



Virus update newsletter

Saturday 6th March 2021



Many of us will be glad to see this winter begin to fade into the background to be replaced by milder weather and new growth all around us. A recovery plan for a way out of a national lock-down is in place and the roll-out of covid vaccinations is going on apace. There is a note of optimism in the air.

We look forward to seeing loved ones again, to being able to enter people's homes, a hug... a trip to the cinema... a hair-cut... a meal out... a holiday. There are so many things that we are looking forward to. Hope and anticipation. The better days are coming.

As Christians we are used to being people of hope. After all, we are used to the annual drama of Lent preparing us for Easter, when the darkness and despair of Good Friday must give way to the Empty Tomb of Easter Day. We have a hope that is not dependent upon good weather, or a chemical formula, a political manifesto, or an economic up-turn. Our hope is based on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. That is a hope that will never disappoint. That is a hope that is good for this life and for the life to come.

New Sacristans

A 'Sacristan' is the person in a church responsible for the provision and upkeep of the fabric and materials used in services, particularly when the sacraments are involved. They help to ensure the linen at Holy Communion is in good order; they order the bread and the wine, as well as ash for Ash Wednesday, palm crosses for Palm Sunday, and candles for various times of the year. Sacristans also help with the changing of the frontals and hangings to match the liturgical colours in the Church Calendar.

I am very glad that Neal and Sue Cotton, who both attend our 8am service, have agreed to take on this important role in our church family. It is one of those jobs that is often unseen, but is noticeable when it is not being done! Please do pray for Neal and Sue as they take up this ministry.



Giving thanks for your covid vaccination!



TO GIVE:

<https://events.tapsimple.org/page/christian-aid/we-are-thankful-for-our-vaccines>

Here in Gloucestershire, as more of our family, friends, and neighbours receive their vaccine, we are both joyful and relieved. But we are aware that many communities around the world are suffering and don't have access to vaccines. And many of them lack the basics they need to protect themselves like clean water for handwashing.

As you or a family member is protected, please give to help protect those who don't have access to vaccines. This appeal was initiated by the Diocese of Gloucester in support of Christian Aid's work and is being supported by Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit.

All donations will support Christian Aid's response to the coronavirus pandemic in affected communities around the world. (Words from Diocese of Gloucester)

"The hope is that we will all wish to give generously to the work of Christian Aid from a place of thanksgiving, whether our generosity be a few pounds or a much larger sum. This is a way of us sharing Christ's hope and love with our brothers and sisters across the world who are less fortunate than ourselves."
(Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester)

Prayer Weekend

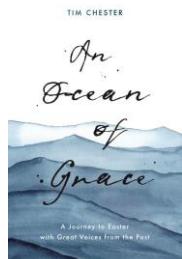
On the weekend of 27/28th February we held our Prayer weekend. Paul Springate, previously Warden of the Harnhill Centre, was our special guest. More than 40 people attended the online prayer workshop on the Saturday afternoon and a similar number heard Paul preaching powerfully at our 10am Sunday service.

2021 will be a season of gathering the church family back together again, regrouping, re-focussing our attention on what is really important, and putting down deep roots in prayer and in Scripture. Paul reminded us of the privilege of having prayer as conversation with God and being bold as we prepare ourselves for a parish mission in 2022.



'An Ocean of Grace' by Tim Chester

Maybe you would like a book to help you go deeper in prayer? Maybe you would like something to give you some inspiration and encouragement? This is a great book, designed for Lent, but suitable for any time of the year. Each day contains a short Bible reading, a reflection, and then an extended quotation from a great Christian thinker or writer in the past. This book is a wonderful treasure trove of good things to help all of us know God better. Recommended! (Available on Amazon, Ebay etc.)



Confirmation service

Confirmation is an often over-looked service in the Christian Church. It is a public 'saying yes' to the Christian faith after a time of prayer, reflection and instruction.

On **Sunday 10th October**, Bishop Robert of Tewkesbury will be leading a service of confirmation in the South Cotswolds Team Ministry and this is a great opportunity for both young people and adults to commit themselves to Christ and the Gospel. Classes for both adults and young people will be announced nearer the time.

It is not absolutely essential for people to be confirmed before they take Holy Communion in the Church of England, but for many, confirmation is a very significant step to becoming a full member of a local church community, which involves taking the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

For further details, please contact the vicar.



Video snippets

Some videos worth your while watching...

An interview with
Archbishop Justin & Caroline Welby

What the Bible says about the natural world
a crushed and broken ruin.

Interview with Archbishop Justin Welby and his wife Caroline by Nicky Gumbel (15:22)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOKOoMnfjb8&feature=youtu.be>

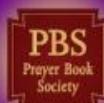
Tearfund video on 'Christianity and climate change' (6: 38)

<https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/christianity-and-climate-change-film-series/film-1>

Wonderful short animation explaining what exactly the Gospel is (2:22)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAy4PLZg9rw&feature=share>

Thinking about the mercy of God



FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER:

Exploring God's Mercy with the Book of Common Prayer

A series of four online seminars for Lent 2021

'Devices and Desires: Confessing our Sins with the BCP'

The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone - Tuesday 2nd March at 7.00pm

'Towards the Mercy-Seat: God's Mercy in the Psalms'

The Revd Canon Richard Peers - Saturday 13th March at 2.30pm

*'Whose Sins Thou Dost Forgive,
They are Forgiven: The Remedy for Sin'*

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner - Tuesday 16th March at 7.00pm

*'Whose Property is Always to Have Mercy:
The Prayer Book Communion and the Nature of God.'*

Dr Bridget Nichols - Saturday 27th March at 2.30pm

The 17th Century Book of Common Prayer is a masterpiece of both English literature and Protestant theology. It remains much used and much loved in the Church of England and in the wider Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, (martyred 1556), was a formidable theologian and preacher, but he also had an ear for the English language. He compiled his liturgy by keeping some traditional medieval forms and marrying them with the best of other thinkers and writers who held to Reformation beliefs.

This Lent the Prayer Book Society is holding online seminars looking at the theme of God's mercy in the Prayer Book.

Sign-up here: <https://www.pbs.org.uk/>

and finally...

We are surrounded by 'a great cloud of witnesses' (Heb 12: 1) – men and women of faith, who inspire, teach and challenge us.

Gregory Nazianzus was a 4th Century Church Father who prayed and thought long and hard about how Jesus, as both God and man, came to us and blessed us. He wrote this in one of his Orations:

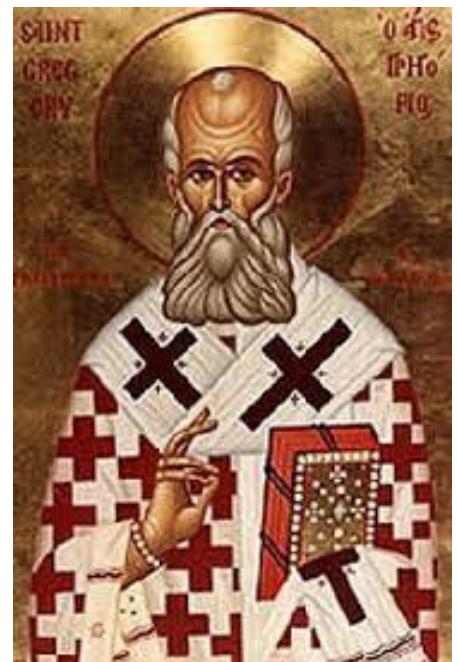
You hungered- but you fed thousands. Yes, you are the Bread that gives life; you are the Bread that is of heaven.

You thirsted- but you cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink (John 7: 37).' Yes, you promised that fountains would flow to those who believe.

You became weary- but you are the rest of those who are weary and heavy laden.

You wept- but you caused tears to cease.

You were silent like a lamb- but you are the Word.



Yours in Christ's name,

Andrew Cinnamon

Vicar of Lechlade, Eastleach and Southrop