

September Life

Editorial Notes

It has finally been allowed to happen! The lifting of further restrictions has meant that we were allowed to celebrate the 1st anniversary of Ana's licensing in August. Although the weather was not the best for an outside event (see Walton Matters) there were a good number there enjoying fellowship and their own picnic in the splendid surroundings of the Rectory Gardens. The front cover shows most of those who were there and the picture includes myself as Sandra insisted that I should be included for once. The bottom photograph includes all the benefice's Church Wardens along with Ana our Rector.

I have tried to include as many interesting pictures of the event on the back cover as I could, top left shows the lovely pond with the Mission Church in the background, centre right is taken through a one pence size hole in the fence whilst Kevin is putting out some more chairs, bottom left is John in his newly acquired buggy. I am hoping that there will be some more pictures of the event on the website or facebook soon.

We are beginning to return to brighter times and church gatherings are starting up again, but of course we will have to be cautious and careful. One future event for us men is featured on page 17 and there are various items on pages 3,4,& 5 to tempt us all back to other church gatherings.

It's back!! You will find the Manna including the Bishop's letter back in its usual place with Bishop Ruth 'Looking to the next chapter'.

You may have noticed that the War Memorial in Merriman Park is being dismantled (as I write this) and is to be rebuilt in another area of the park which hopefully will give more room for the Fun Day on Saturday 4th September. We at Trinity Handbells are hoping to see some of you there supporting us. Roger Harmsworth

Rector's Letter

Dear Friends,

"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God"
Psalm 40. 3

September tends to mark a fresh start for many of us – schools and colleges begin a new term and many organisations, perhaps following a summer break resume a programme at this time of year. With Covid restrictions lifting it may feel even more significant this year as some things that we have not been able to see or do resume after many months.

In the life of our churches, we will also be making many new starts with, I hope and pray, the launch of a number of initiatives across the benefice. Some of these you can read about elsewhere in the magazine including the re-introduction of children's work at the Mission Church, an event for families at Walton, a course, 'Mission Shaped Living' for the whole benefice starting in a few weeks' time and a men's breakfast. And there's more to come, watch this space!

As the Psalmist said (in the verse above) God has put a new song in our mouths and it has been wonderful to be able to sing again in our Sunday and midweek services, for those of you who have been able to come to church as we have begun to 'find our voices' again.

In these coming months, I am keen that, as we discern all that God is calling us into, both as individuals and as a wider benefice, we look to 'doing' and 'being' church in new and fresh ways. Let's be a church family that is looking forwards and

outwards; reaching new generations and being prepared to re-imagine what we do. This September, my prayer is that we will be singing a new song rather than simply seeking to re-create things that have happened in the past.

Part of our looking outwards should be inviting inwards and please be prayerfully considering who you could be inviting back to church as part of our 'back to church' special Sunday, now rescheduled for Sunday 3rd October. Special invitation cards will be available in September, but you don't have to wait until then!

Yours, with blessings and my prayers,

Ana

'Back to Church' Sunday

On Sunday 3rd October, you are encouraged to invite friends, neighbours and family to come 'back to church'. Maybe they used to come? Maybe they have got out of the habit of coming? Maybe this is an opportunity to invite them to come for the first time? Each of our services will have a special focus on welcoming people back although please reassure people that no-one will be singled out! Special invitations will be available shortly.

Ana Lawrence

Thank you for your feedback

You may recall that we asked for comments and feedback on the three-month trial on various changes in service times that we introduced in the spring. Thank you so much to all of you who took the time to share your thoughts. As a result, from September, we will be changing the service time at the parish church on the first and third Sunday to from 11.15am to the new time of 11am. With four church services on a Sunday morning, 'juggling preachers and leaders' will always be a challenge, but I

hope this change goes some way to responding to the comments received.

Ana Lawrence

A New Course for the Autumn - Mission Shaped Living

As part of our Christian calling to look outwards, during the Autumn weeks, we are focusing on mission both in our Sunday morning sermon series and midweek at a new course 'Mission Shaped Living'. This 8-week course, open to all across the benefice, is designed to give us the tools to reach and bless our communities. Starting on Wednesday October 6th and running until Wednesday 24th November in the Mission Church, the evening will begin at 7pm with a pudding, followed by a chance to learn together. We will be finished by 9pm. If you would like to join the course, please let the office know, for further details, please talk to Ana.

Ana Lawrence

House groups

If you have ever wanted to ask a question on a Sunday or chat through some of the things being said in a sermon with other people, house groups may be for you.

They are a great way of meeting with other Christians who meet to study the bible together, pray and have fellowship. If you are not currently in a group and would like to consider joining one, please have a word with one of the leaders or with Ana who would be delighted to talk to you.

Ana Lawrence

Confirmation

Confirmation is the nearest we have in the Anglican Church to 'membership' and confirmation is a public opportunity to confirm

the vows made at Baptism and to become a full member of the Church of England. This year's Confirmation Service will be held in Wells Cathedral on Saturday 13th November at 2pm. If you would like to consider getting confirmed, please contact me.

Ana Lawrence

Family Harvest Event at Walton

On Sunday 26th September from 2 – 3.30pm we will be running a special harvest event. This is aimed at primary school aged children and their families. There will be interactive activities, games, craft and fun for the whole family. If you are interested in getting involved, please have a word with me.

Ana Lawrence

'Fancy a coffee?'

Across the benefice, we already host coffee mornings midweek in Compton Dundon and Walton (where this ministry of hospitality is about to re-start – see elsewhere in the magazine for details). It would be great to also host a coffee morning in Street, and if you are up for helping, either by serving coffee, baking or in any other way, please have a word with me.

Ana Lawrence

Thanks to our Wardens

I would like to thank our four dedicated and hardworking church wardens. Much of the work that they do is never seen and that is particularly true for some of the things they have been involved in over the last few weeks. There has been a great deal of sorting and tidying going on in and around our churches as well as work to sort out papers, policies and other routine, but essential parts of church life. So, thank you to Diane Gray (Street), Sandra Gristock (Walton), Pat King and Trish Cox (Compton Dundon).

Ana Lawrence

Home Communion

You may have seen in recent editions of Lifeline, that we are hoping to re-start offering Communion in people's homes, for

those unable to get to church. If you would like to receive Communion at home, please could you contact the office.

Ana Lawrence

Walton Matters

What does man gain from all his labour at which he toils under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains for ever. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, and they return again, there they return again.

Ecclesiastes Ch1. V's 3-7.

Thank you to Ana and Kevin for hosting a picnic in the rectory garden to celebrate their 1st year with us. It was lovely to see so many and the spots of rain didn't dampen our spirits until the end of the afternoon when we had a heavy downpour which sent us all running for cover. We also had our photographer recording the event.



It is so exciting to announce that we are recommencing our coffee mornings on Thursday 9th September. For the first week due to Covid, we ask that you bring your own flask of coffee or take away.

Please come along, it is a wonderful chance not only to catch up with dear friends, but also to meet our Rector, Ana who will lead us in a thought for the day.

We are having a Friends of Walton Church meeting on 2nd September in Church at 2.00. It will be good to have new ideas

for fundraising so please come and join us.

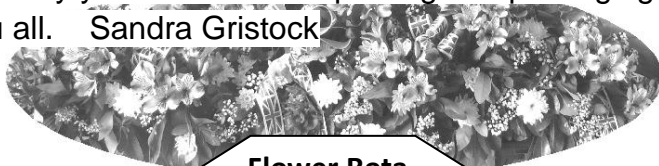
Our Harvest service will be on the 3rd October and we will be serving coffee and cake afterwards. We hope to have a few items



for sale so if you have any produce or other items we would be grateful.

The Church will be open on Saturday morning 2nd October from 9.30 for decorating. It will be lovely to see you if you can help in arranging or cleaning.

I can't believe it is that time of year again but from after the Harvest services in our Churches, Samaritans Purse shoe boxes will be available. We have been sending our gifts to underprivileged children around the world for many years and helping to transform lives by letting them know they are loved. As always, if you are unable to fill your own box, do let me know and I will shop for you and show you the filled box. A small donation is another way you can assist as posting and packaging is costly. Bless you all. Sandra Gristock



Flower Rota.

My thanks to go Brenda Stradling for stepping in to the Flower rota in place of Liz Selway 21st August. Liz is having a cataract removed and so needs to isolate. I have swopped them around.

4th September Jane Doyle 18th September Anne Halsted
2nd October Sandra Gristock

Compton Dundon News

The power of friendship

How wonderful it has been to invite friends into our gardens in Compton Dundon for regular coffee mornings. And not just churchgoers, but neighbours and those newly moved to the village. There are two coffee mornings in September:



Tuesday, September 7th at 10.30
at Susie's, 'Lime Tree Cottage,' Compton Street.

Followed by Wednesday, September 22nd at 10.30 at Julie's, 'The Pippins,' Hayes Road.

We hope to see you there.

Thank you Margaret



On Sunday August 8th the congregation of St Andrew's, Compton Dundon thanked Margaret Sutton for her long and dedicated service on the PCC, which included 20 years as Treasurer.

She was presented with flowers and a gift of garden vouchers so that she can choose some new plants for her lovely garden. We are all very grateful for her contributions in so many ways to the church and the village and we continue to be thankful for her friendship here among us.

Pat King.

WATCH - Are you an OSTRICH or an OVERCOMER?

We all know the old adage “The ostrich buries it’s head in the sand” and it’s very tempting to do this as we face an accelerating ever-changing landscape of changes and challenges in our world today, ranging from climate change to artificial intelligence, from forest fires to lining with a global pandemic. It is quite easy to be a TV spectator to most of this from the comfort of an armchair. But is this the reaction God expects from members of his church? Is God really silent on these issues?

If God isn’t then we had better wake up pretty sharpish or we’ll be in danger of being knocked off our perches and hit for six when we are caught off-guard in the slips because we haven’t done our homework on what to expect from the bowler.

I am currently reading a commentary on Revelation. This is a closed book to many people who consider it incomprehensible. But should we also follow them and ignore it completely? Martin Luther thought so, but he was no more infallible than the Popes he vehemently opposed. Why should we read it and wrestle with what it’s about?

First and foremost, it’s the only book in the Bible written by Jesus himself (Rev1:1), having been revealed to him by God his Father. Second, he promises a special blessing to all who read it or hear it (1:2).

Third, a curse is pronounced on anyone who adds to or takes away from its message.

Fourthly, in each of the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3, a promise of a heavenly reward is made to those who “overcome”. This is at the end of Jesus’s individual report on the good (if any) and bad points of each church. An overcomer will be someone who reads these reports and determines that he will take the message to heart and address and, with God’s help, overcome the shortcomings highlighted.

This is the challenge to us: it is the challenge of a lifetime. Jesus is knocking on the door of my heart and yours, asking to come in and run the race with us. Are we individually and corporately, up for it - the true context of Revelation 3:20?

to be continued... *Bernard Sinclair*

REVD CANON JOHN POLKINGHORNE 1930-2021

Elmhurst G.S. former pupil who went on to become a leading Cambridge professor

and discovered the science of free will as well as being ordained in the C of E.

If you look in the new War Memorial Garden just along from the URC church in the High Street you will find the name ‘Polkinghorne PG’ on the 1939-1945 plaque. That one is John’s elder brother, an RAF pilot who was killed in 1942. John went to Elmhurst Grammar School (now Elmhurst Junior School) in Street. He was born in Weston-super-Mare where his father worked in a post office. Presumably his father later moved to Street and worked in a post office here, but I don’t know this for sure. John completed his education at a school in Cambridge, and after national service in the Army went on to Cambridge University where he studied Maths. He went on to do a doctorate in high energy physics where he worked with Paul Dirac, who was a founding father of quantum mechanics.

Much to the surprise of fellow scientists who did not share his Christian faith, he believed that advances in his field of science in

the 20th century actually made it easier to believe in God. Previously scientists had believed that the movement of an object was predetermined by the forces acting on it, following Newton's laws of motion. This posed a problem for Christians, because if the course of events is predetermined then we human beings, although created in the image of God, have no freewill. But in the 20th century scientists discovered that atoms don't always behave in line with predictions. Polkinghorne believed that quantum physics, the study of this strange behaviour, demonstrated that, contrary to Newton's findings, science could never prove causality. This left wide open the possibility of divine intervention, and also that if things were not inevitably determined, then perhaps we human beings individually have free will.

He thought it no less an article of faith to believe that atoms move according to some hidden law of nature, as many other scientists did, than for him to believe that they moved according to God's will.

This dumbfounded many of his colleagues who regarded his being a Christian and a scientist with the suspicion that, as he put it, "might follow from the claim to be a vegetarian butcher." His scientific credentials were such however that he clearly knew what he was talking about.

During the 1960s and 70s he helped to define the equation that posited the existence of 'quarks', the smallest of all particles. In 1968 he became professor of mathematical physics at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was made a member of the Royal Society in 1974.

In 1979 he decided it was time to make way for those with younger and fresher minds and announced that he was seeking ordination in the Church of England. He studied theology at Ridley Hall, Cambridge and went on to curacies in Cambridge and Bristol, before becoming the vicar of a rural parish in Kent, near Canterbury.

Whilst he very much enjoyed parish life, he said "the intellectual side of me, which is quite strong in my make-up, wasn't greatly

exercised” and in 1986 he accepted the post of dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

He became a prolific writer of books about the relationship between science and religion, with titles such as *The Way the World is: the Christian Perspective of Science*. This was the first of 26 such books.

He was knighted in 1987, but as a clergyman did not use the title “Sir”.

Once he was asked how he imagined the afterlife, he replied, “People sometimes say that eternal life would be just boring; you know, just sitting on a cloud and shouting ‘Hallelujah’ or something. But it is the unending exploration of the reality of God, progressively unveiledthat seems to me the most persuasive picture of the life to come.” Bernard Sinclair

Jess Hudson who achieved the A level grades needed to get her place at Uni.

Isaac Day for obtaining 3A* in his A levels, thus earning his place at Southampton Uni.

Katie (Diane Grays Granddaughter) who achieved 3 distinctions for her Btech exams.

To our not quite so young!

Sonia Beaty who recently celebrated her 50th birthday.

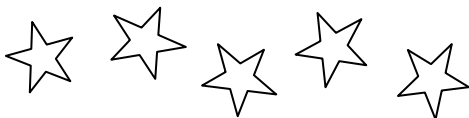
Suzie Williams on becoming a Sea Cadet Chaplain.

Freda Smallwood On achieving ‘Woman of the year’ with Slimming World.

Ana Lawrence celebrating her 1st anniversary of her formal licensing to serve us in this benefice.

We wish them all the very best for the future. Roger Harmsworth.

Little Stars Update.



In September 2016 we began our Little Stars parent and toddler group, so this year we celebrate our 5th Birthday!

In May 2021 we restarted our group and have a weekly gathering of roughly 8 families each time.

Our volunteers currently are Pam, Julie, Suzie, Ruth and Darrell. Please do continue to pray for the families who attend, that they feel supported, and feel the touch of God's love through us.

In July we stopped for a summer break, and here are 2 of the lovely comments posted on Little Stars Facebook page by grateful local families...

"Thank you, you have all been so nice and welcoming. We enjoy coming and A has really come out of her shell and really enjoys it..".KG

"Thank you for such a lovely group. We will see you in September." TLC

As volunteers we look forward to singing in the group again, and also to be able to serve refreshments again, when the time feels right, and we have permission. These things will happen in time. We are so grateful to have the opportunity to support some of the wonderful young families that live in our community in these unusual times!

Julie Day and the team



Children's Sunday Groups at the Mission Church

From September on the second and fourth weeks of the month, we will be resuming our children's work during the morning

services. The children will leave the service for their own special activities and join the service again for Communion (on the second Sunday). We look forward to welcoming them as part of the church family. We would also welcome more people to help to lead these groups and if you would like to be involved, please have a word with Hannah Hindle at the Mission Church.

Ana Lawrence

CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY SWCD CHURCHES

Over the coming months, we plan to feature those organisations we will be supporting financially through our charitable giving across the benefice.

Introducing the Railway Children, one of the charities supported by Walton Church.

The Railway Children charity (<https://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/>) is being supported for the first time by Walton Church. It was founded 22 years ago by David Maidment OBE, a lifelong railwayman, advisor to the TV series 'Thomas the Tank Engine' and train enthusiast, in response to meeting children forced to beg for coins on Indian railway stations. The charity now supports street children throughout India, Tanzania and Kenya in East Africa and in the UK, where they work with 'at risk' young people often using the railway network as a place to hide or escape from difficult personal or situations.

The charity has grown rapidly since its foundation and now says it supports 275,000 children both through immediate action to support and rescue vulnerable children in immediate need and longer-term support. The latter includes projects supporting street children to return safely to their families where possible

and campaigning for local governments and communities in India and East Africa to both recognise the problem of those thousands of children who live on the streets and access the resources that they need to offer long-term locally based solutions.

Our charitable giving in 2021 will help them in this work. To find out more, visit the charity's web site, or speak to Bernard Sinclair, the benefice charitable giving representative for Walton Church.

Kevin Lawrence On behalf of the benefice charitable giving committee

CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY SWCD CHURCHES

Over the coming months, we plan to feature those organisations we will be supporting financially through our charitable giving across the benefice.

Introducing the Railway Children, one of the charities supported by Walton Church.

The Railway Children charity (<https://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/>) is being supported for the first time by Walton Church. It was founded 22 years ago by David Maidment OBE, a lifelong railwayman, advisor to the TV series 'Thomas the Tank Engine' and train enthusiast, in response to meeting children forced to beg for coins on Indian railway stations. The charity now supports street children throughout India, Tanzania and Kenya in East Africa and in the UK, where they work with 'at risk' young people often using the railway network as a place to hide or escape from difficult personal or situations.

The charity has grown rapidly since its foundation and now says it supports 275,000 children both through immediate action to support and rescue vulnerable children in immediate need and longer-term support. The latter includes projects supporting street children to return safely to their families where possible and campaigning for local governments and communities in India and East Africa to both recognise the problem of those thousands of children who live on the streets and access the resources that they need to offer long-term locally based solutions.

Our charitable giving in 2021 will help them in this work. To find out more, visit the charity's web site, or speak to Bernard Sinclair, the benefice charitable giving representative for Walton Church.

Kevin Lawrence On behalf of the benefice charitable giving committee

Gentlemen prefer beans?

SWCD Churches Men's Breakfast coming in October



I hope the awful pun grabbed your attention (unless you are too young to remember the film). Whether your preferred breakfast in the morning is the 'full English' or something a little lighter and dare I say healthier, this may be for you.

On Saturday 16th October, in the Mission Church, we are planning the first of what will be, we hope, regular men's breakfasts for SWCD churches. A chance to eat, talk and laugh together and an opportunity to invite friends and neighbours to join you for good food and good company at the beginning of the weekend.

At this stage, please



and watch out for information and how to book places. We are looking forward to seeing a good number of you there.

Oh, and if any of you gentlemen out there fancy yourselves as dab hands with a spatula or a tea towel, I would be particularly pleased to hear from you – go on, you know you want to!

Kevin Lawrence

SWCD Eco Churches

Sue Ripley introduced us to Eco Church and is still steering the group. The rest of us joined in as the Eco Church journey continued. Sue says "I have long been interested in environmental matters and am a longstanding member of a number of wildlife organisations. For me Eco Church links my Christian faith with care for our planet."

Helen Thomas and Trish Cox are the representatives from Compton Dundon.

Helen says "I became involved in Eco Church as I wished to play my part in protecting our fragile planet for future generations." Trish Cox is also keen to see everyone living a more eco existence and is keen to work on moving the church and churchyard to a more sustainable way of 'being'.

At Walton Sandra is working hard alongside Sue Ripley to make the church and grounds more eco friendly.

At Street Suzie, David and Kay are sharing the work with Sue. Kay says "I wanted to be involved as I care about God's world and the part the church can play in helping to protect it, especially the wildlife aspects." She has been helping Pam with the wild garden at Mission Church.

David Yemm has been working tirelessly on our past carbon footprint; he has experience in many eco areas as you will have read in his articles. He is a member of Somerset Wildlife Trust and his reason for joining the group would be that he always likes to try and improve anything and feels he can have a beneficial input in the objectives of Eco-Church with his past experiences.

Suzie has been working with Sue for a couple of years on both Parish and Mission Churches, and acknowledges she has learned a lot but equally has much to learn. To Suzie caring for the planet and all creatures in it is a foundation stone of her faith. She is a member of Somerset Wildlife Trust and Green Christian.

Currently we have a local botanist surveying our church yards; you will read more about that in the future. We have produced an Action Plan which has been updated to help us to keep track of our progress and to consult and inform PCC's on what we are doing.

We work on the principle that many willing hands make light work so if you would like to join us please talk to any team member and we will gladly welcome you on board.

Suzie Williams (Street), for SWCD Eco Church Group

Body, Mind, Soul

We will be starting back on **Thursday 9th September, 9.30 am**. We will be following a 'keep-fit for seniors' video online – using chairs instead of mats. You will need to bring a couple of tins of baked beans or similar to use as weights. Suitable for all ages as you can put as much effort in as you feel able to. There is no pressure to keep up, we just try to have fun while giving our bodies a work out.

It's good to give our spiritual beings a work out too, as St. Paul reminds us in his letter to Timothy, 'For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.' (1 Tim 4:8). So after a cool down and a drink and chat we will aim to start the Bible study at about 10.45 am. If you feel that the exercise is not for you but would like to join a Bible study group you would be very welcome to join us. Equally, if you cannot commit to a whole morning but feel like giving the exercise a go, that's fine too, one of our members does just that as she then dashes off to work. Or if you are in the area why not pop in for a cup of coffee around 10.30? We would love to see you.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

THE BIG TEARFUND QUIZ

We're excited to announce that Big Quiz Night is back on 20 November 2021! Thousands of people from hundreds of churches across the UK will unite for an epic evening of poverty-beating fun, and we'd love you to join us at Street Mission church; more details to follow.



Suzie Williams

Manna

The search for a new bishop

Following the retirement of Bishop Peter in May, the diocese is now looking to the future and taking the necessary steps to appoint the next Bishop of Bath and Wells.

As part of the process of finding our new bishop, people across the diocese are being asked to share their views. Hundreds of people completed surveys expressing their hopes for the new bishop in the summer and in September the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary will meet with various groups of people in the diocese and then hold an open public meeting, where all can contribute.

The process is taken forward by the Vacancy in See Committee, a cross-section of people from across the diocese. The Vacancy in See committee has two aims, to consult, discern and prepare a diocesan Statement of Needs, a document which reflects the hopes and challenges for the ministry of the next bishop and to portray what is distinctive about the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

The second aim is to elect six representatives to join the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) which is responsible for the actual interviews process.

Chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the CNC, is responsible for interviewing the potential candidates before a recommendation is sent to Her Majesty the Queen. The appointment of a new bishop is then made by the Queen following an established process.

Simon Hill, Archdeacon of Taunton and Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee says, "Everyone, young and old, church going

and non-church going, has been invited to share their thoughts through surveys and consultation.”

If you have any queries or views you wish to contribute please email: newbishop@bathwells.anglican.org. Find out more about the progress at www.bathandwells.org.uk/new-bishop

News in brief

Cross cultural climate crisis conference

“We need to address climate concerns in our hearts and minds.” Bishop Ruth told clergy and church members from across the diocese at a climate crisis event organised with the charity Send a Cow.

The group heard Rob Walrond, rural affairs adviser, and Titus Sagala, Country Director of Send a Cow Kenya, who joined from Kenya on Zoom, tell them first-hand how climate change is forcing farmers in every country to find new ways of operating and how climate change is hurting crop yields and damaging farmland in places all across the world, from England to Kenya

Landlubbers Holiday Camp

Every year in Minehead the Exmoor Youth Project runs a summer holiday club for children aged 5 to 12. This year the theme was Landlubbers! The children learned all about Jesus and St Paul through song, games, story-telling and crafts. Fr Simon, vicar of Minehead, said "Our thanks go to Jess and Lynne from the Exmoor Youth project"

Magnificent Go Team mural made in Saltford

A fantastic school mural is taking shape in Saltford Church of England primary school. Andy Gray, the diocesan faith sharing

enabler, also an artist, was commissioned to create the mural. It is based on the Go team's Bible Chat Mats, also designed by Andy, which encourage children, young people, and adults to read the Bible and have conversations together. Andy was presented with 400 design ideas from the children and he wove them into what he has called "The Chat Wall, the artistic sibling of Go Team Advisers' Bible Chat Mats initiative."

Looking to the next chapter

By Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

Back to school!' perhaps has never sounded so good. For those of us who found last year disrupted in terms of school, college or University, some of our young people and their parents might be really looking forward to the doors re-opening! And perhaps their teachers too!

Of course things will not be the same as they were. A new school year always means change. New classes, new goals, new possibilities. An opportunity to start with a clean sheet, open the next chapter of the book of our lives.

Here in Bath and Wells we are also looking to the next chapter in our story of faith together. This month we will be bringing together all we have learnt from listening to others about where we are as a diocese and what sort of bishop we now need to lead us into the future. If you haven't already done so, please have your say by attending the open consultation Zoom meeting on September 20th. We have already heard the thoughts of almost 1000 of our children across schools in the county, as well as hundreds of adults!

It will be some time before we know who our next Diocesan Bishop will be but now is the time to start praying for him or her

so that they might hear from God as we also seek God's wisdom and guidance. And let's pray too for ourselves and all those within our diocese, that each of us will find God's will for the next stage of our journey.

None of us can know what that might hold for certain. The last year or two have shown us how difficult it is to predict anything! Some of us have lost loved ones and livelihoods. It will take time to recover and to renew our hope.

There will be challenges along the way and we have much to face together. However, our hope is in the Lord and we hold to the promises of His word...

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Proverbs 29:11

Bishop Ruth

Interview

All generations have their say

Youth worker Emily Hatton reflects on her role in the Vacancy in See Committee

What is the Vacancy in See committee for?

It's a group of people who represent the diocese in different ages and stages. Its for finding out what the diocese needs in terms of the next bishop.

Why is it important young people are represented?

I think it's really important that young people are represented because we are an equal part of the church. The church is a family, and in families you have all generations. The committee should ensure that all generations are represented and spoken for and all voices are listened to.

Who is on the committee?

So, we've got Archdeacon Simon, he's the Archdeacon of Taunton, who's been chairing a lot of it, Bishop Ruth is also on the committee. We've got people from the diocese's support services team like Sue Rose, and Matt Orr from Movement, the youth worship team based in Bath. There are also lots of clergy and lay people.

What has your experience of the committee been?

Most of it has been on Zoom, which is interesting when you've got such a big group of people and they've all got things to say. I'm really glad I'm on it, it's quite an honour to be on the committee.

Why does it take so long to get a new bishop?

It's a whole huge process, and the bishop has a lot of responsibility and is an important person in the diocese. You need to make sure you get the right person and that the person who ends up being the bishop is God's best for the diocese.

Stay Balanced'

... DO NOT LET ... ERRORS ... MAKE YOU LOSE YOUR
BALANCE.' 2 PETER 3:17 CEV

In the Olympic games the pentathlon is composed of five events: pistol shooting, fencing, horseback riding, running, and

swimming. Medals are given for succeeding in all five areas, not just one or two. And the same is true in your Christian life. If you are serious about staying on track and in balance, you need to develop two vitally important habits:

1. Talking it through with others! The best way to internalize any scriptural principle is to discuss it with others. The Bible says, 'As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other' (Proverbs 27:17 NCV). Only as you interact with others can you give and receive feedback, discuss real life examples, pray for, encourage and support each other as you begin to live out God's principles. Remember, we are meant to grow together, not separately.

2. Giving yourself regular checkups! Listen:'... Do not drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups ... Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it (2 Corinthians 13:5 TM). For good physical health you need regular checkups to determine your blood pressure, temperature, weight and so on. For good spiritual health you need to regularly check such vital areas as prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, growth in character, stewardship and ministry to others.

Jeremiah wrote, 'Let;s take a good look at the way we are living and reorder our lives under God' (Lamentations 3:40 TM). You will be amazed how much these two habits help to keep you spiritually balanced!

From the daily readings in 'The Word for Today'. This booklet of devotional readings is published every three months and is available free of charge through the generosity of supporters, from: UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF. Tel: 0845 60 40 401. Email: ucb@ucb.co.uk

UCB is short for United Christian Broadcasters, who also produce Christian radio and TV programmes available on DAB digital radio, TV and online. Details at ucbmedia.co.uk