

Life June 2021

Editorial Notes

Hello all, well here we are in June but as I write this it feels more like winter, but it will get warmer and as we ease back into some sort of normality, we have holidays to look forward to.

This last Sunday was Pentecost Sunday and Walton celebrated it in the open air and you can read Suzie William's article on page 19 as well as seeing all the action on the back cover. We were so lucky with the weather, thank you Holy Spirit.

Quarry Batch farm which borders Walton with Street is where I came across the cattle with a lovely white calf which make up the front cover.

Read about the floral enriched Compton Dundon on page 5. It has lovely footpath walks, some of which were shown on the back cover in the April magazine, well worth a visit whilst taking up Pat's invitation to visit the plant stall.

If you are unable to get out and about, then why not support Wilder Churches on page 8 or take an Eco Journey with Suzie Williams on page 9.

On page 14 we are given an insight on the 'One Hope Church in Harare, Zimbabwe by Kevin Lawrence, and it is followed by the latest news from Annie Makoni, who with her husband Malvern, work with children there.

As I mentioned the forthcoming holidays, please can I have any articles by Sunday 13th June at the latest so that the July magazine can be distributed on Thursday 17th June. Many thanks.

Finally a prayer from the Prayer Diary that comes from the Diocese alongside the Manna. The one I have chosen is taken from a very special day for Pam and I, which you will read on page 18. It's relevance is to the Eco pages in this magazine
Saturday, 5 June

On World Environment Day, Creator God, help us to play our part in the ecosystem you created. Help us to work with nature and

not against it, to delight in it and not to destroy it. Give us the humility to live lightly on the earth. Roger Harmsworth.

Rector's Letter

"See I am doing a new thing" Isaiah chapter 43 verse 19.

Dear Friends,

There is a famous old story of a visiting Bishop meeting a longstanding village churchwarden, "fifty years in post" said the Bishop, "that's a long time, I bet you've seen many changes?" "Yes" replied the warden, "and I've opposed every one of them!" Of course, I am not writing about our wonderful benefice wardens here in Street, Walton and Compton Dundon, but the story reminds us that not everybody, even in churches, relishes change.

And we've certainly seen plenty of change in recent months! Covid 19 has impacted virtually every aspect of our communal and individual lives. As we begin to emerge from restrictions, our current sermon series invites us to 're-imagine', as Christians, our post pandemic world. In this series we are focussing on a number of themes, re-imagining community, church, worship, the care of God's creation, hospitality, relationships, giving and stewardship and finally a 'new heaven'. As Covid 19 continues to recede, some things in our world might return to how they were, but some things certainly won't. Let's prayerfully consider what new things God might be calling us to do through him. Let's be agents of change, knowing that God can use even us in his purposes and plans.

I am very conscious that each of us handle change differently. For example, some of us probably cannot wait to rush out and hug each other the moment we are allowed to, whilst others,

particularly those who are not yet fully vaccinated or are feeling vulnerable, may be somewhat more cautious. Be kind and gentle with one another, respecting one another's preferences, we are family.

My personal longing, as restrictions ease, is to be able to welcome back into our buildings some of those who, for whatever reason, may not have joined us for worship in recent times. As a focus for this welcome, we are planning special services (restrictions permitting) on Sunday July 18th across our four churches. Please see elsewhere in this magazine and on our website for more details.

The bible verse above from the prophet Isaiah is a timely reminder that God, in his infinite wisdom, is always doing a 'new thing'. I am excited about all that lies ahead and whilst we don't yet know to what extent life will be more 'normal', we can be certain that God is with us in and through any changes that we face and as we seek to be His people in this new post pandemic world.

With my love and prayers,

Ana

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## **Walton Matters**

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

## Colossians Ch 3. V's 12-14.

It has been a joy and a blessing to share with people around the world They Kingdom Come. Our journals and novenas have been an aid to private prayer. The website has been lovely to watch as we shared short clips from leaders, guiding us, the daily services on the TKC app has been so good and it was a privilege to join in with the 24 hour prayer. Thank you Jeff Brewer for setting this up for us all to dip into as and when we have been able. May we continue to hold our 5 people up to the Lord in prayer, that they truly might be part of The kingdom Father.

We are getting near the time we can again share Communion in our Churches and also get back to having coffee and being able to socialize more freely. Let's hope in our July magazine we will have dates of activities slowly returning in a safe way.

Our congratulations and love go to Roger and Pam Harmsworth as they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We thank you both for all you do for our churches in Street and we hope you have a wonderful celebration.

Happy birthday to Liz Selway who celebrates her 80th birthday on 8th June.

Advance notice of another important milestone. Eileen Smith will celebrate her 90th birthday on 5th July. Enjoy your celebration Eileen and love to you both from us all.

We have had a letter from Chris Woods. This lovely letter was received by our PCC.

'I am enclosing a donation in thanks for the use of Pat Moxey's rollator which has transformed Richard's and my life.

It is so good to handle and so light and easy to lift in and out of the car for transporting which makes all the difference from his NHS one which is so heavy and hard to manipulate.

With much gratitude

Richard & Chris Wood.

How lovely and Pat would have been delighted. Thank you both for the donation and letter.

Flower Rota.

12th June. Kath Sully.

26th June. Anne Halsted.

## **Compton Dundon News**

### **All things floral**

It is that time of year when we are able to really appreciate our gardens, planting for Summer flowering and eating freshly grown home produce.

Nothing better than sitting outside having an afternoon cup of tea (or something stronger in the evening.) From mid April the woods in Hayes Road and around Dundon Beacon have been carpeted in bluebells. I often seem to be waxing lyrical about flora and fauna, but that comes of living in Compton Dundon!

We are pleased to have been given the opportunity to join the Benefice Eco group, and Helen and Trish have enjoyed finding out about projects being undertaken in the other churches. We have discovered that we are well on the way towards our Bronze Eco Award but we are taking one step at a time, beginning with considering how to encourage wild flower growth. The crab apple trees that were planted in the churchyard, one to commemorate each of the fallen in World War Two, are thriving and currently in blossom.

In keeping with our 'Reimagining' preaching series a team of volunteers, along with help from the 'Reimagining the Levels' group, created a new bridleway for walkers and riders by planting 420 native trees just off Peak Lane. The trees are already growing well and further planting is planned.

We would like to invite everyone in the Benefice to visit our village Plant Stall, with proceeds in aid of St Andrew's Church. Seeds, seedlings and plants of both vegetables and garden varieties are on sale, all labelled. Last year around 100 tomato plants were sold! So please do come and have a look if you are walking in Compton Dundon, as some of you do, or it is possible to park nearby. The stall is at The Old Farmhouse in Compton Street. Turn left at the memorial into Compton Street, bear left at the end and drive around half a mile until you spot the plant stall on your left. The stall will run daily throughout the summer. Thank you for your support.

*Pat King*

## **Charitable giving at SWCD Churches**

For many years, each of our three parishes have generously supported a wide range of charities with prayer, time and money.

With the support of our three Parochial Church Councils, (PCC's) a group from across the benefice have been meeting over recent months to review the way we organise our charitable giving and discuss some broad principles and practical proposals for the ways we might both continue and develop this support.

Each PCC have approved their recommendations, and the group will now begin to put some of these ideas into practice.

This article explains some of the thinking, what will happen next, and how you can get involved.

In many ways, very little will change. Each of the three PCC's, as representatives of their parish, will continue to decide both what organisations they support, exactly how they support them and the amounts they choose to give. However, the PCC's all agreed some principles they want to work with, including:

- Aiming for transparency for our donations, by generally supporting only UK registered charities.
- Wherever possible, supporting Christian charities, or if one cannot be found, supporting those who are in sympathy with our Christian ethos.
- Supporting a range of both larger and smaller organisations, whilst trying to keep the total at around 12 a year so that we have time to give them some benefice wide publicity each month through 'Life', in our services and elsewhere.
- Whilst recognising that each church will have different charities and areas of work they are particularly interested in, we want to try to encourage benefice support for a spread of organisations. These will be local, national and international, covering a range of areas including local needs, international aid and development, evangelism, the persecuted church etc. Each PCC agreed that it would also be great to try and identify at least one cause that we could support jointly across the benefice.
- Encouraging all our churches to aim towards 'tithing' their charitable support, however it is raised, so giving away sums equivalent to at least 10% of their previous year's income from church members.
- Encouraging church family members to be fully part of the process, including recommending charities and getting involved in other ways with the organisations we support.
- Unless otherwise agreed, limiting our support to a single year commitment at any one time. Each PCC is, of course, entirely free to agree longer term support at the outset or ongoing support in subsequent years for particular causes if they wish to do so.

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If you want to know more, please contact either me, or a member of your PCC.

So, what happens next and how can you get involved? Within the above principles, we now want to bring proposals to each PCC, for charities to select and we would love to hear from you.

If you have a charitable cause that you are passionate about and which you think might 'fit', please let us know. Whilst your PCC will make the final decision, the charitable giving group have agreed to collate the recommendations in time for the July PCC meetings.

Giving your full name and the church where you normally worship, please let me have details of the charity you would like to be considered for a donation, including their website address and registered charity number if possible. Say a little bit about

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why you think they would be a great charity for your parish to choose and, if you are or have been personally involved with their work, do say something about that if you feel able.

Please don't leave this to others as we want to hear about all the possible charities we might donate to. Even if you think someone else might do it, even if you think that, as we've previously supported them that will continue, even if you wonder whether anyone else would be interested, still let me have your recommendation, either by email ([lawrencekv@aol.com](mailto:lawrencekv@aol.com)) or via the Church office, by Monday 21 June.

Thank you. *Kevin Lawrence*

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A brief update on Eco Church.

As well as looking at our Carbon Footprint we have been looking at the church grounds at all four churches in the Benefice with the help of a local expert. A plant survey is being conducted over three months with visits planned in May, June, and July. The series of Wilder Churches webinars run jointly by the Diocese and Somerset Wildlife Trust continue with the next one on June 30th. They are open to anyone interested, details can be found on the SWT website where you can also find links to past webinars.

In addition to the plant surveys we would welcome any other wildlife sightings. Helpful guides can be found on:

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/team-wilder/team-wilder-resources>

You will need to scroll to the bottom of the web page to find the links to Wilder Churches resources.

Susan Ripley, Eco Church Group

My ongoing eco journey.

It was suggested by Sue Ripley that I should join Green Christian and I am so delighted she did. Apart from a really excellent magazine they run workshops. Last night was ... **Bible Discussion: What does scripture say to believers about Creation Care? With Deborah Tomkins, co chair of Green Christian**

Deborah picked apart Genesis Chapter 1 vs 24-27 and explained that we are in the middle of creation; after God made the animals and before he made food for all of us to eat. He then gave us dominion over creation and created things. Now like me you may have struggled with that dominion word but actually the speaker made it really simple. We are made in God's image and there is no greater example of this than Jesus so we rule or have dominion in the same way Jesus would have. Caring for all of our creation is as vital as the command to love our neighbour.

People over the years have asked why Jesus did not give lengthy sermons about caring for the earth but the reality is, it was given when He lived on earth. Everyone lived with great respect for creation. It was a light bulb moment. There is no such thing as a non green Christian. Right now we may not be suffering too badly from global warming but some of our neighbours in countries around the globe are, so that must be our motivation to do our bit. So in summary every small step we take should be motivated by our recognition that God created this world and gave us a mandate to care for it and running alongside that our love of our neighbour who may be thousands of miles away but is still our neighbour.

The Green Christian mantra is, in everything you do use the least amount of energy. Go on challenge yourself! Try to add another thing you could do and tell me about it and we can celebrate!

Suzie Williams

House groups

A house group is a great way of meeting with others from church during the week in a more informal and relaxed setting. Being in a group allows the opportunity to chew over and discuss the teaching theme from the Sunday Sermon series. Typically, a group may have between six – eight people who gather to read the Bible together, study, discuss and pray. It is also a fantastic way of getting to know a few others at a deeper level as well as growing and deepening in your own faith.

House groups may meet in someone's home or in another location such as a church building or local pub and in recent months groups have also been meeting online.

Currently, across our four churches, we have a number of house groups.

Belonging to a house group can be a real gift and source of personal encouragement as we navigate our Christian lives in a complex world.

Here's what a couple of house group members have recently said about being part of a house group:

"I love belonging to a house group because we support and encourage one another to explore and grow in our faith."

"I love belonging to a house group because I enjoy hearing different perspectives and being able to learn from each other."

Do prayerfully consider joining a group. To find out more about each of the groups, and where you might find a 'home', visit our website or talk to me.

Ana Lawrence, Rector.

"Back to Church" Sunday

Government restrictions permitting we are planning a "back to church" Sunday across our four churches on 18th July.

Whether because of Covid 19, or for other reasons, I am sure many of us are aware of friends, neighbours, family and others who we may not have seen in our churches recently. These services are a great opportunity to invite them to return. Each of our churches will be offering a particularly warm welcome on that day and, if it's possible, there may even be cake!

During "Thy Kingdom Come" we have been encouraged to 'pray for five' including for five to return to church and how about inviting those five who you have been praying for to come to church with you on that day. There will be invitation cards for you to use available from our churches nearer the time.

Of course, we aim to welcome everyone who joins us every week, but my prayer is that this special week will provide a focus for those who are waiting for the invitation to come back.

Recent research suggests that up to a third of the population would come to church or return to church if they were personally invited. For many, the chance to go with someone they know would make all the difference. Our job is to prayerfully issue the invitation and trust that God will do the rest!

Ana Lawrence

New Sunday Service Patterns – a time to reflect

As I promised, after Easter, when I introduced the trial of the new Sunday Service patterns and times, we are now planning to review and reflect on these in the light of our experiences so far.

If you have thoughts or comments, we would love to hear your views as part of this process. Please have a word with your church warden in the first instance.

Ana Lawrence

NEWS FROM ONE HOPE CHURCH ZIMBABWE

Walton Church has been supporting One Hope Church in Harare, Zimbabwe for a number of years and it was good to receive recent news of the outreach work they are doing amongst some of the most vulnerable people in the capital city.

Like many countries, lockdown restrictions have had a major impact in Zimbabwe. Food prices have risen and many people, particularly the poorest, are struggling to afford regular meals. Now restrictions are beginning to lift, the church, using an old shipping container they own, have opened 'One Hope café' offering nutritious breakfasts and lunches each weekday for the

equivalent of just a few pence, which is all many of their customers can afford. Nonetheless the church are trying to ensure the cafe runs at a profit, releasing money for their other work

Recent donations from Walton have been used to buy bicycles, allowing members of the church team to travel to work and to get out and about to visit people, with cars and public transport being a luxury beyond most people's pockets. The church is also starting a new drug addiction recovery course for local young people, as part of their outreach to street kids.

If you would like more information about the work of One Hope Church, please have a word with Bernard Sinclair at Walton Church.

Please pray for the people of Zimbabwe, where Covid 19, economic hardship and political uncertainty have taken a heavy toll. Pray also for the work of One Hope Church, that God would guide and bless them as they seek to reach out.

Kevin Lawrence Charitable giving committee

MORE NEWS from Annie (One Hope Church) IN ZIMBABWE

Annie works with street kids in Harare and is supported by Walton Church. Here are her two latest letters -

April

Hello! The lock down is pretty much over in Zimbabwe and it has been great to get out and about again. The children started back at school last week and are very much enjoying seeing their friends again.

Mathew, Time and I have been joined by Tonde a lovely, young, bright student who is waiting to go to university. He has been organising the

library and has thrown himself into helping out with absolutely anything that needs doing. Thanks to our wonderful friends at Walton Church, Tonde and Mathew have beautiful new bicycles to come to work on. They both live about 7 miles away from One Church. Public transport is pretty scarce so it has made a huge difference to them being able to get into work each day.

In the aftermath of covid, we continue to come across people in extreme desperation and need. A few days ago a young mother with a two year old boy were brought to the church by a good friend of ours who had bumped into them at the hospital. Believe, ended up in the streets after her adoptive parents died and she was kicked out of home. She was just starting her third year of secondary school. After being raped, Believe gave birth, alone, to her little boy, in a derelict building in Mbare. Determined to keep her baby alive, she worked tirelessly carrying goods for venders, sweeping shop verandas and doing any other jobs that could earn her a few cents. At night they slept in the open, on pieces of cardboard. Then one day, Comfort broke his arm when something heavy fell on top of him as he sat on the pavement. That was how he and Believe ended up at the hospital.

Believe collapsed shortly after arriving at the church but has gradually regained strength as she has been able to eat and sleep in safety. She turns out to be a voracious reader and is very much enjoying the library.

On Tuesday after she spent half the night reading the book "Out

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of The Black Shadows" She told me that she wanted to have the same peace she had read about in the book. We prayed together and she asked Jesus to come into her life! It was a truly wonderful moment!

We hope that she and Comfort will be able to stay at the church for the time being whilst he gets better and she begins the road to recovery. If you would like to help us to care for these two precious people please give using our online link: www.give.net/20168768

I feel God is going to build something beautiful here out of the ashes. We have finally connected with Munya. We found him in town selling sweets and cigarettes from a cardboard box. He seemed genuinely relieved to see us and has said he would like to come back home. This needs to be his own decision so I have let him know that the door is always open and we are waiting for him to come when he is ready. Poor Victor was sent back from school with Covid symptoms so we have had to quarantine him at the top of the garden! We are giving him lots of lemons and ginger and Zumbani tea and he seems to be almost totally well again now. Thank God.

Promise messaged me last night to say she had arrived at Lawn Cottage. My kind sister Naomi, went to collect her from school and she will spend the holidays with mum and dad. She seems very bubbly and clearly thriving at her new school. What a relief!

Sending you all much love from a bright, sunny Saturday morning in Zimbabwe, Annie.

Hello! It's May! My favourite month in England because of the bluebells and my favourite month in Zim because it is still green after the rains but cooler and breezier as we head towards winter.

Wow! Lots has happened since last time I wrote. We have been as busy as clockwork mice since One Hope Cafe opened a couple of weeks ago. As you know, we had planned for a while to start a cafe in one of our converted containers but with the lock

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down everything was on hold. Suddenly we were given a green light. Believe has been a great help assisting in the kitchen. We have a nice lady called Sheila who is the main cook. We're serving breakfast and lunch every week day.

With food becoming increasingly expensive it's very hard in Zimbabwe to find a decent meal if you only have a dollar or less in your pocket. Our aim is to provide filling, nutritious meals as inexpensively as possible. The trick is to still make a profit so that it can benefit our outreach to the homeless.

Tonde's accounting skills have been invaluable, as he has been recording everything. He is due to start an accounting degree shortly,

so we will be losing him as a full time volunteer. But he has promised to pop by regularly to keep us on track!

We have started another addictions recovery course on Friday mornings with a small group of lads. Pray for Tatenda, Terry, Luckson, Tafadzwa and Dennis as they start on the road to recovery.

Huge thanks to those who have given gifts and prayed for Believe and little Comfort. Believe hopes very much to go back to school at some point and complete her education. In the meantime she is helping us in the cafe and Comfort is gradually learning to play with other children. We have come to love them both very much.

On the home front, we would appreciate your prayers for Ephie. He suddenly had a seizure in the middle of the night last week. We have been referred to a lovely paediatrician who is taking him through various tests to try to decipher the cause. Ephie has struggled for some time with nightmares and these have become much worse lately. So please pray with us for him to have peaceful nights.

Life always does seem to have its mixture of pain and beauty. We are choosing to hold tightly onto the hand of the good Shepherd as we walk through this valley.

Sending you all our prayers and love,

Annie Makoni xx

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On behalf of the Parish and Mission Churches we would like to congratulate Pam and Roger Harmsworth on their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 5th June 2021.

Pam and Roger have been such a large part of our Church life since moving to Street in the early 70's. Since their retirement they have been caretakers of both Churches. Previously Pam successfully ran Mrs Tiggywinkles pre-school held at the Mission Church for over 25 years.



Therefore, we would like to thank them for all their hard work and dedication and send them our warmest wishes for a lovely day.

Diane Gray

Pentecost service at Walton.

Well as soon as I saw I was leading the service in Walton on Pentecost Sunday I was excited. A little voice in my head was saying let's take it outside so everyone can sing, the dancing came later!!! So I asked Ana's permission and got it, asked David if he could do a risk assessment and he said yes. I knew Andy would help with music and making leaflets and Sandra their lovely church warden was very encouraging. I am so grateful to be surrounded by 'can do' brothers and sisters. I was watching the weather forecast closely and waiting for

final booking numbers to know how many leaflets to print.

So on Monday Andy and I had our first practice for well over a year and what a joy that was. I have looked at the weather forecast and it is still set fair., PTL.

Saturday late afternoon decision made as barometer set fair Andy printed the booklets, the service would be outside!

Sunday came and I was so pleased Andy and Louise had erected a Pentecostal meter with a fluttering white flag, it was great I had a true sense that the Spirit of the Lord was hovering over Walton. David made us all hold our breath as he made Andy sit in a chair and then produced a chain saw! However he then went on to speak of the mighty spirit within each one of us which we can use to reignite the church post pandemic. He also reminded us that each one of us has different gifts we can bring to expand the work of the church in our community and beyond. He encouraged each one of us to be part of the exciting re-imagining of our churches as we go forward. If you are not sure where you fit in that then talk to one of the church leaders and they would be delighted to help you discover where your God given gifts lie. We finished the service with the lively song 'When the spirit of the Lord is within my heart' and as Pauline led the dancing the whole congregation clapped, played an instrument and moved with the Spirit. Well done Walton and thank you for making 2021 a Pentecost service to remember, I hope you have warmed up. *Suzie Williams.*

Manna

Giving back to our schools

Teachers and headteachers have been doing admirable work to support pupils during the pandemic. They have not been alone, however, they have been supported by a dedicated community of school governors. Since January, we have been appealing for more volunteers to become governors in our church schools and while some places have been filled, schools still have vacancies to fill.

Governors are crucial to the successful running and of school, offering a variety of skills and knowledge to support the overall operation of the school. While all governors share these common responsibilities, there are vacancies too for Foundation Governors who also promote the distinctiveness of the school as a church school and help with the development of positive relationships between the school and its local churches.

School Organisation and Governance Adviser, Vicky Christopher says, "It's a great opportunity for people to put their skills and experience to good use and develop skills in other areas. Now more than ever our fabulous church schools need our support, and what better way to do that than by volunteering as a governor?"

Schools are looking for governors from all walks of life, could you have something to offer?

News in brief

Twin your bin!

Join St Andrew's Church, Backwell and twin your bins with Tearfund.

Around 2 billion people worldwide don't have their rubbish collected. By twinning your bin for £45, you can help fund a community project that's preventing disease, protecting the environment, and creating jobs.

Jane Canning from St Andrew's said: "We're delighted to be involved with an initiative of such global reach and importance. I worked in Tanzania for two years. I expected terrible roads and poverty, what shocked me was that nobody collected our rubbish. We had to burn it or bury it in the garden."

[Find out more about Bin Twinning](#)

Marking a year of chaplaincy

Just over a year ago, Ewen Huffman became Chaplain to Hinckley Point C, the first salaried Chaplain to the construction industry. Starting work at Europe's largest building site just as a global pandemic took hold was never going to be easy, but Ewen has continued to work on site throughout the year and has quickly become a familiar and valued part of the team. He's established a Christian group, runs regular prayer meetings and works alongside other health and mental health workers to provide support to anyone who needs it.

Wilder Churches

If you missed the popular Wilder Churches events run in partnership with the Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) in March, then don't worry, you haven't missed out. You can still watch the

March session on line or register to join a session on 30 June.
[Visit the SWT website](#) to find out more.

A time to learn

Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

'I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught,' wrote Winston Churchill. I think many of us would echo that thought!

A huge 'thank you' to our teachers and all who support our schools! There has been a tremendous effort across our diocese to ensure our children have been able to continue their education during lockdowns and the need to restrict normal practice. Not only have the children been learning but teaching staff have also been going 'back to school' in order to find new means of communication. Governors, church communities and individual volunteers have gone the extra mile too, to encourage our teachers through gifts and cards and prayer. The whole school team deserves our gratitude.

Learning online is a challenge. Those of us who are spending many hours in Zoom rooms online these days can vouch for that. It's tiring! And it is not just our children who have found it so. At the end of this month we shall be celebrating the ordinations of our new priests. Last year they were ordained as deacons in September following three months as lay curates as a result of the pandemic restrictions.

What a year to be a deacon! They've had a very different learning experience than would normally be expected. Not so much opportunity of the 'hands-on' experience yet perhaps an even more profound learning possibility. I'm looking forward to

hearing their stories!

We shall be repeating the new pattern of ordinations with our incoming deacons being licensed as lay curates initially this June. For them, colleges and courses have taken place principally online and they've had experience of digital worship on top of regular lectures and seminars. How might that prepare them for our 'new normal' of blended worship, with live-streaming of services in person?

As the Church emerges into this 'new normal' we have the opportunity together to learn and discover new things, new gifts, new ways of being the people of God. It is the same good God, the same story of His love to share with others, but there's a new landscape. How might you and your community respond to that? What have you learnt in this time? And how might that learning change you and the way you do things? Do share your stories with us!

“One learns from books and example only that certain things can be done. Actual learning requires that you do those things.”
(Frank Herbert)

Every blessing

Bishop Ruth

Interview

Bridging the diversity gap

Sharon Warmington, CEO of the National Black Governors Network, explains how improving school governor and leadership diversity benefits everyone.

What brought about the National Black Governors Network (NBN)?

After many years of being both a governor and a clerk to governing bodies, I realised I was often the only person of colour in the room, and I felt very strongly that that needed to change.

You recently led a session for Somerset schools on Bridging the Diversity Gap, what did that cover?

I always try and promote an honest conversation, suspending political correctness and pussyfooting around the challenges. We talked about governance through the lens of race and identified practical steps to help them recruit and retain a more diverse governing body, without it being a box ticking exercise.

What kind of practical steps can schools take?

Skills audits and succession planning is one area to look at. If you review your governing body and realise that you could really do with supplementing your legal skills, where are you going to look for that person? Have you approached the Society of Black Lawyers? You may feel that you are lacking a young person's voice. Have you approached your local university to see if any students would be interested?

Does every school need a diverse governing body?

Not every child's school or village has a diverse population, but they are experiencing that diversity on social and other media, so

it is important that they see and hear those different faces and voices in their school life.

What are your hopes for the future for schools?

There are no quick wins here. Change will take time. Every school needs good governance and I hope to continue to support schools in their bid to diversify their governing boards and also their leadership teams.

Find out more: <https://www.nbgn.co.uk/>

<https://thegovernorspodcast.buzzsprout.com/1684594>

U.C.B.

Hearing from God

'SPEAK, LORD, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING.'

1 Samuel 3:9 NIV

Too many of us think of prayer as just talking to God, rarely stopping to wonder if He might want to talk to us. How does God speak to us?

- Through His Word. A familiar verse jumps off the page and takes on new meaning.
- Through people. But you cannot be so preoccupied, or selective, that you do not recognize them.
- Through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads, rebukes, encourages, comforts and stretches us.

A lot of us, however, do not seem to expect God to speak to us at all. By our actions you would think that Jesus packed up and went back to heaven forty days after His resurrection and has not been heard from since. No, the Bible is full of accounts of God

speaking to His children. If the essence of Christianity is a personal relationship with God, then God must still speak today. But you cannot build a relationship on one-way speeches; you need regular intimate contact between two persons, both of whom speak and both of whom listen.

Hearing God speak to us through His Spirit is not only normal, it is essential. Paul wrote, 'You ... are controlled ... by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you ...' (Romans 8:9 NIV). Once you turn your life over to Jesus, it cannot be business as usual. Life no longer consists only of that which can be seen, felt or figured out. It includes walking by faith! Trusting God! Constantly opening yourself to His voice and to the leadings of His Spirit!