

St Olave's Church, Gatcombe

December 2021/
January 2022



During a recent service at Newport Minster where we commissioned thirteen new Lay Worship Leaders for the Island, I was discussing the last time that I had officiated at such a service. It was shortly after I had started as Archdeacon, but there then ensued a conversation about whether this was one, two or three years ago! My sense is not that my presence is eminently forgettable, but rather that the last two years have been difficult and challenging in so many ways including our sense of the passing of time.

Covid19 has made things so much harder and challenging. This is true for the church as for any other organisation. We have had to navigate closing our buildings for public worship and then opening them and then closing again or not. We have had to conduct risk assessments and provide endless sanitising hand gel and regularly change where we stood and what we did, and even whether we could sing. Life has been tough, and it is no wonder we feel so discombobulated (great word!).

Now that we are returning to a greater sense of 'normality' - albeit with trepidation and cautiousness - we are realising that this period of restrictions has brought two things which existed already, into sharper focus. Firstly, that the Church of England has been declining in its members and influence over many years meaning that this has resulted in much smaller congregations who tend to be older in age. This has a further implication that there are fewer people to do the roles that need to be done or the work we would like to do, and then fewer people means that the number of givers has also decreased so we face significant financial challenges.



Rather ironically, the other thing which was apparent during the restrictions is how valuable and needed the church is. Many of the volunteers who visited the elderly and vulnerable, collected shopping, ensured medical appointments could be kept or dogs walked, or gardens cared for or the lonely to have some company even over the phone or support offered with home schooling came from church communities. During a time of national, indeed global crisis, many people needed to consider the bigger questions about life, the universe and everything. Many people needed to pray or to worship in some way and the church was here to enable that to happen even if virtually, over the phone or a computer screen.

So, we are faced with a challenge – meeting a need with reduced resources. The Diocese of Portsmouth is currently carrying out a consultation process which will enable people to contribute to what the future might look like. A future with thriving Christian communities where people's depth of discipleship is demonstrated through their impact upon the world, and which is attractive enough to be growing as more and more people want to be part of it. Communities where a mixture of ordained and lay, paid and voluntary work together in teams doing the work they enjoy and feel called by God to do.

We are going to have to hold some current clergy vacancies for some time yet across the Island, but we absolutely do not want people to burn themselves out trying to maintain the same levels of services and activities. We will therefore have to collaborate in new and creative ways, and churches across the Island are working now on what that might look like. Although this may have arisen out of a crisis, I can't help but feel the Holy Spirit is involved in it somehow. Developing, changing and growing God's church so that it might be more Christ-like, and serve all God's people better.

Of course, this is not the first time God has brought new life out of adversity – let's not forget that the Christmas story involves a baby born in a stable after a long and arduous journey due to Government decisions. A mother and father confused by strange visitors from lowly shepherds to grand mystics. A family forced to flee for their lives and hide in a foreign land before having to return and start afresh in another new place.



They were however, a family who trusted that God was with them throughout all of this, and who played a vital role in bringing something exciting, creative and life-changing to life. I pray that we on the Isle of Wight, and across the Diocese of Portsmouth might do the same.

The Venerable Peter Leonard

(Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight)

In Your Prayers...

Lord, we thank you for your constant presence in our lives and for the knowledge that we may bring our prayers to you at any time of the day or night, with confidence that you will listen.

As we look forward in Advent to Christmas and celebrating your birth, we bring before you those who will not feel like celebrating for many reasons - homelessness, illness, poverty, loneliness, loss of a loved one.

We thank you for all those who are ready and willing to reach out to those in need and give practical help.

Give us the eyes to see these needs, and the hearts to respond. *Christine Heal*



The Funeral of
John James Horne
was held on
Friday November 12th 2021
at Gatcombe Church

We Shall Not Forget...

St Olave's Remembrance Day Service this year was led by Revd. Hannah Barraclough (one of our team ministers) who also preached the sermon.

As usual, the Service started a few minutes earlier in order that the two minutes' silence could be observed at exactly 11 o'clock.

The net of poppies draped over the altar, and other poppy symbols, created a beautiful focus for remembrance during the Service.

Harriet Robinson read the names on the Roll of Honour (men from our Parish who died during the 1st and 2nd World Wars). The Roll of Honour is always on display in The Sanctuary.

Michael Terry (a former serving officer) read The Kohima Epitaph and The Exhortation - always a poignant moment. Another moving moment (and new to St. Olave's this year) was a recording of a bugle playing The Last Post and Reveille, before and after the two minutes' silence.

Two hymns were sung during the Service: *O God Our Help in Ages Past* and *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*.

The Service concluded with the singing of The National Anthem. *Hilary Jones*



'Ecky Thump ... Revd. Steve's Turned Fifty!!

Turning 50 is a great occasion in itself and what adds to this 'joyous occasion' (ha ha!) is a bunch of humorous and amusing 50th jokes – or so people seem to think!! After all, some of the most humorous jokes and stories are about growing old or reaching a 'milestone birthday' and in the past week, poor Revd. Steve has been subjected to most of them, as he celebrated his 50th Birthday on 17th November.

To say he celebrated the occasion well is an understatement, and knowing dear Steve, we feel his celebrations may well extend until the New Year – and why not?

St O's, who are never known to turn down a chance to have fun, took this opportunity to organise a party for him in Chillerton Village Hall last Sunday (21st). I'm not sure who had more fun - the fund-raising group preparing it, or Steve being subjected to sparking fountain candles, limericks and even more teasing about getting old!

JUST ONE MORE TIME! - HAPPY 50th BIRTHDAY REVD. STEPHEN!! – and just remember there are plenty of good things about being 50 - just ask someone who is 80! After all, age is just a number and yours is unlisted! Oh yes, and fifty isn't old.... if you're a tree! And of course, I forgot, I expect you now realise with some irritation, that your parents were rightabout nearly everything!! Ok.....no more, I promise!!!

Must add a huge thank you to everybody who helped to organize and prepare for the party...and to everybody who came along to help Steve celebrate...not that he needed much help!!

Liz T. (St O's Churchwarden)



Poppy Update (nothing to do with Remembrance Day)

I thought you might just like a report on how Elizabeth Peace's dog, Poppy, is doing.

If you remember, she came to me in a rush when Elizabeth was taken ill and stayed with me, with Elizabeth's blessing, after Elizabeth died. She was a very traumatised Jack Russell from Friends of the Animals where Elizabeth's previous dogs came from too, and Elizabeth had only had her for a couple of months.

She is still very nervous of people that she doesn't know ... and other dogs too, as she was badly attacked while with her original owners.

She has, however, come out of her shell so she can now be let off the lead in Carisbrooke Castle grounds, and loves playing with her ball. She is quite at home with her Auntie Liz (Taylor) and Lizzie, the Border Collie and loves her Auntie Jill (Hawkes) too. She has been out for pub lunches and is very well behaved, and has had her first beach walk.

I do hope Elizabeth is looking down and has seen that Poppy comes with me to church when I am locking and unlocking, and when I am cleaning or doing the flowers. I hope she will be pleased, as her last dog, Sam came with her to church too, though not to services.

Poppy is a real blessing and I'm sure 'him upstairs' (as my Irish friends call him), saw that I would be lonely having lost both Mike and my spaniel and gifted me, through Elizabeth, Poppy. *Harriet Robinson*



Poppy eating a 'dog ice cream'!!!

Newport's Day of Christmas

What a busy day. I don't think I have ever seen Newport more crowded. There were stalls and an ice rink on the quay, there were market stalls and donkeys in St Thomas Square, and in the Minster, we had Santa's Grotto, with queues of children up and down both the aisles - I had my fingers crossed that Father Christmas wouldn't run out of presents.



We had the Minster choir, followed by a brass band, followed by wonderful singing from primary school children. As Revd Steve would say, 'What a joy'.

St Mary's, Carisbrooke ran a book stall, Hannah, our curate, ran a craft stall helping the children make beautiful stained glass windows, Revd Emma ran a lucky dip stall with the prizes being Christmas baubles - with a heartwarming Christmas message of love written on them - to hang on the tree.

St Olave's A Team Catering Platoon ran the Coffee Shop - to help the Minster volunteers - with all our homemade cakes. We made over £180 for the Minster. We also had a stall for St Olave's with all the donated gifts and teddy bears, to raise funds for the repair of the hole in our roof, that made over £95. It could have been more, as I had Poppy, the Jack Russell with me with a Christmas bow on her harness, and I had to be very firm that the dog was not for sale. She was brilliant in attracting the children to the stall. (There are photos on The Minster Facebook page.)

A huge thank you to all the cake-makers and helpers. You really are the A Team.

Harriet Robinson (Churchwarden)



**Sunday December 19th
6.30pm**

Please join us at St Olave's for this traditional 9 Lessons & Carols Christmas service, followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

**Friday December 24th
(Christmas Eve)
3pm**

St Olave's Crib Service

There will be traditional Nativity costumes in the church for the children to dress up in, but are welcome to come along wearing their own favourite costume...whatever that might be!!

**Saturday December 25th
(Christmas Day) 10.30am**
Morning Service with Carols

Sunday December 26th
No service at St Olave's

Contact Us...

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Churchwardens:

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Fund-Raising Events for 2022 - How Exciting!!

Have you bought your new diary yet or do you fill in a diary online or on your phone? St Olave's A Team Fund-raising Platoon have some dates for next year for you. Please double check as further details will appear in the New Year and perhaps a few things may have to be altered.

Saturday 19th February

Wine Tasting and Supper Evening

Saturday 23rd April

Spring Market and Coffee Morning

Saturday 18th June

Pudding Party and Organ Recital
(Gosh that sounds a bit different)

Saturday 6th August

Ritz Tea - Yes, its back. Hurrah !!!!!

Saturday 17th September

Autumn Produce Sale and Coffee Morning

Saturday 1st October

Harvest Supper

Saturday 12th November

Christmas Market

Events at our other Churches

Saturday December 4th

Christmas Fair at The Minster Newport
from 10am until 2pm

Christmas stalls - including one from St Olave's.

The Minster Coffee Shop will be open and will serve soup and sandwiches as well as coffee and cakes, so, food to keep you going while you buy everything on your Christmas list.

As Christmas and 2022 draw near, our thoughts are with those for whom this time of year is not necessarily going to be a happy one.

Please be kind to yourselves.

We wish you all a peaceful Christmas.



J.W.

Services for St Olave's... at a glance!

Sunday December 5

Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday December 12

Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday December 19

9 Lesson & Carols at 6.30pm

Friday December 24

Crib Service at 3pm

Saturday December 25

Service with Carols at 10.30am

Sunday December 26

No Service

Sunday January 2

Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday January 9

Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday January 16

Evensong at 6.30pm

Sunday January 23

Holy Communion at 11am

Sunday January 30

Service to be decided.