

Lent Newsletter

February 2023

Hello Dear Friends of Pilsdon, we wonder how you all are?

Those of us who have the opportunity to live in this patch of God's creation at Pilsdon are given another opportunity during Lent to ask ourselves again, 'What is it we love more than God? To awaken again to our patterns of thinking, behaviour and attachments. Those with life threatening addictions carry the label of 'addict' for all of us whether we consider ourselves addicts or not. We are all attached to 'something' and letting go means loving the mystery we call God more deeply. The letting go enables the letting in and the paradox of beginning to see past our attachments and have 'insight' is the beauty and joy of realising more is always given when we willingly surrender. This constant movement within and dance without brings everything we really, really need. If only we could bottle this experience like our apple juice and give it to everyone, everywhere.

In conversation with visitors and friends who come to stay so many want to take 'Pilsdon' with them into their lives, ... though often veiled the essence is always there, always now.

The work is slow, and each year we enter Lent from a different place with old lessons matured.... apple juice had its beginning as a tiny seed, grew into a fruit bearing tree and with the right conditions of soil, rain and sun, care and time, .. 'the slow work of God' (Teilhard de Chardin).

Those of you who have followed our journey over the last few years will know we have been through an unprecedented period with only three of us in the leadership team. Tough and transforming! Kneeling to receive the ashes feels a familiar internal space as these years have called out of us a deeper reliance on God, a greater awareness of our own vulnerability and the strength this brings, ... we three, with Jane in our office, have been forged by the refiners fire into an authenticity that can leave others wondering.



February's snow moon

We wonder too, but not for long as we know what we have lived, day by day, and with everyone here and those who have come to support practically, we have been sustained. So much love, so many blessings given and received, and for those who are willing and able, a building of trust that can make hearts sing into a tangible belonging. To know our own need as we kneel on Ash Wednesday honours every person who has ever come to Pilsdon over its nearly 65 years. Kneeling, it honours too, the suffering and beauty in our world and brings us gratefully to 'cast our crowns'* surrendering space for God who is Love.

Thank you all for your prayers over these years we are so grateful to you.

We have delightful good news to bring you. We have new members who in stages over the coming year will join our leadership team. Kathryn Brooks arrived early in January, you will hear from her in this newsletter. Rev Lisselle Clarke-Moisley will join us in March and Rev Nigel and Mary Fry in June, what an abundance and answer to prayer. Was ever a Warden so relieved and grateful!

Overleaf is a personal prayer written for a liturgy many years ago, ... gathered up from my own experience and centuries of other people's inspiration, it might be something to accompany you through Lent Dear Ones.

With my love and gentle blessings
Sue

*from the last verse of hymn Love Divine.



Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.' Luke 18.1

We come before you God, through Christ who is with us in all the experience of our lives, knowing we can often forget the promises you made through him. When we hide from your power, when we misunderstand your love, give us the grace we long for to surrender to you.

Help us be open to change and growth;

from guilt to grace,

from fear to trust

from resentment to love.

God is full of compassion drawing us ever closer, embracing us, reassuring us, reminding us we are always loved, and need never be afraid.

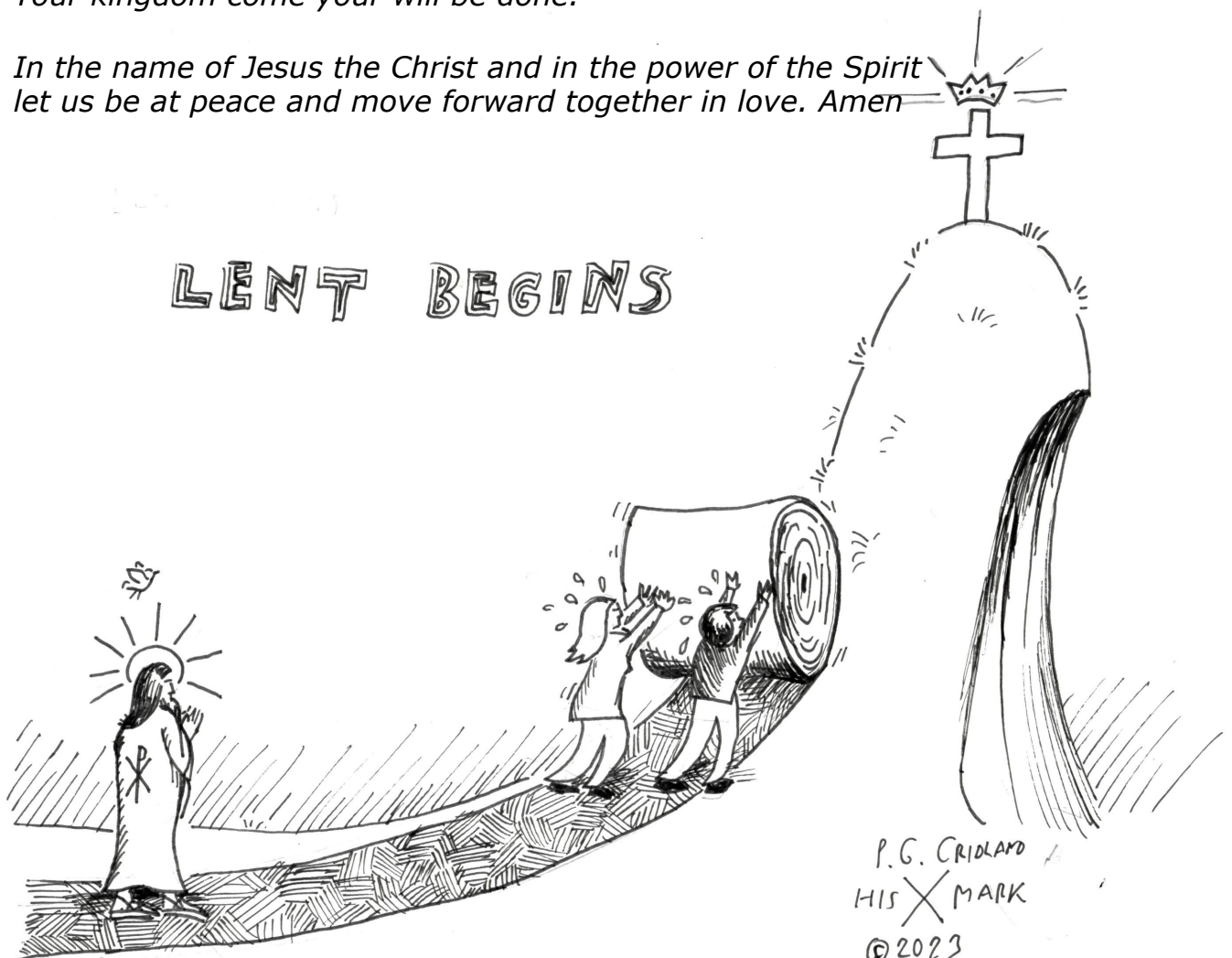
We may not know your will for us,

if by our lives your grace may be known,

then in us, through us and even in spite of us,

Your kingdom come your will be done.

*In the name of Jesus the Christ and in the power of the Spirit
let us be at peace and move forward together in love. Amen*



Introducing our latest member Kathryn Brooks...

I arrived here as a new member at the beginning of January. I heard about Pilsdon some years ago through conversations with others at nearby Othona, and when I had the opportunity to spend 6 months at Othona last summer I was also able to visit and start to get to know Pilsdon.

Having worked for many years with people experiencing or recovering from adversity I am attracted to Pilsdon as a place that combines so many of the essentials that promote recovery and indeed promote a full and healthy life for any of us.

I have long been attracted to community living and the power and positive impact of connection with the natural world, connection with other people and moving in and out of the rhythms of days, weeks and seasons. All this whilst also valuing diversity, recognising each person's individual worth and embracing the spiritual aspects of our lives individually and collectively.

I look forward to a mutual learning, growth and development within the community and amongst the many amazing people who make up the community, particularly of course those that live here, but also the wider extended community around us.

This is my third experience of living and working in an intentional community and over the years I have lived in many parts of the UK. Outside of Pilsdon my home base is in Wales, I take most of my holidays in Normandy, France and I am involved with a number of charities, but most significantly a homeless charity in Birmingham and a disabilities charity in Powys. **Kathryn**



Kathryn milking Meadow

Words of wisdom from the archive...

"Thus we go on learning to "accept" ourselves and one another, pooling our strengths and weaknesses, giving and receiving forgiveness, sometimes exasperated, sometimes slow to understand, but always helped by life in community, lived with a common purpose.

We try to offer acceptance and friendship, in the context of work and worship and faith, which though it is sometimes of the dark night, nevertheless hangs on because it believes in light although everything seems darkness...We are only too well aware that there are no easy answers, no ready made solutions, and that there can be no tidy completeness, no finished plan or set pattern...For us, (in the words of T.S. Eliot) "there is only the trying. The rest is not our business".

Percy and Gaynor Smith, February 1959

Conversations at breakfast

Not long after David and I first started spending time at Pilsdon as residential volunteers we started to enjoy the conversations that developed over a relaxed breakfast. Well, it felt relaxed for us. At that point I don't think either of us had started doing the 5.30 a.m. milking and dairy slots and strolling to the main house past cowsheds, sheep grazing in the fields and ducks stretching their wings felt like a good way to start the day. But we were still in that process of waking from private sleep into public interactions and eating breakfast with others speeds up the process of becoming a public rather than a private person.

Eating meals together is one of the core ways in which community happens, even if we don't feel like engaging in lengthy conversations as we eat. At breakfast I was obviously doing some of what I usually do in private in a place where community life invites us to be with others: I was making wake up noises. They could come out as groans, less negatively exhalations as I stretched different bits of me to bring them to life, non-verbal expressions that I had not been particularly aware of until Mary affectionately commented on what I was doing. She offered this as a positive example of the small intimacies enabled by life together in community. Eating breakfast together offered an opportunity to be attentive to others and learn about them in ways that we might not think are significant but which bring a closeness not available in circumstances in which we feel fully 'public'.



We've had some good conversations over breakfast. Conversations about current and historical events in the community, about food preparation, marmalade making and potato cultivation, about different lives, personal memories and political frustrations. It's not a time of day that works for everyone, some people have been active at Pilsdon for hours before breakfast and others need more time to emerge from wakeful or disturbed nights. But for me the process of getting going with others as we move into the day's activities creates a space in which being attentive not only enables a better understanding of those I am living with whilst I'm at Pilsdon, but also helps me understand how others see me. It is the kind of space not available in institutions that separate 'staff' from 'service users' not only by role and status, but by designating separate places in which meals are taken by each group. I used to work in a university where the 'Senior Common Room' was forbidden territory for students.

To care, for ourselves and others, necessitates attentiveness and attentiveness needs spaces in which we can be together in different ways and time during which conversations can develop without specific purpose or structure. And sometimes we don't need to talk. **Marian**

The Joys of 'dead hedging'....

In the midst of a week of very cold days we suddenly had the gift of a cloudless afternoon, so with that bit of spring promise and Mary's enthusiasm, had a gang of us come out into the vegetable garden, bathed in warm sunshine, to try our hand at a bit of innovative gardening!

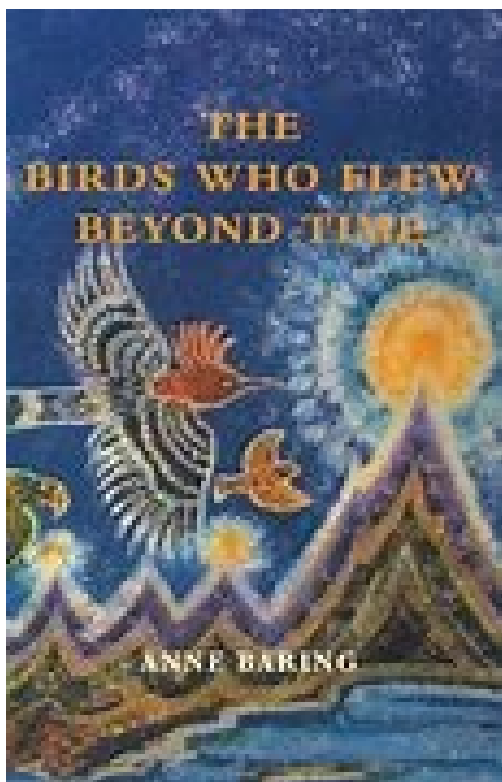
Soon we all had a job to do... banging stakes into the ground, pulling cut, dead branches out of tucked away places and taking off rogue twigs with loppers to make the streamlined poles. These, together with all the brash wood that we could hunt up, became the necessary materials for our 'dead hedge'. Before long, under Mary's cheerful supervision, the desired hedge began to take shape.



This so called dead hedge, in spite of its title, should soon be full of life, as it is a perfect habitat for all kinds of wildlife. As well as that, it will be an effective windbreak, plus an attractive feature in the veg garden.

As evidenced in our faces, a good time was had by all!

Els Jolly



The Birds Who Flew Beyond Time

Initially I wanted to record this very important story for my grandchildren. After I had read it and saw the video that Tim Collings had created, I thought, and so did the community, it was worthy of a wider audience. I contacted Anne Baring, the author, and she very kindly agreed to allow us to put this transformational story on our YouTube channel. We are so grateful to Anne for the gift of this story and permission to share it.

Go to our [Pilsdon Community YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) and find it there or click on the link below...

https://youtu.be/bmUuyF9_oP8

The story, though of Sufi origins, is the classical spiritual path in any faith. It will, if listened to and integrated into our lived experience, be transformational for us and for the healing of our planet. **Sue**

Trevor's Paintings

Late last year Trevor posted two videos of his paintings on YouTube.

One of work done pre 2000, and one of paintings produced since living at Pilsdon. The music was kindly written by Tim.

Should you be interested you'll find them following the links below

Paintings pre-2000

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gRiqHcORnE

Paintings from 2000

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH7knYao0og



New Build update

STOP PRESS! We are delighted to tell you that we will be taking ownership of our new build by the end of this month *fingers crossed*. We took a leap of faith, you leapt with us; we are so very grateful for your donations. There will be more news very soon. Thank you again.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday, 6th April: The Washing of Feet at 8pm in the Church

Good Friday, 7th April: Stations of The Cross 12 noon, meditations in the church from 1-3pm

Dawn Service Easter Sunday, 9th April
With no evening service

Community Anniversary

We will be celebrating the 65th Anniversary of the community on 15th October. Please put the date in your diary. The Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Stephen Lake, our 'Visitor', has agreed to visit us then and lead our worship. We look forward to welcoming him to the community. More details will follow over the next few months