

Life Magazine for May 2021

Editorial Notes

I hope you all had a good Easter and made the most of the easing of the restrictions, I guess like me you were very pleased to be given the chance to celebrate the Risen Christ with others in our churches, (be it socially distanced and no Communion or singing), although we were allowed to sing outside for the last hymn, which was the rousing 'Thine be the glory' on two Sundays at the Parish church. Seeing all the churches adorned with daffodils and other colourful flower displays, was also a treat, and in the churchyard of the Parish church the newly constructed Easter Garden could be enjoyed by worshipers and visitors alike.

The death of Prince Phillip was a great loss to the nation and prayers and special services across our benefice paid tribute to a great man who dedicated most of his life supporting Queen Elizabeth, and amongst other things created and supported the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Before the funeral Tim Hatrey tolled the Street Parish church Tenor Bell, (one stroke muffled).

Whilst we were having a walk recently Pam and I came across a family out for their daily exercise before returning to home waters, this event can be seen on the front cover! Some of the above mentioned flower displays can be seen on the back cover alongside two verses of scripture with the calligraphy written by the talented hand of the late Liz Parker. (See Norman's 'Creation during Lockdown' on pages 12 and 13). Also Andy and Suzie watering the newly created Easter Garden, and the Parish Church congregation singing 'Thine be the Glory' after the Easter morning service.

God's Blessings to you all as we ease out of the restrictions, enjoy a bit more freedom, but keep safe.

Roger.

Rector's Letter

"...he looked towards heaven and prayed...." John 17. 1

Dear Friends,

As Christians and indeed as the church, prayer should always be a priority. I have not seen any statistics, but I suspect that over the past year or so, particularly as a result of the global pandemic, the number of people praying, whether of faith or not, has risen. Praying for loved one's suffering, praying for those grieving, praying for the scientists, praying for a vaccine, praying for our freedom - I could go on. I am sure many of us would echo some of these prayers and more.

As a family, Kevin, our daughter Sarah, her husband John and myself have deeply valued the prayers of so many as we have journeyed for many weeks with the knowledge that Sarah and John's much longed for first child when born would not survive. When life hurts, the prayers of others can bring much needed healing and comfort. How much we have valued prayer.

Prayer is of course for all occasions not only for the times when life is tough. Intercession can be broad and all-encompassing as we bring to God in prayer the needs of the world around us. Prayer can also be in the context of celebration giving thanks and praise for God's love and grace in a particular situation. Whether praying alone or in community, in prayer we are entering the gates of heaven, encountering the living God as we pour out our hearts to him, in praise and thanksgiving, in sorrow and heartache, in need and indeed in desperation.

It is wonderful that we have so many opportunities to pray. A growing number of us meet online, on Zoom on a Tuesday morning for just 30 minutes to bring the needs of the world and the church to God in prayer as well as a chance to pray for each other. Later this month, as a benefice we will be involved with 'Thy Kingdom Come', a national prayer initiative encouraging us to pray more deeply and more intentionally over a 10-day period. Please see elsewhere in this magazine details as to how you might get involved.

Wherever you are on the journey of prayer, know that God loves you fully and accepts your prayers however faltering and tentative they may feel. A wise friend once said 'pray as you can, not as you can't'.

May you know the transformative love of God as you bring your hopes, joys, sorrows and deepest longings to him in prayer, Anna .

Our Continuing Journey out of Lockdown

It has been great that we have been able to reopen our churches and gather for public worship once again in our buildings on Sundays. As I said in last month's magazine, strict Covid 19 restrictions must remain in place for the foreseeable future with the wearing of face coverings, hand sanitizing and social distancing being always maintained whilst inside any of our buildings. If the government 'roadmap' out of lockdown keeps to schedule, it is our intention to re-start Communion Services in our Churches from Sunday 23rd May as per the services rota (see details elsewhere). However, at this stage, we shall continue to receive communion in one kind (ie. just the bread) until any further guidance is received from the Church of England. In the meantime, if you choose to receive Communion, please remember to come forward wearing your face covering and briefly removing it to consume the bread once you have moved away from the priest, before returning to your seat.

From the 17th May, it is possible that in person meetings may re-start and therefore we are currently planning to hold our APCM's in our churches. This will have to be subject to review, dependant on further government announcements and will certainly involve social distancing and other Covid 19 safety guidelines. We will also aim to re-start house group and other meetings as soon as it is safe to do so, in discussion with the groups concerned. Watch this space.

Thank you so much for your understanding in these challenging times; even though many people will have received one if not two doses of the Covid vaccine by now, everyone remains at risk of

both carrying and contracting the virus, so we urge you to continue to look out for one another.

Ana Lawrence

Walton Matters

So when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? "

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Acts Ch 1, v's 6-9.

It is so wonderful to be back in our Churches and worshipping together after such a long time. It may not be as normal as we would like yet, but we are getting there. Thank you to all our leaders, Ana, David, Diana and our worship leaders for getting us through this difficult year with joy and some laughter. There have been so many highs for us still to share.

Thank you to our wonderful flower arrangers that came up trumps in unusual circumstances. Vases and containers were left on a table in the Church porch and they were returned the same way for decorating. We all felt the Church looked beautiful for our first week back. Bless you all.

It may take a time before we can enjoy our usual fundraising activities or our coffee mornings but please give thought to the commencement of events and let us know if you have any new ideas that we can all enjoy. We will be playing catch up with fundraisers. As Friends of Walton Church, we enjoy

planning together and love welcoming new people to help with ideas and projects. Sandra.

Flower rota.

1st May. Liz Selway. 15th May. Brenda Stradling. 29th May. Jane Doyle.

Easter at St Andrew's

Easter Day began with a beautiful sunrise service led by David Hatrey. Definitely worth the early start! It was also to be our final 'Zoom' meeting together as a Benefice before re-opening the four churches. As the final hymn concluded, the sun rose with a pink glow around the wooden cross on Lollover Hill. An Easter symbol for the whole village to share. Later it was with a sense of great anticipation and excitement that we made our way to St Andrew's for our first church service since Christmas. The church had been beautifully decorated the previous day by Trish, with donations of daffodils from village gardens brightening the windowsills. Diana led the worship, replacing the usual Easter shouted 'Alleluia' responses to 'Christ has Risen' with a different sort of celebration – party poppers! There were loud pops and coloured streamers flying everywhere whenever 'Alleluia' was heard (or nearly every time - we did miss a few!) All except during the hymn 'Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the Risen Lord,' beautifully sung by Diana. We so enjoyed listening to her singing both the hymns that not a thought was given to party poppers, instead focusing on the words. For the final hymn we processed outside for everyone to join in singing 'Thine be the Glory. 'This was the first time that we have been able to sing as a congregation for over a year and it was a very special moment to spread out in the churchyard in the warm sunshine sharing the words 'Thine be the Glory, Risen conquering Lord.' The Lord is Risen indeed. Alleluia. Pat.

“Let the Earth flourish”

Glasgow’s Patron Saint and founder St Mungo is remembered by a verse that recalls four of his miracles:

“HERE IS THE BIRD THAT NEVER FLEW

HERE IS THE TREE THAT NEVER GREW

HERE IS THE BELL THAT NEVER RANG

HERE IS THE FISH THAT NEVER SWAM”.

These words are both historic and possibly prophetic. It’s not an exaggeration to say that the future of the birds, the trees, the fish and all humanity will be determined by the decisions taken in Glasgow this year.

St Mungo prayed, “Lord, let Glasgow flourish” which became the City’s motto. Glasgow and every other community can flourish only if the whole earth flourishes. So our plea for this global conference should be “Let the earth flourish”.

We are all part of the future’s history. It’s worth asking what will be needed by COP26 if it is to go down in history as earth-saving. Taking MUNGO as a mnemonic:

M is for MAGNANIMITY. We can progress only by putting ourselves in the shoes of others especially those already feeling the disastrous effects of climate change.

U is for UNIVERSAL. Although delegates rightly represent their own national interest everyone needs to see themselves as universal ambassadors and champions of the Earth.

N is for NATURE. We are part of nature, not apart from it. There is no future for anyone if the result of COP26 is bad for nature.

G is for GREEN. All our decisions – personal, purchasing and political – have to be greener for a healthier world.

O is for ONLY. We have only the one planet to inhabit and to nurture us. In this Anthropocene era it is up to each and every one of us to live within nature's means, for the earth is not a limitless larder.

Let the birds fly, let the trees grow, let the fish swim and let not the bell toll, for the Earth is our only home.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE Bishop of Liverpool
(1998 - 2013)

A search on the wild side

For our Eco Church project an area of the churchyard at the Parish Church has been roped off. The grass was cut in March but will be left to grow naturally until the flowers in the area have set seed and died off. This is all part of our project to find out which plants, insects and other animals are in or will return to the churchyard if it is left to colonise naturally, what we are calling Wilding of the Churchyard.

In summer when all of the plants in the area have had time to mature and hopefully flower a local botanist has offered to survey the area and list all of the plants to be found. This we hope will include rarities which will be of interest to the local Wildlife Trust. We also intend to carry out a Bug Hunt with the aid of our younger parishioners.

As a precursor to the main plant hunt Suzie and I decided to try to find as many plants as we could and identify them using an App on Suzie's phone which identifies plants from their leaves. We were both very surprised by the number and variety of plants we found in the area, a list of which are.-

Ale hoof, Bar weed, Bee nettle, Bind wood, Blue bramble, Carolina geranium, Common gypsy wood, Creeping buttercup, Dwarf mallow, Great hairy willow herb, Hemlock, Meadow dock

and Square stalked willow herb as well as the ubiquitous Daisy and Clover.

We hope you found this as interesting as we did, enough to get involved with, and a similar exercise with a patch of grass at the Mission Church encouraging God's flora and fauna to thrive and be closer to us.

David Yemm.

Thy Kingdom Come 2021

You may remember that in recent years we have joined the Church of England's Thy Kingdom Come initiative; primarily praying for five people we know to come to Jesus. This year, we will again join the initiative which runs from Ascension Day (Thursday, May 13th) to Pentecost (Sunday, May 23rd).

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ
- Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus
- Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit that we would be effective in our witness

In addition to praying through this period for **“five to come to Jesus”** it has been suggested we also pray for **“five to come back to Jesus”** – those who may have drifted away from our church family because of the difficulties and restrictions of the last ‘Covid’ year. I would like to add that we also pray for **“five to grow in Jesus”** – those in our church family who might need their faith deepened or their work within the church blessed. I hope many of our Church Family from across the Benefice will join in this initiative not only by committing to pray for their selected fives but also by joining one or more of the events and/or utilise the resources; both of which are listed below. If you have any questions or want to know more – please get in touch.

With blessings – Jeff Brewer

Our Thy Kingdom Come Events:

We are planning a number of events linked to this initiative: -

- An Ascension Day Service, Thursday 13th May, to formally launch this year's "Thy Kingdom Come"
- A 24-hour prayer vigil, Saturday 15th – Sunday 16th May. We are hoping to make this as flexible as possible so that more people can participate – joining by praying where/when they can.
- Benefice Pentecost Services on Sunday 23rd May – to include testimonies from some of the participants on this year's "Thy Kingdom Come" and the launch of a new "Time to Pray" resource.

Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Resources:

We are obtaining Prayer resources to help those wanting to join in this initiative - these that will be available in all four churches of our Benefice and will include: -

- A Prayer Journal that has been written by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell. Having already seen a copy I can highly recommend it. Each day there are a few things to read, a prayer to offer and then an invitation for you to make your own reflections on what it means to follow in the way of Christ. The Prayer Journals can also be downloaded from the TKC website.
- A simple "Pray for Five" bookmark which you can use as a reminder and where you can list those you are praying for.

Additional resources are available through the Thy Kingdom Come website; for example: -

- A Novena, "Praying the Psalms from Ascension to Pentecost" – available as both a hard copy or as a download.
- The Thy Kingdom Come app – based on last year's app it is expected to provide a daily bible reading, daily reflection, audio podcast.
- Various Children and Family resources.

More details of our Thy Kingdom Come events and the availability of prayer resources will be published in Lifeline and on the Church's website in due course.

'Creation' during Lockdown

During these months of enforced Lockdown, many folks have been *making* things: models or music; pictures or puddings; furniture or flower-beds - and I'd like to share a couple of thoughts about these activities.

(1) We mustn't be put off by the commercial world's distinction between "art" and "craft".

I recently found some notes that Liz had made in a journal; and she wrote about how she had always wanted to do Calligraphy (beautiful handwriting) but had been put off because "I had always thought that there were two categories of people - artistic and non-artistic - and that I was one of the latter." But eventually she did a short Course at Strode College, and then joined a Calligraphy Group. She wrote, "I have never felt such excitement as when I finished my first small piece and realised that I, who was 'not artistic' had actually created something that was - dare I say - beautiful, or at least pleasing to the eye. It was at about this time that I read the words, 'And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good' and I understood it, and saw it in a new light."

(2) Also we mustn't be put off by the word "hobby". To call something a hobby makes it sound trivial. As Christians we believe we should be out there 'doing good' or evangelising; and having a hobby sounds rather selfish. But, if we turn to God's Word we find, right at the start (*Genesis* 1, v 26) 'God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"' and what we know about God at that point is that He is the Creator, the Maker. So He has made us to be makers, too. So making things is OK; and if we do it to His glory, and with thankfulness, then it is a form of worship.

[One 'maker' is given special mention in the Bible. Bezalel (*Exodus* 31 onwards) was chosen by God and given "skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts" to produce the furnishings for the tabernacle, and the ark itself. We are told that he was

filled with the Holy Spirit for that purpose; one of the earliest mentions of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.]

I think that God has made each one of us unique. Perhaps there are things that only we can do; and if we don't do them, they won't get done. So let us enjoy our 'making' and go to it with enthusiasm!

Norman Parker.

'Re-Imagine' preaching series

I am excited to be launching our new preaching series "Re-Imagine" starting on the first Sunday in May running for 9 weeks throughout May and June. The concept of re-imagine has been borne out of considering what our post pandemic world might look like and what as Christians, we can learn from the past 14 months. How might we see the post pandemic world, what could we lay down and how might we do things differently? The series includes topics such as the world, the community, the church, hospitality, relationships and more, and I am so grateful to the preaching team we are blessed with as a benefice who will bring the message God puts on their hearts as we seek new and Godly insights into all that lies ahead.

It would be so tempting to just default to 'the way things were' as we emerge from restrictions. However, I believe God may be challenging us, as the church, to be looking to do a new thing and our series will unpack some of the ways that we may begin to see this.

Let's re-imagine together. Ana Lawrence.

WATCH

HOCUS POCUS is alive and well in 2021

Hocus pocus is the popular name for the debate which raged at the time of the Reformation and still goes on, as to whether Christ is

actually physically present in the bread and wine at communion or whether He is only present spiritually.

In recent weeks the Supreme Court's judgement in a case brought by Scottish churches over the legality of the Scottish government's enforced closure of churches as part of its anti Covid lockdown. The reasoning of the Court clearly shows that it considers valid worship can only happen when the worshippers are physically present. This line of thought is widespread in other pronouncements in recent weeks, and not confined to north of the border.

What does the Bible have to say on the subject? In John 4 we have the account of Jesus meeting the woman at the well in Samaria. A remarkable encounter between Jesus and someone who was not only of a race despised by the Jews but also a woman, so doubly inferior in their eyes. Not only that, she had 5 failed marriages and was now living in sin with a man who she was not even married to. Clearly not the sort of person to be with – on the grounds of race, gender or morality. And yet the best definition of God's requirements for worship comes from Jesus's conversation with this woman. Here's what Jesus said (NLT): *"Believe me, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem."*

This surely shows that location is irrelevant. *"True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship him in Spirit and truth."* The Holy Spirit and a living faith in God and Christ are surely the vital ingredients here.

When we get to heaven, what will worship be like? I've got a sneaking feeling we'll be in for an almighty shock!! It may be more like a night club disco than evensong in a Cathedral!! There'll be amazing music to dance before the Lord to, lively Afro-Caribbean Gospel music and singing, as well as the Messiah and John Rutter.... *I can't wait!!* - BS

My Memories of Prince Phillip.

I shared these memories with the congregation on the first Sunday after the death of Prince Phillip.

When I became pregnant with Joe my son, women could not stay in the Royal Navy with a child, but change was afoot. In 1990 the MOD changed the ruling and I was the first WRNS officer to stay in the Navy post childbirth. So when the Queen and Prince Phillip were due a short visit to HMS Nelson I was not going to be allowed not to be on parade. It was a particularly hot June day and I was told there was a chair behind me but I was not to sit unless I was about to pass out!!! In their defence this was a whole new ball game for the G I's!! dealing with pregnant ladies on a parade ground. So I stood sweating, feeling sick and slightly dizzy as the Queen and Prince Phillip walked past, praying that I didn't disgrace myself! It was all a-bit of a blur really and Joe was born a couple of days later!

I have tried to find the newspaper cutting of me and bump outside HMS Nelson but can't find it but here I am with Joe at his christening.
Suzie

Peter Preston also remembers

60 years ago when I was teaching in Dorset I introduced the scheme in to the school and it proved to be of real value to pupils going into the world of work having earned their BRONZE SILVER or GOLD award. The Duke of Edinburgh had a real understanding of the needs and ambitions of young people.

Peter.

Manna

North Somerset welcomes Syrian families

In the last few years Nailsea has played its part in welcoming Syrian families from war-torn areas and refugee camps.

Elaine Atkinson co-ordinates a team of volunteers brought together by Christians Together in Nailsea and District (CTNAD). They support refugees who have arrived in Nailsea with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS).

She says, “We now have two families here and are keen to welcome others. We work closely with North Somerset Council who will welcome 12 more families to the county. The main obstacle to doing this is finding suitable private landlord rental accommodation.”

Two families now living in Nailsea have shared their stories about life here. A mother from one family says, “As for moving to Britain, it was a little hesitant decision. People, home, country. Everything, will be different. The English language was difficult for me. We found a voluntary job for my husband and my son started going to pre-school and found great friends. All the people were wonderful and accommodating and welcomed our presence with them. This was our first two years and it was difficult, different, and stressful, wonderful things happened, and difficult things too. Then everything became better and better. Language and self-confidence. We adapted to society.”

North Somerset Council would like to support more refugee families. If you are a landlord or looking to invest in a rental property, contact the Refugee Resettlement Team on 01934 427275 or email caroline.crossley@n-somerset.gov.uk. Find the full stories from the two Nailsea families at www.bathwells.anglican.org

News in brief

Cartwheels and brussel sprouts

When Sophie and Izzy of St John’s, Keynsham realised that not all children in Zambia go to school, they decided to fundraise to help build and furnish a new 3-classroom primary school at St Paul’s church, Chipata. After Sophie reached her £500 target for her fundraising raffle, her brother had to do his promised challenges of having a worm crawl on his face and eat three of

his least favourite foods, including brussel sprouts. Izzy meanwhile did 100 cartwheels a day for seven days. In total £2,500 has been raised for the school which means it can be built later this year. bathandwells.org.uk/parish-links/

Save the date

We will be launching our first Zambia Sunday, 4 July. Inspired by Bishop Peter's last trip to Zambia, it will be an opportunity for us, together with our Zambian brothers and sisters to pray and learn more about each other together. bathandwells.org.uk/Zambia-partnership/

Our new website

Check out our new website. Designed by ChurchEdit, it is part of a collaboration with 20 other dioceses to create a standardised website that will serve dioceses across the Church of England.

This new way of working is built on collaboration, shared learning and good practice and will allow some of the costs of website build and development to be shared.

The user-focused website includes a documents section, to enable people to find essential downloads and other material quickly, and a more powerful search function.

The Bishop's Letter.

Called to serve and care.

There are many things I shall miss when I retire. One is writing these brief articles for parish magazines. After some 41 years of writing articles and editorials you might think I would be pleased to stop. However, over the years this is one way I have been able to keep in touch with people and offer encouragement and

support to all that is happening in the life of our churches and communities. In the ordination service for bishops the liturgy begins with the words: 'Bishops are called to serve and care for the flock of Christ. Mindful of the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep, they are to love and pray for those committed to their charge, knowing their people, and being known by them.' These monthly articles are one way in which I seek to 'be known' across the diocese.

As I prepare to retire, I want to express my huge appreciation for the welcome I have received in all the parishes and places that I have visited. It has been an enormous privilege to join the churches of the diocese to see what you are doing, to preach and to share in your worship. I am conscious that despite getting out and about across the whole diocese there are still some churches which I have not visited, and I am sorry about that.

Reading the ordination service, I see that as disciples we are all called to 'witness to the resurrection and to preach the good news of salvation in all the world.' That is a calling and a privilege which will not stop as I lay down the See of Bath and Wells. It is at the heart of what it is to be part of the Body of Christ. So, as I say my farewells, I send you my blessing. Please know that my prayers will continue to be with you.

Yours with the love of Christ,

Bishop Peter

Interview

An absolute delight

Bishop Peter reflects on his time in Bath and Wells as he prepares to retire on medical grounds.

What moments stand out for you?

It has been an absolute delight to visit so many churches to share in worship, preach and to see all that clergy and congregations are doing or planning. Every confirmation service has been a real joy and privilege and the Cathedral confirmations have been inspiring.

What will you miss?

I shall hugely miss the visits I have made to schools, colleges and universities. To see young people learning, exploring and thinking about the world we live in has been a joy. I shall also miss the sitting down with Clergy, Readers and church leaders to talk and pray with them about the challenges and joys they are finding in ministry. I know that when we leave Somerset, Jane and I and our dog Juno will miss the glorious scenery and wonderful countryside.

What gives you hope for the future of the Church in Bath and Wells?

I can't think of a day when I haven't been encouraged and hopeful about the future of the Church here in the diocese. This past year has been particularly difficult for everyone but I am confident that despite the issues we face that the diocese is in good heart and in good hands.

What will you take away with you from Somerset?

I have wonderful memories of being the Bishop of Bath and Wells 'outside a church setting. Going to the Bath and West Show and taking delight in our rural and farming community, or responding to invitations to speak at civic occasions or at the Somerset Chamber of Commerce. Speaking at the Glastonbury Festival will

never leave me - walking onto the Pyramid Stage in front of such a huge crowd was both terrifying and uplifting

U.C.B. Fulfilling your calling

‘LET EVERY MAN ABIDE IN THE ... CALLING WHEREIN HE WAS CALLED.’ 1 Corinthians 7:20

When Peter preached at Pentecost, three thousand souls came to Christ. But when Paul preached a guy nodded off, broke his neck and killed himself by falling out of a third story window. Hardly an encouraging sign! But Paul admitted that preaching was not his chief calling: 'I came to you ... timid and trembling ... my message and my preaching were very plain ...' (1 Corinthians 2:3-4). Yet while he might not have been the most dynamic speaker in town, God empowered him to raise the man from the dead after he fell out of the window!

Listen: 'Let every man abide in the ... calling wherein he was called.' What Paul lacked as a speaker, he more than compensated for as a writer. His pen changed the world. He was responsible for more New Testament doctrine than those who spent every waking minute with Jesus. He judged cities, straightened out fornicators, stopped incest, rebuked idolatry, and established truth. Paul did not need to preach; he wrote the inspired Word that enabled others to do it.

Something so powerful was released through Paul's writings that even when they threw him in jail he did not ask for a lawyer or a gourmet meal because he was tired of prison food. No, he asked for more paper so that he could keep writing. In fact, Paul wrote all the way to the end of his life. And because he did, souls are still being reached today! What a legacy! And all because one man devoted himself to his calling! Now for the question – are you devoting yourself to yours?