

# April Life Magazine 2021

## Editorial Notes

Last Easter, services in our churches didn't happen, but after months of lockdown and vast numbers of people being vaccinated, it looks likely that we will be able to worship in all our churches again. Flowers will adorn our churches once more and the all important cross will be seen to remind us all that 'Christ has Risen'. There will be no communion and no singing, but we will be able to worship, be it in small numbers and socially distanced to celebrate Easter. Please read and keep to Ana's 'reopening our churches' on page 12, and remember to book. You will find Holy Week services that occur in March on page 5, and the remaining Holy Week services can be found on the Aprils services in the centre pages.

On page 9 you will find Pat's 'Compton Dundon Pathways', the photographs that accompany this are on the back page, and the three crosses that can be seen for miles on Lollover Hill in Compton Dundon every Easter in the past are pictured on the front cover.

There is a letter from Bishop Peter on pages 2&3 and you will find the usual 'Bishop's Letter' by Bishop Ruth in Manna at the back.

As I write this, plans are going ahead for the construction of an Easter garden, please take Ana's advice as on page 5.

**Wishing you all a very happy Easter.** Roger.

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## Congratulations

To Jill Perryman,(Mission Church) for featuring on Radio 4's 'Any Answers' programme, speaking out for carers and bringing God into politics as we were encouraged to do in our recent sermon series on Joseph.

# A Letter from Bishop Peter

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I want to thank you once again for your prayers, support, and encouragement during these past months, as I have undergone three courses of chemotherapy and then in December received a stem cell transplant. We are still in Bristol where Jane and I are having to shield for three months, while I receive ongoing medical treatment and care. Inevitably there have been some setbacks, but I am getting much stronger and seem to be recovering well. It therefore looks very likely that I will be able to return to Wells again fairly soon, although I will still need to continue to shield, perhaps for quite some time. We have been so moved by people's love and care; and to know that people have been praying for us right across the diocese, and indeed across the country and beyond, has been humbling and uplifting. I am writing however, with some personal news. Whilst I was very much hoping to be able to return to work before too long, that does not look like it will now be possible. My consultant has signed me off as unfit to work for six months and has said that this may need to be extended further, perhaps up to a year. During this time, I will not be able to go into public spaces, need to be very careful about meeting people and will be unable to conduct public worship or services. So, after much prayer and reflection, I believe this means that I need to take early retirement on medical grounds. I have discussed this with Bishop Ruth, the Archbishop of Canterbury and of course with Jane and the family. After seven years as Bishop of Bath and Wells I could not be more grateful for all the opportunities that I have had to serve the Diocese and during this time I have met so many inspiring, faithful, creative, and courageous people and visited so many wonderful places. I don't yet know what lies ahead, but I am sure the Lord will continue to lead and guide me and provide opportunities for ministry and service in the future. I remain hopeful and confident in His future for me. Plans for my retirement service have still to be finalised. However, it was on

Pentecost weekend in 2014 that I was installed as Bishop of Bath and Wells and that same weekend this year might be a good occasion to step back from public ministry. Perhaps that might also be an opportunity to ask for your prayers as I prepare for what lies ahead for me. More details of what is being planned will become available soon.

I am very aware of the challenges we are all facing and the extra burdens and responsibilities that we are all carrying. I am therefore particularly grateful for all that you are doing to sustain and support the life of the diocese and especially for all that Bishop Ruth has been doing as Acting Diocesan Bishop. The Diocese is clearly in good hands and good heart, and my prayers and thanks are very much with you all. In Morning Prayer today, the refrain for the canticle was: 'Full of compassion and mercy and love is God, the Most High, the Almighty'. In the midst of all that is happening in the world today let us not lose sight of God's gracious, loving care for us all.

With my warm greetings in the Lord and with my very best wishes  
The Rt Reverend Peter Hancock

## **Rector's Letter**

*"I have seen the Lord!" John 20. 18*

Dear Friends,

Following the events of Holy Week, culminating in Jesus' death on the cross on Good Friday, three days later early in the morning, Jesus miraculously rose from the dead and appeared in the garden, on the Emmaus road, in an upper room and by a lake shore. Both Mary, other women and the disciples witnessed these extraordinary and amazing events.

Today, as Christians, we continue to celebrate the Easter story as we worship, serve and love the risen Lord Jesus.

Following many weeks of lockdown, I am really excited that we will once again be reopening our church buildings for public worship, and it seems so appropriate that we can gather again as God's people on Easter Sunday. Of course, we continue to live in a Covid world with all

the restrictions we have become so used to over many months and these will still be in place in our churches as we seek to keep people safe. Many people will by now have received a first if not a second vaccine but of course, some will have not yet been jabbed. Do consider others in church and let's be family together.

We have so much for which we can celebrate in these coming weeks and I hope you were encouraged by the government announcement now a few weeks ago and at least a 'road map' of what the next weeks and months will look like. As restrictions begin to ease, we will be gradually 'opening' areas of church life and introducing some new initiatives too!

On a personal level, whilst it has been fantastic to worship together online, I am very much looking forward to meeting more of you face to face, whether in church or out and about during the week.

As we open our doors, let's be a church community open to sharing the Good News of the risen Jesus.

'Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!'

Yours, with my love and prayers, Ana

## **Easter to go bags**

You will see elsewhere in the magazine details of our Holy Week and Easter services. There will also be available at the entrance to each of our churches 'Easter to go bags' for the church family to help you celebrate this special week even if you cannot access our online services.

As part of your daily exercise, why not take a walk to your church and pick up a bag which will be available from Palm Sunday.

If you have friends or neighbours from the church who you think would appreciate receiving one, but might not be able to get to the church, why not give them a ring and offer to pick one up for them too.

Whilst walking, why not take a look at the Easter Garden which will be appearing in Street Parish churchyard. Ana.

## **Holy Week and Easter**

Whilst we cannot observe Holy Week and Easter in perhaps the ways many of us are used to or would want, there is plenty going on across our benefice as we mark the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 10-15am On Zoom Palm Sunday Service.**

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 7pm On Zoom Prayer and Reflection in Holy Week**

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 10-00am Mission Church Midweek worship in Holy Week**

You will find the other Easter Services, including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day on the April centre pages.

Or check Life-Line, our Website, or Facebook and join us in Worship and Thanksgiving. Ana.

## **Walton Matters.**

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on the way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has

risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'."

Mark. Ch 16. V's 1-5. NIV.

How appropriate that Easter Sunday should be our first church service back in the building. Last Easter was in lockdown and our buildings were closed. We do look forward to worshipping together after such a long time but of course there is still social distancing to be observed, hand gel to be used, and socialising outside the building and not inside. Still all of that won't dampen our spirits to be allowed to worship as the body of Christ.

I am delighted to tell you that I have heard from Samaritan Purse and some of our shoeboxes were sent to Central Asia. Local churches have delivered boxes to children of all religious background in their community. Due to political and religious sensitivities within Central Asia and for the safety of the ministry partners living in restricted areas, specific countries have not been disclosed. Wonderful photos of joyful children receiving their boxes can be seen on the Samaritan Purse website. Please take a look if you can. I know some of the boxes that went in November were taken to Belarus. If you had tracked your own shoebox and it was sent somewhere different, please take time to safeguard with us.

One mother whose child received a Christmas box at her nursery, told a local partner that she too had received a box as a child and it was the most memorable thing from her childhood. It just shows how, from our plenty, we can give pleasure and encouragement to people for a lifetime.

Our owl box is now in the churchyard and our grateful thanks to go Terry Francis who also cleaned out a bird box ready for re-use this year. Do take a walk down the footpath and see what you can spot.

It is with sadness we have to tell you of the death of John Parsons. John had suffered from ill health more and more and the past couple of years he has hardly left the house. He will be missed by so many of us. We send our condolences to Margaret in her sad loss.

Sandra

## **News from Jan James**

Hi to those of you who remember me from our days in Street. Thanks for your support through the years.

I just wanted to let you know that I'm moving on from my curacy at St Thomas' Wells to be priest-in-charge for Coxley, Henton and Wookey. It's great to be staying nearby.

The vicarage is in Wookey and we're looking forward to making use of the large garden when we're allowed to have people round.

The licensing is 7pm 19th April - Primrose Day. It is only on Zoom, so if you want to join please let me know and the Archdeacon's office will send you the link.

You can contact me at: [jjames44814@hotmail.com](mailto:jjames44814@hotmail.com)

Very best wishes, Jan

## **Why Eco Church? and News Update**

Around this time last year three of our churches were successfully applying for a Bronze Eco Church award; all four churches are now working towards Bronze or Silver awards. So far we have focused on our buildings and church land and they will continue to be important. We are also challenged, as Christians, to look beyond ourselves and the narrow focus of our own churches to reach out to the local community and Christian and other communities around the world; to be aware of concerns at a national and international level.

Why are we doing this and why should we care? I cannot express it better than Bishop James Jones who, at a conference I was able to attend online, asked why Christians should be concerned about climate change and environmental degradation. His answer 'very simply' was 'desecrating God's Creation is to undo God's creative work in, through and for Christ... Yes, it's a crime against humanity and future generations but it is also an

act, not just of defiance, but of rebellion against God's creative purposes.' He explained that the word used for Hell in the Gospels was a reference to 'the municipal rubbish dump outside the walls of Jerusalem... When Jesus used that image, it was if he was saying to people: "Look if you carry on living in this way, you will end up wasting your lives and you will turn everything into some great heap of rubbish."' In effect, he said, this is what we are doing to the Earth today.\* That is why we all do what we can to reverse this decline.

Whilst current restrictions have limited what can be done, we are continuing with those actions that are permitted. For example some owl nesting boxes have been donated to Walton and put up in the churchyard. Our present situation could be likened to spending time in the desert, but deserts are not empty, this one has given us time to think and to engage in different ways using online resources to meet and inform themselves. The Church of England Environment programme aims 'to support, encourage and enable the whole church to pray, speak and act prophetically on environmental issues, which threaten the flourishing of the whole of creation.' If you go to the news section of their website you can sign up to receive regular information. They have regular informative webinars aimed at helping churches to achieve the target of net zero carbon by 2030.

Lastly we have received news about an exciting new joint initiative between the Diocese and Somerset Wildlife Trust called **Wilder Churches**, there are more details about this in the Manna section of this magazine. The Interview in that section relates to another church working towards an Eco Church award.

Sue Ripley, SWCD Eco Church Group

\*(Green Christian magazine Spring 2021 and reported elsewhere in the media)

## Compton Dundon Pathways

During lockdown we frequently hear about the latest 'roadmap' describing the gradual easing of restrictions. 'We are on the path to



recovery,' a Minister assured us in one of this week's briefings. Here in Compton Dundon we are fortunate that we only need to step outside our own homes for outdoor exercise in such beautiful surroundings. This week we have been able to share this with one other person (and sometimes their dog!) There are many choices of paths, through fields and woods or maybe for more of a workout a climb to Lollover Hill or Dundon Beacon. The landscape changes throughout the seasons and during April daffodils and primroses will be replaced by Spring blossoms and swathes of bluebells. Whichever path we choose we are assured of being close to Nature in all its glory.

Proverbs 4 26-27 warns: 'Watch your step. Stick to the path and be safe. Don't sidetrack; pull back your foot from danger.' (Living Bible.)

This metaphor shows that our feet not only follow a physical path but a spiritual one too. Pat.

## **Reopening our churches and Covid**

Whilst for many of us, coming back into our church buildings is something that we are eagerly anticipating, for others, there will be many concerns. Whilst I am really excited that we can begin to worship together on Sundays from Easter Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> April (see Rector's letter), I do need to remind you that strict Covid restrictions will remain in place for a while yet in line with government guidelines. Whilst many people will have had vaccines, this merely reduces the risk of contracting Covid and does not therefore make someone immune from the virus. There will also be people yet to be jabbed so let's continue to be church family and keep each other safe.

Therefore, please note the following as our churches reopen: Face coverings must be worn in church unless there is an appropriate medical reason not to do so.

- Observe social distancing at all times tempting though it will be to greet old and new friends after so long away.

- Sanitise on entering and exiting the building.
- Leave the building as directed by stewards and in as safe a way as possible.
- Book in with the office (to attend Sunday Worship) by 1pm on the preceding Thursday. Numbers will still be limited and we will need your details for 'track and trace'.
- Until at least the 17<sup>th</sup> May, services will be morning worship only. We will reintroduce Communion as soon as we can.

I want to thank you for your co-operation in adhering to the above, and whilst it is not what we would want, I am hoping that as restrictions continue to ease, we will be able in due course to relax the above. Meanwhile, we will continue to closely monitor the situation and keep you updated.

Ana Lawrence

## **APCM Arrangements**

This year, we are planning for our APCM's to take place in our church buildings and we really look forward to seeing many of you there. The APCM is an annual opportunity to gather and review, to give thanks and celebrate the life, witness and ministry of our parishes over the previous year. It is also the time when we elect our church wardens and new PCC members within the church. Please prayerfully consider who you might wish to nominate for warden or PCC.

If you are not currently on the electoral roll for your parish, please have a word with the electoral roll officer or church warden and fill in the form they will give you.

APCM Meetings will take place on the following dates and times:

**Holy Trinity, Walton** – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 7pm in the church.

**St Andrew's Compton Dundon** – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 4pm in St Andrew's.

**Holy Trinity Street and the Mission Church** – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May in the Parish Church, Street. Ana Lawrence

## **Welcoming a new Reader to the Benefice**

Following approval by all of our PCC's and completion of the 'paperwork' we are delighted to welcome Kevin Lawrence as a newly licenced Reader to the benefice.

Kevin was first licensed in the Diocese of Lichfield in 1996 and has already had the opportunity to preach and lead in some of our churches and online. Outside of church life he works as a freelance fundraising consultant for churches and charities as well as having the 'job' of 'Rector's husband'.

Ana Lawrence

## **Spring Harvest 2021 'UNRIVALLED'**

Tickets for *Spring Harvest Home* are available now for the 4th to 8th April.

Visit <https://springharvest.org/springharvesthome21> to book your place to access all the amazing content online, both live and on demand. A ticket is just £55 to access Spring Harvest Home on two devices (laptop, desktop or smartphone)

The 2021 theme 'Unrivalled: Why we worship'. With the help of brilliant Worship Leaders and Speakers, we'll be looking at why we worship which starts with who we worship. Every new challenge we face brings a new opportunity to tune into God and join in with his mission. Whatever comes our way, our God is unchanged, our God is unshakeable, our God is Unrivalled and we will worship him. Please join us

## **£2 Coins**

We are collecting £2 coins again this year. The collection will be for Mission Church and Holy Trinity Church Street Funds, 10% of which goes to the Missions that we support. Please let Pam or Roger Harmsworth have your £2 coins during the year, or save them and let us have them when we have a coffee morning later in the year. (If we can get together before the end of the year.) Thank you!

## **WATCH - *Now or never?***

I had a note the other day from someone I know, in which he said that the pandemic is 'a sign of the end times' (that means that the end of the world is going to happen before long). I thought for a moment and began to wonder. What about the Black Death in the Middle Ages? The Plague just before the Great Fire of London in 1666? Then 100 years ago there was the Spanish Flu pandemic which killed somewhere around 50 million people worldwide. A sign of the end times? Respectfully, I can't quite see that myself. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be ready. The Bible says clearly that Jesus is coming back, but not even he knows when, only the Father, and he will come as unexpectedly as 'a thief in the night'. We must be 'living a life worthy of our calling' (Ephesians 4:1). Those wonderful words "CHRIST HAS DIED, CHRIST HAS RISEN, CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN!" ever ringing in our ears and shining in our hearts and eyes.

I guess a good number of us have enjoyed going to Christian festivals over the years and for many those occasions have been milestones in our journey of faith. Events such as New Wine, Spring Harvest, Greenbelt, CreationFest, Soul Survivor (now no more) and so on. Here in mid-Somerset, we have been particularly fortunate in having relatively easy access to both New Wine and Spring Harvest. Sadly, the news is not good. The enforced closure due to COVID-19 restrictions is causing a

financial crisis and their future is in doubt. They are asking for our help. Please can we support them in any way we can – in our prayers or financially - or they may be gone for good. Spring Harvest is being livestreamed online this year with a full range of talks and activities from Sunday 4th (Easter Sunday) – Thursday 8th April at a cost of £55 for a whole family on up to two devices. This is before the 12th when non-essential shops (including hairdressers!) are scheduled to reopen, so many people and families will be locked down stuck indoors over the Easter holidays looking for something to do! Here is the answer! What better way to spend the time? *Bernard Sinclair*

## **Manna**

The diocese has teamed up with Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) on a new joint initiative, Wilder Churches, which seeks to improve biodiversity in churchyards.

SWT is running online training for church leaders and communities across the county, introducing what's happening, what support we can provide and finding people who can be Wilder Church Champions for their community.

Sara Emmett, assistant environment officer said, "With the diocese embracing a new environmental policy, we are delighted to be working together with SWT to support church leaders and communities to increase the value of churchyards and other church land for wildlife."

Initially, the initiative will focus on encouraging people to simply find out what wildlife their local churchyard already has, as well as getting to know those already involved with its management. Through ongoing online training, communities will be able to identify ways they could help wildlife in their local churchyard, as

well as to communicate their ideas, consult others and come up with a plan that works for the church, wildlife and the community. Pippa Rayner, Engaging with Nature Coordinator for SWT says, “By regularly getting together online to celebrate successes, share expertise and solve problems as they arise, we will collectively achieve so much more, so this is a really exciting initiative to be involved in.”

People from churches across Somerset who manage our churchyards or had a particular interest in biodiversity have already taken part in some training events. Keep an eye on our website and media channels to find out details of future opportunities.

## **News in brief**

### **Abbey’s new eco heating goes live**

Bath Abbey’s innovative eco-heating system powered by sustainable energy from Bath’s famous hot spring waters has been switched on. As part of the Abbey’s Footprint project, a new distribution of underfloor heating pipework has been laid in the Abbey and ten custom-built heat exchangers collect heat from the thermal spring water that flows through the drain from the Roman Baths and down into the river. Every day around 1.1 million litres of water flows through at a constant 40°C. There will be enough energy to heat the historic Abbey and its adjacent buildings.

### **Remembering Together**

People across the region have taken time to remember those lost during the Coronavirus pandemic. Early in March Bishop Ruth hosted a service streamed live over Facebook during which people were able to share names of those they wished to be

remembered. Later in the month Bath RUH Hospital Chaplain, Revd Narinder Tegally organised an online community service of remembrance with Bath Abbey, Dorothy House Hospice Care, SWALLOW Charity and Bath and North East Somerset Council.

## **Young connections**

During 2021, the Go Team is focused on helping parishes to connect with young people and their families; an area that is a significant struggle for many churches. They are looking to challenge and equip households, churches and schools to: nurture and support young people (aged 11+) and help grow their faith; disciple young people effectively so they know how to live as Christians in the world and share the radical and compassionate love of Jesus with young people so they in turn know how to love, live and treat others.

Check out their new pack of 19 Bible Chat Mats, themed around Christian values [bathandwells.org.uk/bible-chat-mats](http://bathandwells.org.uk/bible-chat-mats).

## **Hope for a better future**

### **Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton**

This month of April begins on Maundy Thursday, the day when we remember the last meal Jesus shared together with his friends before he was arrested and crucified. It was the meal that has become so significant in the life of the Church, where bread was broken and a cup of wine passed round, coming to symbolise for us the brokenness of the body of Christ. The sacrifice he made for love of us.

Many of us will hopefully celebrate something of the Easter feast this weekend although restrictions continue for a while longer.

We may not yet be able to gather in larger groups of family and friends but perhaps we can glimpse what is to come?

This has always been the story of the Church, to point to what 'is' but which may not yet be fully realised. During this pandemic there has been a need for hope amongst such bleakness and now as the vaccine is shared and the signs of life appear in the world around us, we begin to see what might again be possible. To hope for a better future.

And yet in the bleakness of this first weekend of April, which takes us into the darkness of the tomb on Holy Saturday, we remember that hope is not cheaply bought. It is not mere optimism, but rather something, though fragile, that is stronger than death.

As some of us break our fast this Easter and share the bread and wine of the Eucharistic feast, may we know both the cost of such love and the hope that it offers.

Easter blessings!

+Ruth

## **U.S.B            Seeing the hand of God in it**

**'FRIEND, DO WHAT YOU CAME TO DO.' Matthew 26:50 NCV**

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Jesus looked at Judas in Gethsemane and said, 'Friend, do what you came to do.' It's hard to imagine what Jesus saw in Judas that made him worthy to be called 'friend'. But Jesus sees something good in every bad situation. And it would help if we did the same. How? Again, Jesus gives us guidance. He didn't place all the blame on Judas. He saw another force at work:



'This is ... the time when darkness rules' (Luke 22:53 NCV). Judas wasn't acting alone – and neither are your attackers.

Paul says, 'Our fight is not against people on earth but against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness, against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly world' (Ephesians 6:12 NCV). Those who attack and betray us are victims of a fallen world. We can't place all the blame on them. Jesus found enough good in Judas to call him a friend, and He can help us do the same with those who hurt us. Even though Judas didn't understand or intend to, he played a vital role in ushering Christ into His destiny.

Of the 98 words Christ spoke at His arrest, 30 were about the purpose of God. 'It must happen this way to bring about what the Scriptures say ... "All these things have happened so that it will come about as the prophets wrote"' (Matthew 26:54-56 NCV). Jesus understood that His immediate struggle was part of a greater plan. He saw the hand of God at work in it. And if you pay attention, you'll see His hand at work in your struggle too.

# Interview

## Making the change

Julian Brooks is Lay Dean for Crewkerne and a Churchwarden at St Michael's and All Angels, Haselbury Plunkett. He has a background in environmental conservation.

### **What is your church doing to help the environment?**

We are working towards becoming an Eco Church. Before Covid hit we had done some of the easy bits on land management and energy usage, but were working on what I think are the harder elements of worship and lifestyle.

### **Do you think the Covid pandemic has changed people's view of caring for creation?**

I think people are more conscious than ever of the need to be more environmentally aware and I hope when we come to redo our Eco Church questionnaire in the autumn that will come through and we can achieve at least bronze award.

### **What are your hopes for worship?**

I'd like to see the environment and climate change mentioned every week. Whether that is in the context of global issues or more local ones, there is plenty to talk about. The Church has to play a leading role in tackling climate change and we need to step up locally and nationally.

### **Any advice for churches wanted to get started?**

Changing your energy tariff to a green one is an easy start, as is letting go of the idea of a manicured churchyard. Even mowing the grass less and having a semi-wild area can benefit biodiversity while still being a place of peace. Many churches are being tested financially currently and going greener can also help save money too.