



Dear Friends,

As we approach the Christmas season and the end of the year, we wanted to send our greetings, prayers and news to share together.

We have had a varied season since the summer with wonderful times of activities and events, all of which have created our Othona community in many lovely ways.



We had a series of weekend retreats including Old Testament theology with the Bishop of Bradwell John Perumbalath, Tai Chi and relaxation techniques with Royston Kymberly and Meditation with Valerie Quinlivan.

Each of these weekends were well attended and created a wonderful sense of work, worship, study and play in their own ways.

The October Half Term week was a great family time, with pumpkin carving, cake making and activities at Bradwell outdoor centre.

The fireworks weekend was full for people staying here and on the Saturday evening we had over 200 additional people come from the local area to enjoy a spectacular firework display and Bar-B-Q. In September we had the privilege of hosting the wedding celebrations for two young people, Alex and Hayley. We catered for over 120 people for afternoon tea, and evening meal. It was delightful to be part of this event and share in the joy and celebrations of the wedding and their marriage together.



The Art and Soul week with Genevieve was a great success, as was the Winter Watch and Open Space week with Nastassja and Hugh.

Thank you to all our programme leaders and facilitators. We are so thankful for their commitment, contribution and hard work towards these activities and creating our Othona Community together.

We have also been very blessed with Volunteers over recent weeks. Ulli Ringrose was here for 4 weeks and she was a great asset in a very busy period. Helen Shaw supported us for a week, and

currently we have Hadrien from France and Maria Jose from Chile. Maria Jose and Hadrien came at the end of October, and they are with us until the 19th December.

We are still recruiting for two more members of volunteer staff to join our core team – please see the links to our adverts and details: [Team Member Vacancies | Othona Essex](#)

Our Programme for 2023 is being added to our website, and there will be another news update about the programme soon. We are excited about some wonderful new activities and ideas for 2023. We do however need to let you know that due to inflation and rising costs our prices will need to increase for all attendees. We are continually reviewing our costs, however we suspect like everyone we are seeing costs rise across most of our goods and provisions. We do want Othona to be accessible to all and continue to have bursaries available for those that are unable to stay due to cost. Please contact us to find out more (essexwarden@othona.org)

We are now looking forward to a few more groups and programmes before Christmas, as well as a full Community Christmas time together. There are still spaces available for the New Year Community time.

We are looking forward to celebrating Christmas together and sharing the joy, hope and wonder of Jesus's birth, God's son, our Saviour, as the Angels said "Good News of Great Joy for all the People, A Saviour has been born to You" (Luke 2 v 10-11).

We pray that you will have a blessed, joyous and happy Christmas and hopeful New Year for 2023.

We offer this prayer to share together:

In the Face of Christmas

“In the face of the Gospel

Let us ask God for a good Christmas;

That no powerful nation should tax the poor or uproot them,

That no unmarried mother should be put away in disgrace,

That no door will be shut on those that need to find it open,

That shepherds and sheep and all of nature need not be afraid,

That barbed wire and angry soldiers may not be found in Bethlehem,

That wise men and women will be found in Ukraine, in Russia, in the Middle East, in Britain and in the Church,

That children may be preserved from those who would abuse them

That this Christmas worship may become a manger,

and the Church a stable

and the rumour become a reality

that Christ has come among us.

And we pray this in the name of Jesus.

AMEN”

Happy Christmas and God Bless for 2023 from everyone at Othona Bradwell on Sea.