

## Editorial Notes

# Happy New Year

It seems no time at all since the December addition went out, and here is the January 2021 LIFE, a little early so that all can be done and dusted before Christmas as Covid restrictions may change and it gives us all involved in the magazine a longer break.

All you lovely contributors have done well this time as we start the year with **24 pages!** Well done to all, I will look forward to having some reports about the carol services, whether on zoom or live, including the drive-in one at Strode car park.

In December's magazine the feature page in the Manna supplement was about the Archdeaconry Days 2021.

Time is running out to book but if you're interested, in this addition you will find more details on the daily schedule of events on pages 8&9, you can find out more at.....

[www.bathwells.org.uk/archdeaconry-days-2021](http://www.bathwells.org.uk/archdeaconry-days-2021)

On page 7 you can read 'a load of rubbish' or rather an update of 'The ECO events, but this page also has news of a fundraising result.

On page 11 Ana gives an explanation of the changes to the New Year services which you will find on the centre pages.

The pictures on the back cover are referred to on the relevant pages.

The front cover needs no explanation, there have been a lot of rainbows this year and I photographed this, one late afternoon at the Parish Church.

I look forward to the time when we don't have to mention 'Covid' and we can greet each other with open arms!

Till next month, A HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all.

*Roger.*

## **Bishop's Letter.**

**One more step** January takes its name from the Roman god, Janus, who is usually depicted as having two faces, looking both

to the future and the past. At the start of a New Year it is good to do the same.

2020 will sadly be remembered as the year disrupted by COVID-19. Cracks in our care for each other have been revealed and it has had a disproportionate effect on those already vulnerable or deprived. It showed us that those who are most essential to our needs, those who clean and serve and care, are often those valued least in our economy. However, we also saw extraordinary acts of kindness and compassion, as churches and communities worked together to provide comfort, support, and practical care. So, what of 2021? The temptation may be to forget what we have learnt, to paper over the cracks, ignore what has been uncomfortable and to seek comfort in the familiar. I hope we don't. 2020 opened our eyes to the harm caused when people are excluded on the basis of race, ability, gender, sexual orientation or wealth. Jesus calls us to a better way. Jesus broke the bounds of exclusion, refusing to accept the social norms and speaking to Samaritans, women, Gentiles, tax collectors and sinners. He teaches that the first shall be last and the last first. He reconciles humanity to God through his death and resurrection. As we look forward to 2021, we need to think again what it means to follow Christ and to build our lives and communities based on mutual love, respect and service. 'For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.' May we all know the Lord's leading and guiding as we step out into a New Year. With my warmest greetings, Bishop Peter.

## **Rector's Letter.**

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13*

Dear Friends,

What do you hope for in 2021? Maybe you just pray it is just better than 2020 or perhaps you have particular dreams, ambitions or resolutions for the New Year? Starting in January, we will be looking at the Story of Joseph in our sermons. Made famous by Andrew Lloyd Webber in that technicolour dream coat musical, the story of Joseph is about much more than a coat! Despite all he went through, here was a man whose trust in God never wavered and who was able to achieve amazing things. If you are unfamiliar with the story, you can find it in the book of Genesis, but you also have my full permission to re-watch 'Joseph and his amazing technicolour dream coat' one evening. The story of Joseph should remind us that, whatever trials and difficulties we may be facing as Christians we remain a hopeful people; a people who, through Jesus have an eternal hope. With the roll out of a vaccine for Covid 19, there are signs of hope that the dark days of the pandemic may be numbered. As we celebrate this hope, let's also remember our sure and certain Christian hope. As restrictions begin hopefully begin to ease, some of the aspects of church life that we have been missing for many months may begin to return. As and when guidelines change we will let you know but in the meantime, we need to continue to practise social distancing etc to keep everyone safe. One change that you will see from January however, is amended service times and patterns in our churches. See elsewhere in this magazine for more details and please bear with one another as we trial this new pattern of worship for the next few months. With my prayers for a peaceful and Christ-filled New Year,

Ana

## Walton Matters

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, and will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; and the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the fields will clap their hands. Isaiah 55. verses 8 - 12. NIV.*

I am delighted to tell you that the rest of our shoe boxes were taken to Bagley Chapel during the second week of December. These may well reach a different destination than the first of our boxes but we shall hear about the destinations of them all in January or February. A total of 72 boxes were sent out from our benefice, well done everyone and thank you for reaching out to others especially during this difficult year.

We are obviously holding subdued Christmas celebrations in our churches this year but thanks go to all the people who have thought outside the box and come up with wonderful ideas we could still share with friends and neighbours. Baby Jesus rocks has been fun to paint and fun to place around our streets and grass verges for children (and adults) to find. That is thanks to Diana who has bought tons of pebbles, washed them all, and set up kits for painting 30 at a time. We had the easy jobs. Thank you Diana.

Comfort and joy has been organized by Ana who used the Church of England resources, adding a card telling of our church services and then we added a small personal gift for us to pass on to neighbours or a friend. A wonderful outreach.

Our advent reflections have been a joy and again we thank Ana and Kevin.

David headed up a zoom carol service which thankfully we could sing to our hearts content in the safety of our homes.

We couldn't get to the end of the old year and the start of a new year without thanking Ana, David and Diana for all they have done for us during the whole year. We also are indebted to all our lay readers and worship leaders for all they do. We appreciate all the back room work that goes on from so many who never get their names mentioned because we are all afraid to leave anyone out. Thanks for all the support we are given by you all in so many ways that enable us to keep our churches open. Thank you to Roger and Bernard for all the work they do with the magazine, plus to Sonia for all the hidden work in the office and all the treasurer work she puts in to supply accounts every month. We take so much for granted as it always gets done and we only notice when it's not done. Bless you all for all you do for our individual churches and for our benefice.

*Sandra.*

## **Zambia Harvest**

At our Harvest Festival Services, a total of £250 was collected and has now been sent to our partner parish of Mfuwe in Zambia. Many of the congregation at Mfuwe are employed in the local game park and Covid 19 has had a devastating impact on the tourist industry, with job losses and reduced income impacting families.

Our prayer is that the church will be able to use our gift to help to bring relief to those most in need. Thank you for your support for our brothers and sisters in Zambia. Ana Lawrence

## **St Andrew's reaches out**

As we move through Advent, we as a church family are continuing to reflect on ways we can embrace the Advent themes of joy, hope, peace and love, reaching out to make a difference

in our community, and others, however small. The church was open during the second lockdown for an hour every week for private prayer and this was appreciated by both villagers and visitors. The last week in November was designated Biscuit Week! Following one of the Salvation Army giving initiatives, people were invited to donate a packet of biscuits and by the end of the week they filled a whole car boot. The biscuits were gratefully received by the Salvation Army in Street. Another car boot had previously been filled with gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child and we thank Sandra for organising this and delivering the boxes to their collection point. From St Andrew's Day onwards, November 30<sup>th</sup>, the church floodlights have been shining out every evening, just as the star shone out that very first Christmas. See *Back Cover*. While the church building is closed during the week, there are still people who enjoy coming up to enjoy its surroundings - to visit the churchyard, look at the yew tree, or perhaps sit on a bench after a countryside walk. So we decided to decorate the porch to welcome anyone visiting or attending services, with the manger as the focal point awaiting the baby's birth. Many people have been busy during the second lockdown making items for sale at our village Christmas stall. See *back cover*. The first opening was December 5<sup>th</sup>, and the tables were laden with a vast array of homemade goodies including decorations, cards, biscuits, fudge, mini puddings, plants, bulbs in pots, wood carvings, books and Christmas themed face masks. 'It has given me a focus during lockdown,' one contributor commented. £600 was raised and when added to sales over the next two Saturdays we will be able to provide support for St Andrew's Church; there will also be a donation to 'Crisis at Christmas.' This Christmas is different in so many ways. But we hope as church members that we can reach out to others in different ways too and reassure them that in this uncertain world the Church is always there. Pat.

## **£2 Coins**

THANK YOU!!

Three hundred £2 coins have been donated during 2020, making a total of £600 for the funds of Parish and Mission Churches in Street.

10% of Church funds are donated to the Missions/Charities that we support during the year.

Considering most of us have not been using 'real money' this year the total is very good.

We hope to continue collecting £2 coins for 2021.

*Pam Harmsworth*

## **Eco Church.**

## **A Load of old rubbish!**

Following a decision by Compton Dundon PCC to begin the process of applying for an Eco Church award an Eco Church planning meeting for representatives from the 4 churches in the benefice was held on Zoom. We looked at possible areas of development for individual churches as well as the potential for joint action. These will all be discussed at individual PCCs. In the meantime we are continuing with some activities and gathering ideas for further individual and group action. Some of you may have noticed the areas of grass left unmown at the Street Parish and Mission churches. On the back cover is a photo of some of your benefice Eco church group visiting Compton Dundon church compost heap to share ideas about ways in which we can move all our churches forwards towards the next level. It is good to be working on this at a benefice level. Of course the compost was awesome but equally great was getting together in person to inspect it and an opportunity to take in the brilliant view from Compton Dundon churchyard, a reminder of how fortunate we

are to live in a scenic area of the country. We are beavering away behind the scenes with Eco Church; we will keep you updated as to the next steps. Suzie and the team.

## Dear colleagues

We are pleased to invite you to the 2021 Archdeaconry Days, which will take place over the week of **10 -16 January 2021**, principally online but with offline options for those who are not able to access materials online.

Over the past two years, we have been delighted to see how the Archdeaconry Days have given clergy and laity the chance to reflect and learn together on themes around Everyday Faith. This year we have chosen to focus on prayer and to run the days early in the New Year so that we can begin 2021 as we mean to go on – in prayer and together. The theme is **Prayer - Everyone, Everywhere!** and as is so often the case with the Everyday Faith themes, it is deceptively simple but central to how we live out our faith. Prayer is the foundation of our relationship with God and yet we observe that many people, lack confidence in bringing themselves before God in prayer, even though they may have had decades of joining in with prayer during regular worship.

Because we have had to move the Archdeaconry Days online, we have decided to go for a different pattern, but our core principles of learning together and of materials that will work across different contexts and ages remain key. The pattern of the week is below and we have gone for short sessions to avoid the usual online fatigue.

**Sunday 10 January – worship**      A recorded non-Eucharistic service from the Cathedral of around 30 minutes, focused on prayer, including a reflection from Bishop Ruth, inviting people across the diocese to join together in exploring prayer over the coming week.



Bishop Ruth's short reflection and invitation will also be available as a separate package for those who would like to weave it into their own offering for that day.

### **Monday 11 - Friday 15 January – inspiration and experimentation**

A short video will be released each day, featuring people from across the diocese talking about the ways that they like to pray. They will reflect a range of contexts and ages and each day will have a theme: Prayer and **Nature**; Prayer and the **Digital** World; Prayer and **Arts**; Prayer and the **Bible**; Prayer and **People**. The videos are designed to inspire and will be accompanied by a few suggestions of things that people could try themselves.

There will also be a background video on 'Why pray?' with personal reflections from people – particularly to help those who perhaps haven't reflected on the nature and range of prayer.

### **Saturday 16 January – discussion and reflection together**

We will host sessions on the Saturday to bring people together to hear more about prayer and have a chance (in breakout rooms) to discuss what they have tried/learned/experimented with during the week. This will also be a chance to reinforce the materials that are available to support them in developing patterns of prayer.

As always, the sessions will encourage people across a particular archdeaconry area to gather together but will be open to all. When people sign up to the Archdeaconry Days they will receive the joining instructions, which will include an option to join by UK phone number.

10.00am to 11.00 am – hosted by the Archdeacon of Bath

11.30am to 12.30pm – hosted by the Archdeacon of Wells

2.00pm to 3.00pm – hosted by the Archdeacon of Taunton

We hope that as well as attending yourself, you will also be able to encourage people from your church to do so as well. We will be providing a simple guide for groups with ideas to help any regular home/prayer/Bible study groups make the journey through the week together.

Please sign up so that we can ensure that you receive all the materials and links at the right time.

We know that the effects of Covid continue to be extremely demanding for people. We hope that this offering early in the New Year will mean that you have a good resource with which you can start 2021 in a spirit of prayer and togetherness, without having to do the preparation yourself.

If you have any questions about this event, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Julia Hill [julia.hill@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:julia.hill@bathwells.anglican.org) who will be able to answer most questions.

Yours in Christ **Anne Gell, Simon Hill, Adrian Youngs**

## **Mfuwe our Zambian link doing there bit towards climate change**

At the same time, as we in the UK are aiming to plant a tree for every child starting school, and hope to have every pre-school child plant a tree, Bishop William of the Diocese of Eastern Zambia has been growing and distributing saplings for planting. He is pictured on the back cover giving these saplings to our link in Mfuwe to plant around the house they are building for the rector and in the church grounds. Deforestation is a big problem in Eastern Zambia for two main reasons firstly the majority of the population cook with charcoal and wood, accounting for 38% of deforestation. Secondly about 156,000 ha of forest have been lost in the last 14 years due to agricultural expansion both domestic and commercial accounting for 37%.

Currently only 31% of houses have electricity and in the rural areas still falls to 4%. So please do pray for this very important work Bishop William is doing to highlight the issue. Jane.

## **2021 A New Start for our Services**

As we begin a New Year, I wanted to let you know about plans to start a revised service pattern across our benefice which will initially run from January until Easter 2021. The changes have been discussed and agreed with all of our PCC's and in summary include:

**Holy Trinity Walton.** Sunday Services moving from 10am to 9.15am together with a new regular service starting on Thursday mornings in the New Year.

**Parish Church Street.** A new service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday so that Holy Communion is celebrated every week, on two Sundays at 8.30am and on two at 11.15am.

**Mission Church Street.** One Communion service per month, with the other services having a more informal feel. The Wednesday midweek service will continue.

**St Andrew's Compton Dundon.** No planned changes at this stage.

Not only will this new service pattern give me, as Rector, greater opportunity to be in each of our churches more regularly but our prayer is also that a greater range of service times will make it easier for more people to join us. We will be carefully reviewing how this new pattern works and, once we get started, if you have thoughts, comments or ideas on how it is going, please let your church warden know or contact me. I know change is never easy but as we begin to emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic I have encouraged by the support from our PCC's for these plans for our worship together. You can see full details of new service times on our website.

Rev'd Ana Lawrence



## **WATCH – Zoom to Zimbabwe**

Well, almost! Although technically possible, subject to a reliable power supply at the other end, it didn't happen quite like that. What actually happened was that on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October at the Walton Home Group, we were joined at our meeting on zoom by my niece Annie Makoni along with her 14 year old daughter, Promise. Annie works with street kids in Harare and we support her through Walton Church. She was on a visit to the UK to try to find a suitable secondary school for Promise due to difficulties in Zimbabwe where Promise has not been getting on at all well at school.

Schools out there are shut due to the Covid situation and there are problems with police roadblocks. We heard about the acute water shortage after months of no rain, with water being sold by the bucket.

Annie and her husband Malvern work with street kids – youngsters who have dropped out of society and are homeless, living on the streets and often finding food in waste bins. It is very cold at night particularly in the winter and they have to shelter wherever they can in derelict buildings, drain culverts and so on. Many take to drugs and glue sniffing to numb the reality of their situation. There is also the problem that they may be robbed or attacked if they fall asleep, so they have to be constantly alert and on their guard. This can present problems in the daytime as if they sit down to listen to a talk, for example, they are liable fall straight to sleep.

Annie and Malvern's church makes a point of welcoming everyone whatever the state of their clothes or even if they smell, as personal hygiene is a luxury they do not possess. The church tries to provide them with a hot meal and they have various projects to provide work.

Mathew is a volunteer worker with the church (see below) who is particularly involved with helping the outreach to the street guys.

One project is a plastic bottle recycling scheme. The boys collect the bottles from wherever and bring them to a collection point and they are then sold in bulk to raise funds for the work. Some boys are taken back to their families and others are enabled to pick up their education and gain vocational or academic qualifications.

Throughout the aim is to introduce them to Jesus and get them back on their feet in life.

We were given a glimpse of life in a very different society to our own. We are so privileged and have so much to be thankful for. There is so much to pray for. The latest news is that it has been raining out there - Praise God! *BS*

### **WATCH – PS**

***HERE'S THE LATEST UPDATE FROM ANNIE***

***Received Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December***

Hi Sonia

I just wanted to let you and the church know, that the money you gave recently enabled us to buy bicycles for helping our team get to work and get around visiting the street guys.

Since Covid, transport has been a major problem as all the regular buses and min-buses have been stopped and other are just a handful of government sponsored one which are extremely over crowded.

Mathew is to have one of the bicycles and also a lovely young guy called Tonde who has been helping us with the library. He was very sad to stop volunteering as he couldn't get to town, but now with a bike, he will be able to make it. This is going to be such a blessing for them.

Thank you. Love Annie

## Safe Families.

At Safe Families we know that every child deserves to thrive, and we recognise that to do this children need to be loved and secure in their own family. The problem is that when families are isolated and struggling their children can feel upset and afraid. Facing life alone is hard, and when families feel like there is no one there to help it's a scary place to be.

This is why Safe Families Christian volunteers stand alongside thousands of families every year. We partner with local churches to train and support volunteers and connect them with isolated families, so they can build relationships that bring hope. We need volunteers to encourage families by phone or text (Connect Friends), or to visit in person once a week (Family Friends), or to host children overnight (Host Homes), or perhaps you have resources that could be donated to a family (Resource Friends) – could you join us coming alongside families in Street, Walton and Compton Dundon?

For more information please see [safefamilies.uk](https://safefamilies.uk) or contact [dawnholmes@safefamilies.uk](mailto:dawnholmes@safefamilies.uk) / 07384 218826.

**Dawn Holmes**

Community Volunteer Manager

**Sheldon News** I have heard it said that a pilgrim is 'a wanderer with a purpose.' When I retired a couple of years ago, I bought a camera to try and slow down my walking and to help raise my awareness of what was happening around me. I have sought to encourage others with my photos. Getting older I have had some health problems but have tried to remain positive: seeking to walk daily in a relaxed manner, making the most of passing opportunities. Life is a pilgrimage but with retirement and

the restrictions of lockdown this year I found myself struggling with the empty diary syndrome wondering daily what to do. Living alone, and having to stay indoors was posing a challenge for me. So when the opportunity came to be an Alongsider at Sheldon for 2 months this summer I grabbed it , and what a God-send this time has been. It has been so special to work alongside the lovely people who form the community here, being part of the servanthood journey that is at the heart of Sheldon and our Christian faith. I have loved the daily rhythm of the communal spiritual life and variety of work opportunities. I have found myself serving breakfasts, picking fruit, making chutney and even counting sheep. It has been good to have this change, and discover some new skills. I am very grateful for this opportunity to feel useful again. I have certainly enjoyed this leg of my life's pilgrimage. Jane

## **A Rocha**

### **The Parable of the Persistent Widow and the Judge**

*Jesus told the disciples a parable on the necessity of praying always and not losing heart: "Once there was a judge in a certain city who feared no one – not even God. A woman in that city who had been widowed kept coming to the judge and saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' For a time the judge refused, but finally the judge thought, 'I care little for God or people, but this woman won't leave me alone. I'd better give her the protection she seeks, or she'll keep coming and wear me out!'*

Luke 18:1-8 (Inclusive Bible Translation)

During a Quiet Day at nearby Launde Abbey, in the beautiful rolling countryside of East Leicestershire, whilst looking out onto the abbey grounds and grass and woodland beyond, I reflected on the question: 'What if Love Ruled the World?' – a paraphrase of 'Your Kingdom Come' from the prayer Jesus taught the disciples. Inspired, I began to form the following poem, to help summarise my current thoughts on nature and campaigning:

***What if Love Ruled the World?***

*Love of every living thing*

*For this dream to become real*

*We need questioning, listening hearts*

*Searching with humility for God's truth and wisdom*

*Open to new ideas and understandings*

*Inspired by those who live simply.*

*First, still – watching, listening because God in nature teaches and inspires*

*Seeking a shared vision*

*Journeying cooperatively to illuminate and build on the good in all*

*Creative, honest, sacrificial*

*Grounded in love and care*

*With rest, prayer and reflection*



*Not succumbing to negativity*

*But empowered by a desire for love*

*Patiently, persistently, determinedly*

*Listening to the voiceless and reflecting their wisdom*

*Using our anger and unease positively*

*Radiating a beautiful vision of hope and healing*

*Remembering the abundance of energy, blessings and love*

*And the capacity of creation and ourselves, as the children of God, to creatively restore and recreate.*

We have the power to consume less with more care and the opportunity to search for and share our dreams and actions for the earth and one another more lovingly. Using the prayer Jesus gave us, we can all pray and pray again 'May your reign come, May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. Matthew 6: 10 (The Inclusive Bible translation).

Like the woman in the parable, we need to find the right people to approach. And, like this woman, often we need to do this persistently, knowing what 'rights' we should be asking for – and that's where the question of love ruling the world comes in.

I have a friend whose persistence in researching, writing, attending and lobbying parliamentary meetings has finally resulted in her being invited to comment on policies. Another friend gave me a book called 'How to be a Craftivist: The Art of

Gentle Protest' (by Sarah Corbett) – written for those whose gift is creating purposeful, beautiful crafts to inspire positive change.

Whatever your gift, wherever your campaign and whoever your companions are, my wish and prayer for you is that of loving persistence and a shared vision of God's love for the earth.

*This reflection was written by Miriam S for the Wild Christian email, 'Nature and Action.' Miriam is a Pioneer Minister in the Leicester Diocese who explores spirituality with teenagers and families in the beautiful grounds of Launde Abbey.*

## **U.S.B. God has something better for you**

'... THE LORD WILL WITHHOLD NO GOOD THING FROM THOSE WHO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.' Psalm 84:11 NLT

When God knows something is good for you He says 'Yes', and when it's not He says 'No'. Why would God say 'no' to you? Maybe the timing is wrong, or He has something better in mind. Gratitude comes when you realise what could have happened, but didn't because God intervened. Stop trying to break loose from the loving grip of the One who holds you for your own protection. The Bible says: 'Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him and He will help you ... Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for Him to act ...' (Psalm 37:4-7 NLT).

Looking back on her life, Billy Graham's wife, Ruth said, 'If the Lord had said "Yes" to all my prayer requests I'd have married the wrong man – several times.' What you're so upset about now, you may be thanking God for later.

The more spiritually mature you become, the more you begin to see how wise your heavenly Father is, and the more you learn to trust Him. The Psalmist wrote, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want' (Psalm 23:1 KJV). What a picture: God leading you, God feeding you, God protecting you, God watching over you. Like a lifeguard at a beach, in order to save you, God will sometimes interrupt your life, risk embarrassing you in front of your friends, and maybe even bruise a rib or two. That's because He loves you too much to let you drown in the thing you thought was so good for you. The main thing is: God has something better for you!

## **Manna**

### **Caring for those in care**

With a background in supporting older people is it no surprise, with the challenges of 2020, that Steph Packham has felt called back to support them. Following a chat with the Revd Selina Garner in the summer, at which she shared her feelings, she was encouraged to undertake the diocesan Exploring Chaplaincy course and was appointed as Chaplain to the Elderly for St John's Church, Wellington.

Steph, who has worked as an activity co-ordinator for the elderly and as the national lead for activities at Bupa Care Homes says, "The healthcare available in care homes is amazing and activity provision is very much on the agenda, but I have felt for some time that spirituality in care homes could be developed. Whilst everyone in a Care Home plays their part in the spiritual health of the residents, having a Chaplain dedicated to this, working alongside a team of pastoral companions, could make such a difference."

Current restrictions mean Steph can't visit them yet, but she was able to involve all six of the area's care homes in the Wellington

Team's 'Angels of Hope' community project. She says, "It was a great way to introduce myself to them and all have been so keen to be involved. Steph and a team of church, school, community and Duke of Edinburgh volunteers have made over 600 angel gift bags for every care home resident.

Steph hopes she will inspire others to become Chaplains to the Elderly across Somerset. For more information email [chaplaincy@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:chaplaincy@bathwells.anglican.org).

## News in brief

The Bath and Wells podcast (90)

We've launched a new podcast which features conversations exploring the places where God already is, and the church may not yet be! There will be conversation about what it means to be pioneering, and how God is leading us all in new and exciting directions.

Our first podcast features Tina Hodgett, who is Evangelism and Pioneer Team Leader in Bath and Wells, in conversation with Rachel Spence a Pioneer in Whiteway, Bath.

Find it on your favourite podcast platform and listen in!

Hidden Voices volunteers sought

Hidden Voices Somerset (HVS) is a local response to Modern Slavery and all forms of exploitation. They are looking for a range of volunteers to help victims of modern slavery and exploitation in Somerset. If you would like to find out more about the project or volunteer, email about the opportunity the Hidden Voices Co-ordinator [sian.owen@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:sian.owen@bathwells.anglican.org).

Prayer: Everyone, Everywhere

Have you signed up to this month's online 'Archdeaconry Days', which will explore ways of praying, wherever and whoever we are? Register to receive the resources through your inbox or your post box at [www.bathandwells.org.uk/ad-days-2021](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ad-days-2021)

Ready to 'Talk Jesus'?

If your new year's resolution is to be more confident in sharing your faith, sign up for our online Talking Jesus course. It's a great way to help you to learn how to become a natural faith sharer. [www.bathandwells.org.uk/talking-jesus](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/talking-jesus)

## **Interview**

God calls everyone!

Rob Norman, Lay Dean for Portishead Deanery shares his passion for lay ministry. Hear how you can get involved too...

### **What inspired your passion?**

IT comes from my belief that God created all of us, lay people and clergy alike, to be equal, and that we all have a part to play in God's world. Lay people live out their faith in many ways, by showing what it means to be Christian wherever they meet people - through their kindness and care for other people.

### **Has 2020 seen any changes to lay ministry?**

People have been taking on leading roles in offering online services as well being out in the community, being part of the army of people supporting people during Covid. Online worship needs different skills and gifts from the usual ones in church and it's been great to see lay people involved in this way.

### **How do you feel about this year's Archdeaconry Day activity being online?**

Excited! Some people will be glad not to have to brave the January weather and can watch the videos we've created at home or, if they prefer, join in offline using the booklet. I have found the stories of prayer I have heard inspiring and I can't wait to share them.

## **What would you say to someone thinking about taking on a lay role with their church?**

Have the courage to think about how God might be calling you and perhaps talk to people who know you well about it. Then perhaps chat to one of our Chaplains for Discerning Calling, who can help you explore further. Email

[jill.perrett@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:jill.perrett@bathwells.anglican.org) for details.