at

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/creation-care-a-series-of-seminars-led-by-the-revd-dr-mark-siddall/>

or contact Church House on 01452 410022

Carbon Awareness Training

Saturday November 11, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

Join Cate Williams and Julie Nelson for a day of Carbon Awareness Training.

Carbon Awareness is a short 4 hour course, enabling participants to explore questions around engaging with climate change in church life. It covers four key questions:

- Why does reducing our use of fossil fuels matter so much?
- What changes can we make that make the most difference?
- How we can encourage others to get involved?
- How does this fit into the whole of church life?

Participants will leave the course better equipped to make positive changes in their own household as well as feeling more confident to engage both with church, and others to encourage more people to take this seriously.

Read more at

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/carbon-awareness-training-november-2023/>

or contact Church House on 01452 410022

from the diocese website

Creative Journaling

Thursday, November 30, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Journaling is like a fingerprint; each one is unique to an individual and there's no right way to do it. Sometimes words are not enough to express feelings or work through experiences and we need colour, pictures, shapes, doodles. .../cont....

Join priest and artist Rebecca Spear, who will guide us through approaches to creative journaling using different media and techniques.

This course has limited availability.

Read more at

<https://gloucester.anglican.org/event/creative-journaling/>
or contact Church House on 01452 410022

from the diocese website

In the Parish

First Saturday Coffee Morning and Produce Stall

on Saturday 4th November
at Slimbridge Village Hall
10.30-12.00

All proceeds for

**HELP for
HEROES**

Next month's coffee morning is on Saturday 3rd December

First Saturday December Coffee Morning and Produce Stall

Christmas Market

3rd December
Slimbridge Village Hall
10.00am – 2.30pm
Coffee and mince pies
Hot soup
Bric a brac,
Produce
Craft and Xmas Stalls

Pat Cope

A Plea

Do you have time to help us, one Saturday morning each month?

It's for our Church Coffee Morning, where we make money for a different Charity every month.

Help includes Serving coffees, washing up, making cakes etc., or doing the advertising posters.

We would like to hear from you. Please ring –

Pat Cope 01453 890 517

Pamela Storey 01453 899 828

Sue Ellis 01453 890 493

Pat Cope

Bonus Ball

30 September	52	Peter Golding Mark Niblett
7 October	26	Lin Ashpole Georgina Jones
14 October	48	Jemma Adamson Bob Eveleigh
21 October	6	Anne Jones Claire Greenwood

Singing for Fun

Many thanks to Ursula for running our Autumn Singing for Fun session in the Village Hall last month. Eighteen of us, including a few new faces, enjoyed an hour and half singing songs both traditional and modern. It was good to trial the new venue: the recently tuned piano and the more comfortable seating for a start. It was noticeable that our voices were contained in the smaller space and didn't disappear into the vast volume of the church. Our winter sessions will be held weekly in January and February, starting on January 8th, also in the Village Hall.

Notes from the Belfry

The regular practice sessions at 7.30 on a Friday evening continue to be well attended and happy occasions with bowls of chips at the Tudor Arms having become an established part of the refreshment and recovery process afterwards. On a few Fridays we have even managed to have an all Slimbridge band ring together to finish the practice.

continued next page

Worship at St John the Evangelist, Slimbridge

Please join us whenever you can.

November	time	Worship
5st	10:00	Holy Communion
12th	10:00	Remembrance Service
19th	10:00	Morning Praise and Worship
26th	10:30	Worship Together with Cam and Coaley at Slimbridge
Each Saturday		9:00 Morning Prayer

continuing Notes from the Belfry

At the first 'Together' service in our new pattern of co-operating with Lower Cam and Coaley congregations, held at Slimbridge on the last Sunday in September, some ringers from Coaley joined the Slimbridge contingent to ring for this joyful morning service. Just a week later, at the Harvest Evensong service on 1st October, again the local ringers were augmented by help from Coaley and Dursley to have the bells call the Parish to worship. On the last Sunday of this month, 29th Oct Slimbridge ringers will return the compliment by attending to ring at Coaley for another 'Together' service. In just about a year since the revival of ringing in the village there have been many things to celebrate. Not least is the great support and positive reaction from the local community, to hearing the bells. With Christmas approaching it is hoped that more such celebrations will be heard and bring with them further festive cheer.