

Events and training

Friday 1 to Sunday 3 December Bisley Benefice Crib Exhibition

Over 80 nativity cribs on display in St Bartholomew's Church, Oakridge. Some handmade, some from all over the world, plus a pop up café. Free admission. More details and timings www.bisleybenefice.org.uk/TheChristmasStory2017.pdf

Friday 1 December, 10am to 12.30pm, Church House, Gloucester, GL1 2LY

Domestic abuse workshop

The Diocese of Gloucester, in partnership with Restored are running Domestic Abuse workshops as part of the 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence. Do you know the signs to look out for? To book email safeguardingtraining@glosdioc.org.uk

Monday 4 December, 6.30pm to 8pm, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Tewkesbury

Social media training

Sharing our stories in new and different ways, including through digital media, is one of the priorities

Have your say

Visit Facebook [f/Diocese.of.Gloucester](https://www.facebook.com/Diocese.of.Gloucester), email Katherine at kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk, follow us on Twitter [@glosdioc](https://twitter.com/glosdioc), view videos on YouTube [▶Diocese of Gloucester](https://www.youtube.com/Diocese%20of%20Gloucester) or visit our website gloucester.anglican.org

that was highlighted in the LIFE vision for our Diocese. We would like to help train and resource more of our congregations, clergy and parish teams to feel confident in using digital media both to promote our churches and to share stories of individual faith journeys. Places are free. Booking via 01452 835515 or kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk

Tuesday 5 December. 10am to 3pm, Tewkesbury Abbey Parish Room, GL20 5RZ

A Quiet Day for Advent "The Spirituality of Mary" (The Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire)

Tea and coffee are provided but please bring a packed lunch. To reserve a place, contact Mrs Penny Lidstone penny@lidstone.net 01452 741410.

Wednesday 13 December, 7.30pm

An evening of Carols with The Filling Station, Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester GL7 6JS

Guest speaker Bishop Rachel. Entrance is free, all are welcome.



imagination

Imagination: Opening new paths to faith Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways

The Archdeacon of Cheltenham, the Ven Phil Andrew

When you say the word 'church' what comes to mind? For many people the instinctive reaction is to think of a building – probably with a tower or spire. The reality is of course that the word most often translated 'church' in the Bible isn't a building at all but rather a group of people – a people variously described as God's people, God's family, Christ's body and much more. Nevertheless in this country especially, church buildings form an integrated part of what we often think of when we talk about 'the Church'.

In the Diocese of Gloucester we have 390 church buildings in addition to other places where worshipping communities meet. How should we think of these buildings? How can we sustain them for the long term when so many fewer people 'go to church' compared with the period when most of them were built? How can we possibly keep maintaining them with diminishing resources? How can we see them as a precious resource, that we have stewardship of, rather than a millstone around our necks? How can we better use them as 'vehicles' for the mission of the church in the 21st century and beyond?

These are questions that the LIFE vision group looking at the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings intend to grapple with.

We are later 'getting off the blocks' than most of the priority groups but we aim to get up to speed after our first meeting in November. We are very aware that there are no easy answers to some of these questions but we hope and pray that we might be able to inspire and share some best practice in imagining new ways of 'being church' and using and caring for our church buildings for many years to come.

Silver award for going green

The 'Eco Team' at St Andrew's Churchdown has received a silver Eco Church award for their practical work to care for creation.

Eco Church Awards are run through A Rocha, the Christian environmental charity which is committed to helping Christians care for the world.

Some of the positive action that the church was already doing included:

- Toilet twinning
- Recycling; garden waste and food waste bins in use
- TV screens used for advertising church events and displaying the words for worship songs rather than having them printed
- Garden area for community use

For more information about EcoChurch Awards, contact the Revd Arthur Champion, Diocesan Environmental Adviser on 01242 870402, or achampion@glosdioc.org.uk

Need a loan? Flexible loans available at affordable rates

No matter what you need, we have a wide range of loans for both new and existing Gloucestershire Credit Union members. New borrowers can borrow up to £1,000 over 18 months and regular savers up to £5,000 over 5 years depending upon your circumstance. All loans applications are individually reviewed to try to find your best borrowing option.

Gloucestershire Credit Union belongs to the people that are part of it, which means that when you borrow from us you are effectively borrowing from other members. Not from pay day lenders at exorbitant interest rates. For full details, terms and conditions please see our website at: www.gloscreditunion.org.uk

Making churches more dementia friendly



St Stephen's Church in Cinderford has been taking steps to make its building more dementia friendly. The Alzheimer's Society says that there are 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers set to rise to over 1 million by 2025.

Working with their local Dementia Action Alliance, the team at St

Stephen's have resprayed all the grab rails in their larger bathroom so they are not white. This colour contrast makes them easier to find for users with low vision. They have also placed signs around the church to hopefully help make it easier to find your way around if the doors are shut.

What are you doing to make your church more dementia friendly? Tweet @glosdioc or email kclamp@glosdioc.org.uk For ideas visit www.gloucester.anglican.org/your-ministry/inclusive-communities

Dementia friendly churches

If you are in the Forest of Dean and interested in making your church more dementia friendly, contact the Revd Nina Summerfield. She's the curate of Lydney Parish and also works as a Dementia Friendly Community Enabler with the Forest of Dean District Council.

Nina said: "I am able to offer any church (not just Anglican) in the Forest of Dean District Council area **free** dementia awareness training at a place and time to best suit you. Numbers attending no issue. Our aim is to enable those living with dementia to remain as part of their faith community for as long as they wish to - staying connected, staying involved, staying as a part of the family of the Church, is good for everyone and could make an enormous difference to someone living with dementia and those who love and care for them." Contact Nina on nina.summerfield@fdean.gov.uk