

Events and training

More details for all these events at gloucester.anglican.org/events

Bowie by candlelight concert, Gloucester Cathedral, Friday 2 October, 7pm and 9pm showings

A night of David Bowie anthems, including *Let's Dance*, *Starman*, *Life on Mars* and *Rebel Rebel*, performed live by candlelight by *David Live*.
www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/whats-on/bowie-by-candlelight-concert

The Apple Snatchers Live, St Catharine's Church, London Road, Gloucester, GL2 0RR, Saturday 10 October, 8pm to 10pm

An evening of live folk music, storytelling and food in support of GARAS, featuring Gloucester-based folk band The Apple Snatchers.
www.eventbrite.com/e/the-apple-snatchers-live-tickets-1995496706366

Harvest festival, St Laurence Barnwood, 32 Church Lane, Gloucester, GL4 3JB, Sunday 11 October, 12.30pm Harvest festival, followed by lunch.
www.stlawrencebarnwood.uk.eu.org/whats-on_1/events

Wildlife gardening evening with Chris Baines, St Philip and St James, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, GL50 2DD, Wednesday 14 October, 7pm to 9.30pm. A talk by Chris Baines, wildlife gardening pioneer, TV broadcaster and author of the RHS Companion to Wildlife Gardening.
www.pipandjims.churchsuite.com/events/jo3oahek

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Black History Month 2026 resources

October is Black History Month, a chance to celebrate the stories, achievements and contributions of Black and Brown people within our communities, our nation and our Church.



This year's theme, "Dig Deeper. Look Closer. Think Bigger.", encourages us to listen, learn and reflect more deeply. It invites us to discover stories that may be unfamiliar, challenge assumptions, and celebrate the rich diversity of God's people.

The Diocese of Gloucester's Racial Justice Action Group (RJAG) is encouraging every parish to get involved. Whether through worship, conversation, creative activities, community events or simply taking time to learn together, every church can play a part.

There are several opportunities to take part across the diocese. Celebration worship takes place at Gloucester Cathedral on 25 October at 6.30pm.

Children and young people are invited to enter a creative competition exploring the stories of inspiring Black and Brown people. Bishop Rachel will present the prizes on 5 November at 6pm at St James' Church, Barton and Tredworth. Winning art and

poetry will be exhibited at St Mary De Crypt, Gloucester, from 11 November.

Churches are encouraged to explore racial justice throughout the year, with resources available to support worship, learning and community activities. Funding of up to £1,500 is also available through the West Midlands Racial Justice Initiative for projects tackling racism and exclusion.

The Black History Month website provides a pack of materials for £84.45 with content for schools, workplaces, local authorities, charities, libraries etc. Their 2026 theme is Honouring Our Communities.

Racial Justice Sunday takes place on the second Sunday of February every year. The Church of England provides liturgy that you can use to support your worship and to commit to end racism and acts of discrimination. If your worshipping community didn't use the resources this year, you could use the 2026 liturgy during Black History Month or at another time that suits your context.

Read the full feature and explore all the resources and website links at www.gloucester.anglican.org/2026/black-history-month-2026-resources/

A message from Bishop Rachel for Prisons Week

In Prisons Week (11-17 Oct) I am particularly giving thanks for our fabulous prison chaplains who share Christ's hope and live out their belief in redemption and transformation.

There has been much in the news about the early release of prisoners due to overflowing prisons, yet if we asked searching

questions about why prisons are overcrowded, we would focus on building stronger communities, not more prisons.

As Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons, I can confidently say that the evidence does not support the myth that we will be safer if we lock up more people and for longer. We have the largest prison population in Western Europe, and approximately half of all those leaving custody go on to reoffend within a year of release, yet our expenditure on perpetuating a system which is failing, is vast: approximately £60k per prisoner per year, plus billions of pounds on the social and economic cost of reoffending.

I never condone crime, and perpetrators need to face the consequences, and some people need to be locked up for public safety. Yet, we need to ask what prisons are for and what sort of society we wish to inhabit. Over two thirds of people in prison are there for nonviolent offences, and you don't have to spend long with prisoners to realise that poverty, deprivation and trauma feature highly in their stories.

In Judeo-Christian tradition, justice is not synonymous with vengeance and punishment but challengingly resides alongside mercy, love and restoration.

We know that good community alternatives to prison result in more transformation and reduction in reoffending, so we need yet more imaginative alternatives as well as focusing on the underlying issues of offending. This will be better not only for perpetrators but also for victims of crime (and many people are both).

Please join me in praying for those whose lives are impacted by crime; all who work within the criminal justice system; and all who work for change.