

VILLAGE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2018

FOR THE PARISHES OF CHARLTON MUSGROVE,
CUCKLINGTON & STOKE TRISTER WITH BAYFORD

Very many thanks to Pip Loxton for all her hard work editing Village News for the past few years which she has undertaken cheerfully and willingly together with her many other commitments.

New editor is me, Sarah Kerr. I live in Charlton Musgrove and can often be seen walking my beautiful fox red Labrador Whisky; I even manage to drag my family along sometimes! If you have any news to share, drop me a line at skerr@downside.co.uk

RUNNING GROUP?



Is anyone interested in forming a running group? Contact Sarah at skerr@downside.co.uk

DIRECTORY

HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

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E mail John.rothwell@sompar.nhs.uk

RECTOR

Revd Rosemary Ashley
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CHURCH WARDENS & TREASURERS

CHARLTON MUSGROVE

St Stephen's & St John's

Church Wardens:

Veronica White 01963 32928
Jonathan Hand 01963 828930

Treasurer:

Jeremy Sellick 01963 32174
jeremysellick@hotmail.co.uk

CUCKLINGTON

St Lawrence's

Church Wardens:

Karen Dunford 01963 34220
Pip Loxton 01747 840947

Treasurer:

Christopher Birrell 01963 33209
crsbirrell@btinternet.com

STOKE TRISTER WITH BAYFORD

St Andrew's and Bayford Chapel

Church Wardens:

Vacant

Treasurer:

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nigel.noble@btinternet.com

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Jean Sellick 01963 32174
The Bakery, Charlton Musgrove

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Sarah Kerr
Charlton Musgrove
skerr@downside.co.uk

Stoke Trister, Cucklington and Charlton Musgrove
Benefice

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS

Charlton Musgrove

Chairman: Robin Bastable 01963 32317

Clerk to the Council:

Sheran Ring 01963 32880
charltonmusgroveclerk@gmail.com

Stoke Trister with Bayford

Chairman: Eldryd Parsons 01963 33628.

Eldryd1@hotmail.co.uk

Clerk to the Council:

Patricia Gillman 01963359598
patriciagillman@tiscali.co.uk

Cucklington

Chairman: Hugh Davies

CucklingtonChairman@gmail.com

twitter: @CucklingtonNews

www.cucklington.org.uk

VILLAGE HALL CONTACTS

Charlton Musgrove Village Hall

Acting Committee Chairman:

Sue Parroy sue@parroy.co.uk

Bookings:

cmvillagehall@gmail.com

Arthur Morison Memorial Hall

Committee Chairman:

Campbell Dunford 01963 34220

Bookings:

Jenny Rawlings 01963 33320

Bayford Village Hall

Bookings:

Niru Linsley 01963 33972

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AND LOCAL POLICE NUMBERS

Andy Chesterman (Bayford): 01963 33465

Brian Trueman (C): 01747 841014

Pene Volk (CM): 01963 32013

Peter Munro (ST) 01963 33036

Police Community Support Officer

Timothy Russell 7467

timothy.russell@avonandsomerset.police.gov

Phone 101

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Carl.mintern@gmail.com
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info@kimbersfarmshop.co.uk

Paul White

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07814857496 or 01963 31701

Pet Portraits by Chris Reed

For further details and examples contact on 07790089929
Cjreed.painting@hotmail.com

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Tel: 07825176752
Website: www.firstimpressionhairandharmony.com
Email: jkeill0308@googlemail.com
Facebook: First Impression Hair and Harmony

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Please call Brenda on 07747 773982

or email fairielillie@aol.com

Planning Renovations This Year?

If you're thinking of a new extension, a bit of remodelling, or finally knocking down that old garage, have you checked for asbestos? Any property built or refurbished before 2000 could potentially contain ACMs (Asbestos Containing Materials). Commonly found in corrugated roofing sheets, it was also widely used in artex-type paint coatings, insulation material, floor tiles, other construction material, fixtures and fittings. Left undisturbed, these materials don't present a health risk. However, when damaged the fibres easily become airborne and can be inhaled. Exposure to these microscopic fibres can lead to severe lung disease and cancer. In the UK, around 5000 deaths a year are linked to asbestos exposure, and it can take years for symptoms to develop. Invisible to the naked eye and normally blended with other substances, professional testing is needed to ensure asbestos is dealt with safely.

Somerset Scientific Services, part of Somerset County Council, offer free impartial asbestos advice as part of our commitment to public health and safety. We also offer an expert service to identify and project manage the removal of any ACMs. Samples of suspect material can be sent to our lab for analysis and we'll provide impartial advice on your next steps if asbestos is identified. For larger projects surveys can be completed on site by our specialist asbestos team if needed.

Call the team or visit our website for expert advice – and to find out what other services we provide.

www.somersetscientificservices.co.uk 01823 355906 or SSSmailbox@somerset.gov.uk

From the Organ Bench

Oddly enough – and certainly not by intention – I have never up to now included a hymn by Charles Wesley (1707-88) in this column. It's time I did, because not only has he often been described as one of England's greatest hymn writers, but he was also one of the most prolific, being responsible for nearly 9,000 hymns. Nearly all were published under the joint names of Charles and his brother John (1703-91, and the man usually credited with the foundation of Methodism), but research has shown that Charles wrote the hymns and John edited them, describing them as 'some bad, some average, and some excellently good'.

There is a well-loved Charles Wesley hymn for almost all of the Church's seasons, such as *Lo, he comes with clouds descending*, *Hark, the herald-angels sing*, *Love's redeeming work is done*, *Hail the day that sees him rise* – and, much sung at weddings, *Love divine, all loves excelling*. As we approach the season of Lent, one of his hymns is particularly appropriate, as it's thoughtful without being gloomy (as Lent should be) – *Jesu, lover of my soul*.

Many of Charles Wesley's hymns are written in the first person singular and sound as if written for private prayer (and probably were): this is one such. Some Victorians inevitably quibbled about the first lines...

Jesu, lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly,

While the gathering waters roll, While the tempest still is high.

...but it has deservedly been included in all modern hymn-books. It goes on, in quite emotive language, to express Wesley's absolute trust in Jesus, even while all else fails around him: and his faith leads him to the triumphant hope expressed at the end:

Thou of life the fountain art; Freely let me take of thee:

Spring thou up within my heart; Rise to all eternity.

Jesu, lover of my soul has had the good fortune to be associated with two quite different but equally singable tunes. 'Aberystwyth' is a typically Welsh melody in a minor key (the Welsh are experts in making minor keys sound positive, unless they really want to be sad) written by Joseph Parry (1841-1903): 'Hollingside' by John Bacchus Dykes (1823-76) is more conventionally Victorian, but is a lovely tune which perhaps better brings out the calm confidence that Charles Wesley finally reaches.

David Duvall

Thank you to Geoff Syme of Auditel for his donation to the Newsletter Fund.



VILLAGE VIEW

CHARLTON MUSGROVE



www.charltonmusgrove.org

Website Editor: Judy Nathan jhnathan321@gmail.com

The Church – St Stephen's And St John's

The entrance to St. John's churchyard has a smart new look. Sturdy hardwood gateposts, a thick coat of paint on the gate, and a generous layer of fresh gravel on the path all combine to good effect.

Thank you to Robin Bastable, Dave, Annie Sutton & the Parish Council

Barry White - a proud Cornishman.

Since moving to the village over 20 years ago, Barry had firmly embedded himself in village life - always willing to help a neighbour in need, whether fixing an electrical problem (using experience gained during service with REME) or making sure that the drains were clear down Rectory Lane to stop flooding. He often got phone calls late at night or early in the morning for help and, although he pretended to be very busy, would be there in a heartbeat. Had he retained his mount from when he served in the White Helmets motorcycle display team he would no doubt have responded even more speedily!

Barry was also very supportive of Veronica's role as Church Warden and often got dragged up to church to change light-bulbs or help with more drastic repairs like fixing the floor at St John's or putting up wall supports in St Stephen's with his very good friend, Claude. He was a man of few words but could always be relied upon to volunteer to help man the bar at village events, although I'm sure that he (along with his partners in crime Claude and John) drank more than they served to the villagers!

Barry's love of animals was also a very important part of his life. His collection of sheep-dogs entertained us all with their inability to actually herd sheep, which he kept an eye on for local farmers. Barry rescued pheasants, orphaned lambs, kittens from Rectory Farm and even a Dalmatian which he found abandoned down Rectory Lane! A true animal lover.

His dry sense of humour, willingness to help out a friend and true belief in our village community, especially when it came to the onion class at the village Flower Show, will always be greatly missed. During Barry's funeral last summer, his eldest son described him as 'a legend'. He was certainly a remarkable man, and will be sorely missed.



Christmas thanks from Veronica White

Christmas seems but a distant memory, but we would like to thank all those who came to St Stephen's on the morning of the 23rd December to help decorate the church. It did look truly amazing. There were lots of lovely comments at the service on Christmas Day. Also many thanks to Joan who helped me spruce up St John's for Christmas.

During the year we have many parishoners who volunteer to help keep the churches looking spick and span. Thank you to you all, for the many jobs that are carried out 'behind the scenes'. For unlocking and locking the churches every day, cutting the grass at St Stephen's, and taking care of flowers and cleaning so that our churches are always welcoming. Your help is invaluable. Very many thanks to everyone.

Charlton Musgrove 100 Club Results

December Draw

No. 43 Lucinda Hand £100
No. 73 Janet & Tony Cole £50
No. 17 Alicia Teague £25
No. 50 Ruth Kimber £25

January Draw

No. 36 Beryl Griffin £15
No. 98 Sybil Woods £15

Village Coffee Morning

Friday, February 16th 10.30am to 12 noon

Come along and join us for real coffee and homemade cake to cheer the winter blues and to catch up with friends and neighbours.

A Date for your Diary

A Coffee Morning to raise funds for the Brain Tumour Charity.

The England Family invite you to come and join them at Paradise Cottage, Charlton Musgrove, BA9 8HW on Saturday 17th March at 10.30am.

Come along and enjoy Coffee, tea, Home-made cake, a raffle, games for the children and lots of good company. We hope you can make it and look forward to seeing you there.

VILLAGE 'SAFETY NET'

Remember to phone 01963 31634 for help in Charlton Musgrove if you need to call on the "safety net" which is in place. Diane Coe

Charlton Musgrove Defibrillator

Chris Mielville 0196333233
Barrie & Ceri Izard 0196334144
David Amblin 01963 31012
Neal Sizmore 07795817460

Ist Responder Contact Numbers

Custodians

John Ball 0196331046
Robert Parker 07769913475

In case of medical emergency ring 999 and ask for the Ambulance Service. The operator will then send a medic and inform there is a Defibrillator in Charlton Musgrove and will give the key pad entry number for access. There is a list of first responders on the door ring one of them immediately for assistance prior to Ambulance arrival. **Defibrillators can save lives**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2018

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1 st | Coffee Morning | 10.00am Bayford Village Hall |
| 2 nd | Winter Lecture Series - Growing Cut Flowers for pleasure and profit with Georgie Newbury | 6.30pm
Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall |
| 4 th | Friends and Heroes Sunday Club | 9.30am, St John's Charlton Musgrove |
| 6 th | Pancake Party
Free. For age 7 – 14 years. | 7.00pm – 8.30pm Bayford Village Hall
Hosted by Impact Youth, Shaftesbury |
| 9 th | Scrabble Evening | 7.00pm Cucklington Village Hall |
| 13 th | Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party | Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall |
| 16 th | Coffee Morning | 10.30am Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall |
| 16 th | Winter Lecture Series – Garden Making at Stavordale Priory with Michael Le Poer Trench | 6.30pm Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall |
| 17 th | Coffee and Crafts – Cookie decorating | 10.00am Stoke Trister Church |
| 18 th | Friends and Heroes Sunday Club | 9.30am St Lawrence's, Cucklington |
| 20 th | Movie 'The Shack' | 7.30pm Bayford Village Hall |
| 23 rd | Winter Lecture Series - No Dig with Charles Dowding | 6.30pm Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall |
| 24 th | Coffee Morning | 10.00am Cucklington Village Hall |
| 28 th | Village Lunch | 12.30pm Bayford Village Hall |



March 2018

- | | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| 1 st | Coffee Morning | 10.00am Bayford Village Hall |
| 4 th | Friends and Heroes Sunday Club | 9.30am, St John's Charlton Musgrove |
| 17 th | Coffee Morning to raise funds for the Brain Tumour Charity | 10.30am, Paradise Cottage, Charlton Musgrove, BA9 8HW |
| 17 th | Coffee and Crafts | 10.00am Stoke Trister Church |



Short Mat Bowls at Charlton Musgrove Village Hall

WE MEET ON THE 2nd AND 4th TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

Come along for a laugh, we are a friendly non-competitive group

Cost - £2.50 per session - Tea & Coffee will be served

Please bring along smooth soled shoes to wear for the sake of the mats.

Brian & Stella Wheeler – 01963 34331

TABLE TENNIS EVERY TUESDAY
AT THE ARTHUR MORISON HALL AT 7.30pm all welcome

CHURCH SERVICES

CMSJ – St. John’s, Charlton Musgrove. CMSS – St. Stephen’s Charlton Musgrove
C – St. Lawrence, Cucklington. ST – St. Andrew’s Stoke Trister

All services below are Benefice Services.

Everyone is warmly welcome to join in whichever service they would like.

February 2018

4 th	9.30 am 6.00 pm	Friends and Heroes Club Evensong	CMSJ C
11 th	9.30 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Taize Hour	ST CMSJ
14 th	6.30 pm	Ash Wednesday Service	CMSJ
18 th	9.30 am 6.00 pm	Friends and Heroes Club Evensong	C C
25 th	9.30 am 11.00 am 6.30 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion with baptism Taize Hour	CMSS ST ST

March

4 th	9.30 am 6.00 pm	Friends and Heroes Club Evensong	CMSJ C
11 th	9.30 am 6.30 pm 6.30 pm	Mother’s Day Holy Communion Evensong Quiet Hour	ST ST CMSJ
18 th	9.30 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Evensong	ST C
25 th		Palm Sunday Walk	Details to follow

Winter Lecture Series

Friday 2nd February 2018, 6.30pm



Georgie Newbery runs Common Farm Flowers, based in Charlton Musgrove, Somerset. An artisan cut flower and floristry business, she and her team grow 250,000 stems of flowers per year for use in her bouquets by post, wedding flowers, and for use in the many day courses she teaches.

Georgie will talk about how you can create a flourishing cut flower patch to give you goodies for the house year round, and will demonstrate how to make one of her gorgeous hand-tie bouquets as she talks.

Georgie's talk is to raise funds to help mend the hole in the roof of Charlton Musgrave's 13th century church St Stephen's in Rectory Lane.

Light refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

Friday 16th February 2018, 6.30pm



Michael Le Poer Trench, theatre photographer turned intrepid gardener, and guardian of 13th century Stavordale Priory and its 12 acres of gardens, which are filled with a vast array of plants, alongside lakes, orchards, and a kitchen garden.

Over the last 20 years Michael has developed and added to the garden at Stavordale Priory, which was laid out in the 1970s by the previous owner, renowned garden designer Georgia Langton. He has made it his own, while remaining true to the historic nature of the place and respecting Langton's original design. His bravery in experimenting with the gardens he inherited, while adapting it for his personal pleasure has allowed for a series of instinctual quirks and

intentional imperfections that attest to the garden's dreamy beauty.

For this lecture, Michael allows us the privilege of a rare glimpse of the private gardens of Stavordale Priory and its magic, as he takes us through its vibrant history and explains how he is making a garden with such a rich past become very much relevant to today's owner. As with all our lectures, audience questions and participation are welcomed!

Light refreshments will be available from 6.30pm

Friday 23rd February, 6.30pm



Charles Dowding is a lead innovator of organic and especially no dig gardening, since 1983. In addition, he pioneers and publicises new methods of growing / picking / marketing salad leaves. He has created and cropped four no dig, organic market gardens, on a range of soils: stony, silt and clay. In the 1980s his garden covered 7.5 acres (3ha) of no dig beds and was less intensive than now. His growing methods are as applicable in small areas as in large ones. Currently he crops an intensive 0.25 acres/1000 square metres in Somerset, SW England, for local sales of salad leaves and vegetables. He has written nine books, runs a You Tube channel, appears on BBC gardening programmes and gives talks and courses at home and abroad.

Charles will give an illustrated talk on how to encourage soil life, easier and plentiful harvests and making your garden part of the solution to many environmental problems. It will of course be followed by a questions and answers session.

We plan to run a seed swap before the lecture, feel free to bring seeds to swap!

Light refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

Tickets are £7.50 each. There is a small booking fee in addition for the use of the online ticketing system, <http://charltonmusgrove.eventbrite.com> or email eventscommh@gmail.com

There is a special offer for residents, all 3 tickets for £20.

Drop in Weekend - Tell us what you think Charlton Musgrove Village Hall

We plan to run an open weekend at the hall on the mornings of the 24th and 25th February. Come and tell us what you think about the hall, hear our ideas for a new canopy with storage, improved wheelchair and buggy access from the car park end and another tarmac car parking space.

Members from the Management Committee will be on hand from 10am - 12pm with loads of coffee on both Saturday and Sunday.

THE SHACK MOVIE – 7.30pm Tuesday February 20th, Bayford Village Hall Bring a bottle - snacks provided!

From the producers of 'Life of Pi', 'The Shack' movie is based on the New York Times best seller book, 'The Shack'. After suffering a family tragedy, Mack Phillips spirals into a deep depression. He receives a mysterious letter urging him to an abandoned shack in the Oregon wilderness. Despite his doubts, Mack journeys to the shack and encounters an enigmatic trio of strangers led by a woman named Papa. Through this meeting, Mack finds important truths that will transform his understanding of his tragedy and change his life forever. Followed by optional five week discussion group.

Gain an out of this world experience at stargazing events

The Cranborne Chase AONB's stargazing is always popular and this winter's season is no different, the opening event at Semley Village Hall earlier this month full to capacity with night sky enthusiasts.

If you missed the Semley event, there are plenty of others in various locations in our special stargazing series, during which astronomer and Cranborne Chase AONB Dark Skies advisor Bob Mizon regales the audience with stories of the astronomical wonders above their heads, while the AONB's director Linda Nunn details developments concerning the Cranborne Chase AONB's bid for prestigious International Dark Sky Reserve status. Afterwards, the audience join Bob and members of the Wessex Astronomical Society outside for a spectacular stargazing experience.

The series of stargazing events 2018 will be on:

- **Thursday 15 February at Ansty Pick Your Own (Ansty PYO & Farm Shop, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5PX)**
- **Thursday 15 March at Sutton Veny Village Hall (High Street, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire BA12 7AP)**

All events commence at 7pm and last for around two to two-and-a-half hours, depending on weather conditions. The cost for adults is £5 each (cash or cheque on the night/includes a free tea or coffee), with no charge for children. Please book in advance, tel: 01725 517417, or email: info@cranbornechase.org.uk.

Additionally, on **Monday 19 February**, renowned night sky photographer Nigel Ball will be hosting a talk on the techniques used to capture fantastic night images and star trails using a standard digital SLR. The discussion includes planning, equipment and top tips for success. The talk will be held at Woodcutts Scout HQ, Sixpenny Handley. Tickets cost £10. To register your interest, email info@cranbornechase.org.uk.

For more information on stargazing in the Cranborne Chase AONB, log on to www.chasingstars.org.uk.

Donating Your Winter Fuel Payment – An Idea Worth Warming To

Somerset Community Foundation has launched this year's Surviving Winter campaign, encouraging people to join the growing number of contributors who donate some or all of their Winter Fuel Payment each year to help local people living in fuel poverty.

Last year, over 400 older people in Somerset were helped to keep warm and better connected through the winter months, thanks to local donors and pensioners who gave to Surviving Winter.

When a person receives their Surviving Winter grant, it doesn't just go towards paying the heating bill. It is also the first step towards connecting them to a local community partner; this can become the foundation for a new relationship that can help to overcome the isolation and loneliness many older people experience.

Help Somerset Community Foundation reach their target of raising £100,000 to help 500 isolated and vulnerable older people this year.

To donate to Surviving Winter, visit www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter or call 01749 344949. Gift Aid forms are also available to download from the Somerset Community Foundation website.



CUCKLINGTON

The Church – St Lawrence's

The Arthur Morison Memorial Hall, Cucklington – Management Committee

Committee members include:	Telephone Number
Campbell Dunford (Chairman)	01963 34220
Jenny Rawlings (Booking Secretary)	01963 33320

Hall bookings should be made through Jenny Rawlings who also holds the keys. If not available, ring Brian Trueman (07398 980487), or Di Hammett (01747 840770)

From Campbell and Karen Dunford

Thank you so much to everyone who joined us to celebrate Karen's surprise birthday party (and our wedding anniversary) in the Village Hall on Saturday 18th November and for making the evening so very special and memorable.

Coffee Mornings. The next coffee morning in the Village Hall will be on Saturday 24th February, at the usual time of 10 am.

Scrabble: The next Scrabble evening in the Village Hall will be on Friday 9th February at 7pm. They will now continue on the second Friday each month.

Village Contacts:

Chair of Village Meeting: Hugh Davies: cucklingtonchairman@gmail.com

- **NHW co-ordinator** - Brian Trueman 07398 980487. Non urgent calls to police – 101, or else call the charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- To check on the status of **Planning Applications** online go to:
<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planningsearch>
- To report **Fly Tipping** online go to:
<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/online>
(Dorset: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/flytipping/report-flytipping-online>).
- Telephone numbers for reporting to the council (office hours) are:
General, inc. fly tipping: 01935 462462.

The contact number for Somerset Highways is now: 0300 123 2224 (Monday-Friday am to p.m., Saturday am to p.m. and Sunday closed (Call 101 if urgent).

Planning: 01935 462016.



STOKE TRISTER WITH BAYFORD

www.stoketristerbayford.net
contact: web@stoketristerbayford.net



The Church – St Andrew's

Thanks to Diana Noble for organising the Christmas Fair and all who ran stalls and helped in any way, and to all those who came and supported this successful event which raised a good amount for St Andrew's Church.

Gareth Baker was in charge of the very successful Christmas Tree Festival in the church this year, and did a fantastic job. It raised a large sum for St Andrew's and drew many people admiring the different trees beautifully decorated by a number of people. Carols were sung and refreshments served, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Thanks to Freda Mills for her donation to the Newsletter Fund.

Bayford Village Lunch

The February lunch will be on Wednesday February 28th, at 12.30 p.m. The March lunch will have an Easter theme, and will be on March 28th. Come and enjoy the food and the people! **All welcome!**

Bayford Coffee Mornings

These resume on Thursday 1st February and the next one on Thursday 1st March, thereafter the first Thursday in the month as usual. In Bayford Village Hall, 10 am – noon, everyone is very welcome and there is a bring and buy, please price your offering. The takings from these goes towards our outings. All are welcome.

Bayford Village Hall

This is just to make you aware that Bayford Village Hall has been selected by the Co-op's Local Community Fund. Every time Co-op members shop at the Co-op, 1% of what they spend on selected own-brand products and services goes to the Co-op Local Community Fund. Additionally, carrier bag sales are shared equally between local charities.

New Year - New Name - Coffee & Crafts

The Stoke Trister Arts and Craft Social Group have re-branded to "Coffee and Crafts".

Everything else stays the same, with craft workshops on the third Saturday of the month through the winter. There will still be an assortment of craft items to make while having a coffee and a chat with like minded local people. Age is no barrier we range from 8 – 70+ and everyone is welcome, men, woman, girls and boys!

Come and join us on 17th February, 10 am at Stoke Trister Church when we will be decorating cookies – don't forget to bring a container to take your cookies home! Ring 01963 32311 for more information.

Letter from the Right Reverend Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath and Wells

In Ancient Roman religion the god of beginnings and endings was Janus. In art and sculpture he is therefore usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks both to the future and to the past. And it is generally believed that the month of January is named after Janus. But looking back and looking forward are also both very much part of the Christian tradition and at the start of a New Year this can be a very helpful thing to do. We so often rush from one thing to the next, from one week to the next from one birthday to the next, from one Christmas to the next and fail to stop, to remember and to give thanks. It is certainly not sentimental or maudlin to look back and to remember some of the people who have been instrumental in our lives. Our parents, our teachers, our friends, colleagues at work, neighbours, people with whom we have shared the special moments of our lives. Sometimes we will have photos to remind us of them, or presents that perhaps they have given us. Sometimes however we have to rely on our memories. And as we remember we can give thanks for their example, for the love they gave us or the things they taught us.

Paul, writing to the Philippians said: 'Dear Friends, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable or excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things'. Sometimes the news seems to be filled with stories that are depressing, violent or worrying. But each of us has a fund of memories which remind us of the goodness, grace and love which we have received from other people. Those people and the example they showed us give us hope and inspire us 'to lead lives worthy of the Lord'.

In that same letter to the Philippians Paul encourages his readers to 'live up to the example they have received' and to strain towards what lies ahead. He sees the Christian life as a race and speaks of 'pressing on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called him'. That prize is Jesus himself. His eyes are on what lies ahead, on all that is to come and eventually to the joys of heaven.

So as we begin a New Year let us give thanks for all that we have learnt about the Lord in years gone by. Let us give thanks that God walks with us and watches over us now. And let us look forward to the future, secure and confident of Jesus' promise that he is with us always – in everything and through everything - until the very end of time itself.

May the Lord bless you and watch over you in all that 2018 may bring.

With my prayers and best wishes

Rt Rev Peter Hancock
Bishop of Bath and Wells

THE WORLD'S GREATEST WIRELESS CONNECTION

Many of us pray in times of crisis. Prayer seems to be a universal response to overwhelming circumstances - the need to cry out to someone or something bigger than ourselves. We might not be sure who we are praying to but the impulse to call for help is there.

But does prayer have to be reserved for emergencies? There is an increasing body of evidence that prayer and spirituality is good for emotional health, reduces stress, regulates the heartbeat and positively impacts brain chemistry. Gratitude, having a better sense of self, humility, a more positive outlook and a sense of forgiveness are all cited as some of its benefits.

So what is prayer? It has been said that prayer is the world's greatest wireless connection. However, as with all wifi, maintaining a consistently good connection is not always easy. We might doubt that our prayers are being heard, feel inadequate to express what's on our heart or wonder about who might actually be listening.

Jesus' disciples had similar questions and asked to be taught to pray. Jesus responded by pointing them to their hearts - it wasn't the words or repetitions used that counted as God already knew their needs. Nor was there point in trying to manipulate God by cutting their flesh or human sacrifice as did some contemporaries. Prayer wasn't to be a system of religious behaviour or self promotion with great displays of spirituality.

Rather, it was a secret, private focus on God whom Jesus said could be addressed as "Abba", Father or Papa. In Hebrew thought, a father represented the source and supply of all things. And this Father was "in the heavens" - the most common translation being "the air that we breathe". So the Father is not in some unknown place out there but all around, closer than the air that we breathe.

Jesus said 'focus on and honour His name' because in Hebrew thought a name embodied character. God has many names in the Bible so for example, honour in your heart the Father that heals, the Father that brings peace, the Father that comforts, the Father that brings victory, the Father that makes righteous, the Father that is always present. Then, once the heart is connected to the Father, asking for his ways to prevail - his kingdom to come and his will to be done in our daily life is the natural next step.

Then comes recognition of our need for daily spiritual nourishment and cleansing as our own failures and those of others are released to God. Gratitude follows the request for protection from evil to end this most simple yet profound prayer of connection.

People across the globe set their alarms for midday to pause to pray this famous and ancient prayer. Why not join them and discover how the themes and words grow in depth and meaning? Or simply practice saying thank you to your Father for everything good in your life. It can only be good for your health!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

Taize Hour

Contemplative worship from Taizé community with chanted prayers, meditation, silence & readings

11th February, St John Charlton Musgrove, 6.30pm

25th February, St Andrew Stoke Trister, 6.30pm

Quiet Hour

Time for reflection and meditation with candles and quiet music

11th March, St John Charlton Musgrove, 6.30pm