

Benefice of
Goring & Streatley
with South Stoke



Sunday 12th September

Trinity 15

Welcome to Church

This week we begin a series of Sunday sermons about Pastoral Principles – looking at Jesus’ example and his expectations for us in how we deal with others... This will help us in our desire to be more Christ-like. It may also encourage us to attend the LLF course – Living in Love and Faith to help us to learn about the many ways people of faith in Jesus have found they are committed to live, in their identity and relationships. I certainly have lots to learn, much to try to understand. This week we:

address

IGNORANCE

pay attention to

POWER

The Collect, the prayer for this week

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

This weekend:

9:30am Holy Communion at St Thomas’ and on Zoom using Meeting ID: 826 6127 7602 and Passcode: 038739.

11:15am Mattins at St Mary’s

11:15am Holy Communion at St Andrew's
3:00pm Piano recital by Janet Pound at St Thomas'
5:00pm Discoverers

A new term has begun and school assemblies have started again in person and Little Lights toddlers have returned with their carers and parents. Alleluia. Please keep praying for them and for Discoverers starting again. More people are returning to church, some would now like lifts. Hymns need choosing, readings to read, coffee to be made and washed up. Please offer of yourself for these and other tasks. 😊

Ben



With the vital concern and need for action on Climate change and Creation Care we are seeking a few volunteers who are keen to make sure this happens: to lead and drive our churches here in response to this crisis. Please speak to Ben. Thank you.

Living in Love and Faith

The Living in Love and Faith (LLF) course is an invitation to learn; to learn together how the Christian understanding of God relates to questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. We will explore how different Christians interpret the Bible, and look at what theology, history and the social and biological sciences have to say, and tell the real-life stories of followers of Christ with diverse experiences and convictions.



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH

Our prayer is for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in all our conversations, that – with all our differences – our love for one another will be deepened and our faith in Jesus Christ strengthened. The hope of the Church of England is that people in worshipping communities across the country will get involved and use the resources to learn together.

We will be offering both a daytime and an evening course in the Canterbury Room, Goring and everyone is welcome. You can join a group on:

Tuesday evenings at 7.45pm – 9.15pm starting on 21st September, or

Thursday mornings at 10.30am – 12 noon starting on 23rd September.

Please let us know you are coming by 19th September by contacting Ben at vicarofgsandss@yahoo.com or phoning 01491 875651.

Wild Church, 3pm – 4pm, Sunday 19th September

Next Sunday afternoon will be the first “Wild Church” of the new academic year. This is for families and all who love the great outdoors with activities, snacks and conversation around the Bible. Please meet at the top of The Coombe in Streatley. We look forward to welcoming you!

Hymn picking committee for St Thomas’

This group meets two or three times a year to choose hymns for the services at St Thomas’ and next meets on Wednesday 22nd September in the afternoon. If you would like to join the group please contact Ben for more details. If instead you just have suggestions of hymns you would like included over the next few months please do let us know!

Afghanistan

Would you like to join a group to see if we can join “Welcome Church”, a charity supporting refugees here, or could you donate to the International Red Cross?

Pick a Flick, Thursday 16th September, 10:30am

Pick a Flick returns this week with the film “A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood”. As usual, there will be coffee before the film and a light lunch afterwards and we ask for a contribution of £3 towards this. **Pre-booking is required** so please contact Jenny Boyd on 01491 872109 or Sarah Fraser on 01491 871838 to book in and to ask for transport if you require it.

This week we pray for Tony Wilson, our diocesan Director of Education, and for all those who work in education. We pray for our schools in Goring, Streatley and South Stoke; secondary schools in this area, and for young people starting the new term at universities and colleges.

We are asked to pray this week for Judy Shaw, Jo Harvey, Peter Phillips, Christine Tucker, Mary Bulmer, Clive McCann, the Gregory Family, Jenny Fay and Rose Fay, and for all their families.

RIP We lift to God the recently departed including Richard Smith, Bob Stokes, and Janet Waling and pray for their families and friends.

Diary for this week:

Wednesday 15th September

10L30am BCP Holy Communion at St Thomas' and by Zoom

Meeting ID: 894 7049 1237 Passcode: 385710

The readings will be 1 Tim. 3. 14-end, Ps. 111. 1-5 & Luke 7. 31-35.

Thursday 16th September

10:30am Pick a Flick in the Canterbury Room

Friday 17th September

2:00pm Marriage of Richard and Belinda at St Mary's

Sunday 19th September

8:00am BCP Holy Communion at St Thomas'

9:30am Good News service at St Thomas'

11:15am Holy Communion at St Mary's

11:15am Morning service at St Andrew's

2:00pm Marriage of Chris and Lottie at St Mary's

3:00pm Wild Church, meeting at the top of The Coombe.

Suggested wording for those unable to join us in person:

This is the day which the Lord has made....

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

The Lord is here, His Spirit is with us.

Lord Jesus, lead us as we come before you now.

The Collect *(please see above)*

Psalm 116, 1-8

1 I love the Lord,

for he has heard the voice of my supplication;
because he inclined his ear to me
on the day I called to him.

2 The snares of death encompassed me;
the pains of hell took hold of me;

by grief and sorrow was I held.

3 Then I called upon the name of the Lord:

'O Lord, I beg you, deliver my soul.'

4 Gracious is the Lord and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

5 The Lord watches over the simple;
I was brought very low and he saved me.

6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul,
for the Lord has been gracious to you.

7 For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears and my feet from falling.

8 I will walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.

Readings

Our readings today are Phil 2 1-11 and Psalm 116, 1-8.

Jo has written a reflection on the reading from Philippians:

It was right at the beginning of my call to ordination, I had just seen the 'DDO' (the person who looks after anyone who feels a call to ordination) and I knew that now I needed to let some important people in my life know what I was considering. I used to call them my 'spiritual parents', and they had a certain degree of power in my life because I cared about what they thought. The problem was they didn't believe in female ordination. It was at the end of a Sunday service, I walked up to them, hugged them and before I could get sidetracked I said 'I've got something to tell you....'.

During our brief conversation there was no argument, no raising of voices, and no hiding from the truth, just a 'We love you which is why we don't think this is the best for you.' But I wasn't saddened or ashamed or put down by their words, because we had a relationship and they listened to me, I listened to them, and we spoke with grace and love towards one another. This to me was what it looked like to be *of one accord in Christ*; loving each other through the way we spoke to one another even when we disagreed. You see, in that moment neither of us hid from the truth, we felt differently, and it hurt because we cared for one another, but it didn't stop us standing in Christ together, and as you know I still went on to be ordained. **It was what happened next which showed me what power with ignorance can look like.** Straight after the conversation I was crying because my 'spiritual parents' had shown me love even when I knew it was hard for them, and seeing me in tears someone in a position of power in the church marched up to

us, made an assumption, and yelled that the opinion of my 'spiritual parents' was not valid. This person had power in the church and in that moment chose not to listen. I have to say that this was a standalone incident and all has been forgiven since. However, it made a lasting impact on me, leading to mistrust in those who hold power over me without any real relationship. However, it also made me want to lead in a manner that allows for differences of opinion to thrive in the unity of Christ. When the power we have over someone is wielded with ignorance, it becomes damaging, however when the power we have genuinely puts the other first in truth and love it is empowering.

Rightly or wrongly, the Church of England holds a position of power within government and local communities simply because it is the state church, and how we wield this power will impact the future of Christianity in our country. With gender, sex, racism and climate debates, the way we as church listen, learn and live together in Christ is vital, not only because we are called to be united as a family, but also because the world will know Christ' love through the way we love one another.

When it comes to ignorance and power, our Philippians passage is key to understanding how we are to respond as Christians. We are to take on the mind of Christ, by making ourselves humble before one another, and being obedient through putting our brothers and sisters first. Paul was not saying that we all need to stop having differing opinions, but was saying that when we experience a different one from our own, let's be like Christ in the way we notice the power we have over the other person, lay it down, and choose to put them first. Our opinions may not change but our hearts will soften and we will grow in love for each other. We do this through the way that we lay down our power, our opinions, our ambitions and listen to each other, putting the other before ourselves. This dissolves ignorance and allows us to walk gently with our brothers and sisters, even when it hurts. We do this because Christ has done the same for us in becoming like us, and dying for us. Essentially, what Paul was saying to the church in Philippi and what the Bible is saying to us today is; follow Jesus by being united together, even when it hurts, because you will be echoing the life of Christ himself.

Prayers for this week

Thank you to Harry Hogg for this week's prayers.

Our heavenly Father, we have been made aware of many Afghan families where the father has been a translator or soldier for the western military and who now think they are on a Taliban death-list. Father these people want to escape their home country as refugees. They will be sorely missed as

contributors to society. Please bless those that get a transit and those that fail and who have to take their chance. We pray for this split nation, that You will grant them fair governance, without threats of force and with maximum democratic choice. Please help the Aid Charities as they raise funds in this country to bring in food and urgent supplies.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Lord we commit to You the UK Foreign Policy as it develops, post-Brexit and post-covid. There seem to be big threats to our way of life from some countries which are going in different directions just now. Please bless the relationships with those we trade with, but whose human rights record is dreadful. May our trading relationships bring a moral force into their caring for the weak, the poor and the minorities, some of whom are Christian. Thank you for the moral lead given by Her Majesty the Queen and may she apply a stiffening of principle to our politicians and businesses.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

We offer our prayers dear Lord for the shutting down of the Covid 19 Pandemic. We praise You for every victory won in the emergency wards and the ICUs of our hospitals, when a patient comes home recovered. Thank you for the selfless devotion of the hospital staffs. We pause to commit to You, those workers who have reached a point of exhaustion and want to give up, fearing break-down. We pray for them, as the Nation moves from emergency to recovery, all the time hoping that we do not get another high in infections. Thank you Lord for the National Health Service.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Lord, we ask for your blessing on the Autumn sermon series to be preached in our three churches. May we all hear and respond to the teaching from your Word, with the help of your Holy Spirit. We would love to be more aware of the Holy Spirit amongst us as we hear the Scriptures and as we worship in prayer and in song.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer

For those of our Churches who are sick or laid aside by infirmity, we humbly intercede. Give them patience under their suffering and a gratitude that You are not at all distant from them in their time of need.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen

This week we pray for Tony Wilson, our diocesan Director of Education, and for all those who work in education. We pray for our schools in Goring, Streatley and South Stoke; secondary schools in this area, and for young people starting the new term at universities and colleges.

We are asked to pray this week for Judy Shaw, Jo Harvey, Peter Phillips, Christine Tucker, Mary Bulmer, Clive McCann, the Gregory Family, Jenny Fay and Rose Fay, and for all their families.

RIP We lift to God the recently departed including Richard Smith, Bob Stokes, and Janet Waling and pray for their families and friends.

Hymn

<p>1. Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.</p> <p>3. I will hold the Christlight for you in the night-time of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.</p> <p>5. When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony, born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.</p>	<p>2. We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road; we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.</p> <p>4. I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you; I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.</p> <p>6. Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.</p>
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Daily readings for the coming week

Monday am:	Ps 30	1 Chron. 28. 1-10	Mark 11. 1-11	pm: Ps 28	Acts 16. 6-24
Tuesday am: Holy Cross Day	Ps 2	Gen. 3. 1- 15	John 12. 27- 36a	pm: Ps 110	1 Cor. 1. 18- 25
Wednesday am:	Ps 34	1 Chron. 29. 1-9	Mark 11. 27- end	pm: Ps 119. 33-56	Acts 17. 1-15
Thursday am:	Ps 37	1 Chron. 29. 10-20	Mark 12. 1-12	pm: Ps 40	Acts 17. 16- end
Friday am:	Ps 31	1 Chron. 29. 21-end	Mark 12. 13- 17	pm: Ps 35	Acts 18. 1-21
Saturday am:	Ps 42	2 Chron. 1. 1-13	Mark 12. 18- 27	pm: Ps 46	Acts 18.22- 19.7

For further information please check www.thomandmary.org.uk