

## Editorial Notes

On pages 12 & 13 Celia Linney gives us an interesting insight of our churches wildlife. Recently I have been keeping an eye out for wildlife in Street Parish Churchyard and a few days ago watched and photographed a young woodpecker foraging for ants near the gravestones.



It is surprising how much wildlife I see while keeping certain areas tidy with strimmer and mower, including of course our resident squirrels.

This month's cover reminds us it's harvest time, with a combine hard at work at Lytes Cary, also some rolls and bread which adorned the alter table at the Parish Church some years back. The back cover shows various pictures of Benefice Harvest displays of the past and the centre one is a very recent one in Street Parish Church of an early 'Harvest display' put together for this cover.

It is so good to see our church doors open for visitors and for those who deliver this magazine who can now pick them up from the Mission Church again. Also the churches can be 'booked' for meetings, choir practices, and other activities that fall within church use guidelines. Details of booking fees, availability, and any restrictions can be accessed by contacting the Mission Church office by phone or E-Mail, details of which can be found on the inside front cover.

### **Congratulations to:**

- Andy Savage on passing his latest assignment as part of his reader training.
- Kevin Lawrence who will be formally welcomed as a reader in Wells Cathedral on 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

Editor

# Rector's Letter

Dear Friends,

*"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" Romans 15. 7*

I am excited that this month begins with our special 'Back to Church' Sunday Services on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Whether we will be celebrating Harvest Festival or doing things a little differently with sofas (in the Mission Church, Street), my hope and prayer is that we will be bold as we invite friends, neighbours and family members to church. You will have probably seen our special invitation cards by now, though it is not too late to pick some up to offer to others.

Sadly, I have lost count of the number of times people have told me of their poor experience of being welcomed into a Christian fellowship and even the oft quoted words 'we are a welcoming church' can mask a very different reality for some people when they cross the threshold for the first time. Sometimes we are too busy greeting our friends to notice a stranger. Sometimes we forget that what might be normal and usual for us is odd and confusing for a first-time visitor. And yet, as Christians, we have first been welcomed by Jesus Christ and in turn we should always offer a welcome to all. Whether a smile on the door, an encouraging word, a hand squeeze, or hug (for those who are ready), being welcomed well makes all the difference as we come to worship.

Churches, perhaps uniquely are places of broad welcome. Almost nowhere else will you regularly meet, spend time with people from completely different backgrounds, ages, life experiences etc. What unites us is our role as worshippers and

searchers; people who come together with questions and concerns, hopes and dreams that we can bring to Jesus through worship and prayer. Recently, whilst on holiday, I saw a door sign in a gift shop which (jokingly) said, 'Oh no, not you again'. On our church doors, I would love the signs to say something completely different like: 'Oh yes, definitely you again!'

Whoever you are, however much you may feel you don't fit or aren't good enough, you are welcome. You are welcome to worship on Sundays, you are welcome to our various activities and events during the week and you are especially welcome if you might be someone who struggles to get out so much these days and would like us to bring 'church to you' through a pastoral visit or home communion.

With my love and prayers, Ana.

## **More from Ana**

### **Back to Church' Sunday**

A reminder that on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 coming that no-one will be singled out! Special invitations are now available in our churches and the church office. Please do make use them.

### **Messy Harvest Event at Walton**

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October from 2.30 – 4pm we will be running a special messy 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. Please invite friends, neighbours or family to come along.

## **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 6<sup>th</sup> and running until Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Joint Service**

On Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October, we shall be meeting together for a special joint Sunday Service at 10.30am in the Mission Church, Street. It would be great to see people from all our churches joining us as we meet together as a wider Christian family.

### **Communion @the Mission & a Service of Healing**

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November (Remembrance Sunday), in addition to our usual Morning Remembrance services, we are going to host a service in the Mission Church at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. This will be an informal gathering which will include Communion and a focus on healing. There will be the opportunity during the service to receive prayer and anointing with oil.

### **Memorial Service**

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November, at 3pm in the Parish Church, Street and at 6pm in St Andrew's Compton Dundon, we will be holding memorial services; a space to remember with gratitude loved ones whom we have lost. Special invitations will be sent to families of those whose funeral services it has been our privilege

to conduct in recent times; however, these services are open to all who would value them, whether the loss remembered is recent or some time ago. More details to follow. Ana Lawrence

## **Calendars, Breakfasts and Books**

### **Real Advent Calendars**

If you are in the habit of buying Advent calendars for friends or family, why not consider buying one with a difference this year? If you are tired of only ever seeing overpriced promotions for the latest Disney film or TV show, this may be just the option for you

Through SWCD Churches, we will be taking orders, over the coming weeks, for 'The Real Advent Calendar' which uses only fairly traded chocolate and offers a clear presentation of the real Christmas story, with a children's story book and a daily reminder of the Nativity narrative behind every window.

These calendars will not be available in most shops and orders will need to be received by early November, so don't miss out! We are also hoping to offer an option, if you wish it, to donate a calendar to a family via our local foodbank.

Watch this space for further details.

KL

### **Breakfast time, chaps?**

A reminder to book your place at the first of our men's breakfasts in the Mission Church on Saturday 16 October. See our web site or Lifeline for more information about how to get tickets. KL

### **Fancy a good read?**

Did you know that SWCD Churches has a book club? Our current choice of book is 'Planetwise' by Rev Dave Bookless, a short but thought-provoking book about how Christians may respond to the current issues around climate change etc.

The group next meets on 1 November, so it is not too late to get hold of a copy, have a read and come along to the meeting

ready for a relaxed discussion about what we have all found in the book,

For more information, please talk to Ana.

Kevin Lawrence

## Walton Matters



Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is,

there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians. Ch 3. V's 17 & 18.

How wonderful it is to have started our Thursday coffee mornings again after such a long time, albeit with a BYO drink policy at the moment. Especially lovely that Ana shared a 'thought for the day' during that time.

It really has been such an age ago that we last met and it is so good to be able to join together informally. All are very welcome to join us at Walton Church, 10.30 - 11.30 every Thursday. We look forward to seeing you.

We have unfortunately decided not to hold an harvest supper again this year due to not being able to link our harvest service weekend with a hall booking and our musical talents being available, but instead we will have coffee and cake after our Harvest service on the 3rd of October.

We have booked the hall for the 13th November where we will be hosting an evening of music, singing and fun. Rough around the Edges will be playing for us and we will all have the opportunity for a sing-along. Please put this date in your diary.

Unfortunately I have heard from Margaret Burchill, Joan Evans daughter, that the Thanksgiving service due to be held on October 2nd has been cancelled due to continuing restrictions. The family have so appreciated the cards and messages received, and are sorry they won't see us on the Saturday to remember Joan and share happy memories.

It is with sadness we share the news of the death of Sheila Blackmore. Sheila and her late husband John were such a huge part of our Church family for many years and were loved by us all. The last few years have been difficult for Sheila and after several hospital stays recently, she passed away in Arthur's Court. Bless you Sheila. Our love and prayers go to Sue and Lynette and their families in their loss.

This is the month for packing your shoe boxes ready for the mid November date for collection. Leaflets and boxes will be in all our Churches after our Harvest celebrations. Pray for the children who might receive your box and the transforming affect receiving a gift packed with love from strangers can have. Thank you.

Flower rota.

October 9th. Liz Selway.

October 23rd. Brenda Stradling.

Sandra Gristock



## **Compton Dundon News**



## Events galore!

Here in Compton Dundon our Events group has been very busy recently planning various village gatherings. How wonderful to be able to meet again in person and at the same time raise funds for the church, village and communities worldwide

The Cricket Club recently organised a Summer Fete and St Andrew's ran 3 stalls - cakes, bric-a-brac and homemade jams and preserves.

The total raised was £343.50, so thank you to everyone who contributed, sold and bought.



Now that the weather is not as reliable, (although was it Summer in August?!), we are meeting for a coffee morning on the first Wednesday of each month indoors in the Village Hall, from October 6th. We hope that many people can join in. Our posters are headlined CAMEO! representing 'Come And Meet Each Other!'

Sunday October 3rd is our Harvest Festival in church. Edible goods will be donated and taken to the Salvation Army in Street for distribution.

The collection is for Christian Aid, one of our chosen charities. Tickets are currently on sale from the PCC for Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall, with a buffet style meal served by Littleton Caterers. There will be a raffle with some wonderful prizes and an auction of fresh fruit and veg following the lunch.

Our November event is the popular 'Big Breakfast' in the Village Hall on Saturday, November 3rd. This is always well attended by those in Compton Dundon and elsewhere and makes for a great start to the weekend. There are Christmas stalls around the Hall selling a variety of seasonal treats so gift buying can begin.



Our other event before Christmas is a concert in church on December 12th by the professional singing group 'Intermedii.' This is a return visit, and from past experience we know that their singing is exquisite so do come and be enthralled.  
A busy but fulfilling few months ahead! Pat King

## **BENEFICE CHARITABLE GIVING**

As part of our regular feature on charities we support across the benefice, this month we focus on: TEARFUND

Tearfund, the Christian international development charity, has been supported by churches in our benefice for many years, with both Walton and Street choosing them for support again this year.

The charity was founded by a network of evangelical churches in 1968 and, over the last fifty plus years has grown to be one of the biggest development charities in the UK. Its work puts both Christian principles and the local church at the centre of all it does, with programmes in health, education, clean water and sanitation, agricultural development, emergency relief and much more delivered in some of the poorest countries throughout the world. The work on the ground is done with and through local churches, who have deep connections with their communities which enable them to both identify and respond quickly to the greatest local needs.

The Tearfund web site (<https://www.tearfund.org/>) is full of stories from their projects of positive changes to end poverty and lives transformed, or, if you prefer, 'sign up' via the web site to receive

prayer and other news regularly through your letterbox or mail box.

As well as supporting the charity through our charitable giving, we will again be hosting a Tearfund Bug Quiz Night in November to raise money for the charity. See elsewhere for more details

Kevin Lawrence Charitable giving Group

PS On a personal note, Ana and I have a strong family connection to this charity as our daughter, Sarah, works for Tearfund in Wales.

## **‘Wilder Churches’ update**

It has been interesting getting involved in this project as about 40 years ago in Pembrokeshire we were recording some wonderful wild churchyards full of flowers and wildlife. Most of these have over the intervening years become improved and tidied up. I suspect the same has happened here in our Benefice. All is not lost though, as we do have the remains of old flower rich grassland at all three of the older Parish Churches. One thing that has become apparent is that there are plenty of trees, I could say too many in places! Street Parish Church has more than 60 trees, with Walton and Compton Dundon having in the region of 30 or so and whilst planting trees is good for storing carbon, it is not so good if it replaces flower rich areas. Recent regular mowing leaves the cuttings behind and this also enriches and therefore ‘improves’ the grassland, so that grasses



out-compete most flowers. Doing a flower survey while everything is mown to less than an inch in height has not been easy. It has been much harder to spot the less common species amongst the grass. Selfheal with its little purple flowers has survived everywhere, perhaps this is a sign for better things ahead!

We have attempted at this stage to identify areas where wildflowers are still present and these can inform us where the best areas are to focus our efforts. Leaving wild flowers to grow, flower and seed is not the only thing we can do. One vital resource for wildlife is totally absent from all our churchyards and is undoubtedly a limiting factor when we consider breeding birds, pollinators, small mammals, hedgehogs and more. Available water has disappeared from our countryside as ponds have been filled in over the last 100 years. Whilst the levels provide rhynes, ditches and larger open areas resulting from restored peat, our Churches are some distance away. Nesting birds such as the swallows at Walton need water close by to build their nests, as well as to drink. In hot periods nestlings need lots of water so chances of survival are higher with water nearby. Something between a birdbath and small pond is all that is required and all our Parish Churches have an outside tap.

Providing a nectar source throughout the year is a good target. Few of the existing trees except lime provide nectar. However, ivy is much underrated as a wildlife resource. With the last flowers of the season and first berries of the following year it provides a lifeline for many species. At Street Parish Church there is a large ivy 'tree' which has developed covering a large stump. This is also a wonderful hibernation site for insects such as butterflies.

Getting to know the Churchyards within our Benefice has been a pleasure, but the survey this year has only been a start and I hope we will be able to add to our knowledge as time goes on. As I write this, the full report promised is nearly ready to go. It is only a starting point but should give us the basis for improving our churchyards for nature and contributing to the joint Somerset Wildlife Trust and Diocesan 'Wilder Churches' initiative.

Celia Linney, Compton Dundon, September 2021

## **My Sea Cadet Chaplaincy.**

Sometimes when God calls you to things it's a voice from Him, sometimes it's something you will read that will touch your spirit and sometimes as in my case it comes through a conversation with a good friend and colleague and I knew as soon as she said the words I think you should be our Sea cadet chaplain my spirit just moved and I knew that this was a very important conversation. This conversation was with Elaine Dearling who worked alongside me at Millfield in the Gatehouse and Elaine was and still is the Chairperson to the Sea cadets. At this time I was also exploring the possibility of becoming a Reader in the Church of England and had started an exploring Christianity course. I enrolled and completed my chaplaincy training and started the process of joining the Sea cadets with the hope that they would accept me as a Reader in training. Sadly as that progressed I realised that the academic side of Reader training was not for me and I had to withdraw. Of course this meant that I could also no longer be considered for the chaplaincy at the sea cadets which was a very difficult thing for me. I was convinced that God had wanted me in that position so how had I got it so wrong. We were now in vacancy and although I wanted to jump into a hole and put the lid on I had commitments to fulfil and I

worked through my disappointment with good Christian friends and continued serving God in our church and my local community. Then Covid struck and we were in vacancy so no time to sit around moping.

Then in January of this year I got a call from Mike Haslam, Chaplaincy advisor for Bath and Wells to say was I still interested in becoming the chaplain to the sea cadets because the Navy and the church of England had had discussions and decided to give me a go, so even though I wasn't going to become a Reader they felt that I had proved myself in other things that I had done working for the Church and also my 19 years in the Navy all went together to say that I could be the first in a pilot project. I was astounded, God had moved two mountains, the Navy and the Church of England but as Jesus says in Matthew 17 vs 20 "If we have faith as tiny as a mustard seed God can move mountains" I was so delighted and again I knew in my spirit there was no decision to make. It was amazing and so having conversations with our current Rector who was here now thankfully, and the area Chaplain to the cadets Adrian Schumann, Frankie the CO of the sea cadets in Glastonbury and Street and Elaine and they were all delighted to hear the news and so we worked towards this point and I am eternally grateful for everyone's efforts especially with it being Covid times. What do I learn from this? Gods timing is not ours, as a Christian sometimes you feel that God is moving you a long one path and then you hit a brick wall and you need to ask "Ok Lord now what?" I was asking that a lot during lockdown and I know I was being told wait. I was looking for every opportunity to go this way and that but it never felt right and of course it wasn't, because the Lord was going before me making a way for His perfect plan for me. I am delighted to be taking up my position as Sea Cadet chaplain and I pray I will serve them faithfully and diligently for as long as I can.

blessings  
Suzie Williams

## Manna

God calls... everyone, everywhere

From 6 February everyone is invited to join in with a week of exploring the many and varied ways in which God calls us during our lives.

The week will kick off with an online service with Bishop Ruth at 3pm on Sunday, 6 February and from Monday to Friday in the following week we will be sharing videos from local people talking about how God calls them wherever they are. The week will close on the Saturday with on-line gatherings for people to come together to celebrate, share and reflect on what they have learnt.

Julia Hill, discipleship team leader, explains, "God has given each and every one of us our own personal gifts. Sometimes it can feel as though God only calls 'special people' but God calls us both in our everyday lives and sometimes to particular roles. We hope that by sharing the stories of how people have recognised their gifts and responded to God's call to use them, it will help others reflect on what their gifts are and how God might be calling them. And that might be as simple as telephoning a friend in need, or praying for a neighbour."

"If we look in the Bible we can see God calls a huge variety of people and you need to only look at the disciples to see that they didn't always get it right. In God's eyes, everyone is worthy of being called."

Join us in February to hear the stories from a whole range of people and perhaps be inspired yourself.

To find out more about the 'God calls... everyone, everywhere' week, visit: [www.bathandwells.org.uk/god-calls-everyone-everywhere](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/god-calls-everyone-everywhere).

## **News in brief**

### Plant a tree in partnership

In November, global leaders come together in Glasgow at COP26 to talk climate change. In Bath and Wells we are asking people to come together with farmers in their local area to plant trees. Farmer and our Rural Affairs Adviser, Rob Walrond, who is in talks with organisations who may supply the trees, says, "It's a great way Christians can make a practical difference in their communities. The fruits of these partnerships will benefit us all." [Visit our website](#) to find out more ■

### Modern Anti-Slavery Day

It is estimated that around 40.3 million people in the world today are trapped in some form of modern slavery, including many thousands of people in the UK. Victims are men, women and children of all ages, ethnicities and nationalities.

Anti-Slavery Day 2021 on the 18 October is a national day to raise awareness of the need to eradicate all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.

This year, Sunday the 17 October the Church of England national online service led by Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones Bishop of Tonbridge will be on the topic of modern slavery. 17 October will

also be an opportunity for churches to [focus their services and prayers](#) on modern slavery to help raise awareness of the issue.

## Preparing to welcome Afghan refugees

Many areas across the diocese of Bath and Wells are preparing to receive Afghan refugees. It's not yet known how many families will be coming, but in places such as Bath and Weston-super-Mare, organisations are already making preparations. [Bath Welcomes Refugees](#) have put out a call out for non-perishable foods, toiletries, and cleaning products and set up three collection points. Organisations across the diocese will also be looking for volunteers to help and support those families in need. Check your local organisations for more information.

## **Bishop's Letter**

### **Made for a purpose**

Trevor Willmott, Assistant Bishop

Whenever I listen to one of Jesus' searching questions to his listeners I find myself thinking "What would I do in these circumstances?"

If I were casting my nets, and Jesus said "follow me", would I do it? I imagine many of us would be hoping that we never have to find out.

All too often it's assumed that being called is just about the religious life to a particular ministry, lay or ordained in the life of the Church. Of course, it is about that for some of us, and thank God for that, but in the New Testament, vocation or calling has a much wider understanding. St Paul talks to the Corinthians about this more general call when he writes "Now there are varieties of



gifts but the same spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Every one of us is called to use the gift or gifts we've been given to help build up the body of Christ. That "building up" can never be confined to what we do on Sunday. Building up is about using the whole of life, including Monday to Saturday. The very act of working or being at home, school, work, leisure is vocational. Our daily behaviour becomes a sacrament and an offering.

The realisation that we are being called comes in many different ways. For some, it's like a sudden flash of light as came to St. Paul on the Damascus road. But for others, it's just not that clear. In my earlier work as a Director of Ordinands and Vocation, I listened to many people who described their sense of calling as a feeling of discomfort. "Like having a toothache" someone said - their "yes" a moving towards a sense of peace and clarity.

Perhaps, as you read this, you know what God is calling you to do. Perhaps you're still searching. But remember, God has made you for a purpose. And God will work that out, but in his own time, not yours. This month's Manna is focused on our forthcoming Archdeaconry Days which will take place early next year, February 6 to 12, with the theme of "God calls... everyone, everywhere". One thing I can guarantee: if you book in, you won't be alone and you'll have a great day.

With my prayers and blessing

+ Trevor

## Interview

Where I am meant to be

Tracey Staples, Church Administrator, Exmoor explains why she feels her role is her ministry.

Why do you feel your role is your ministry?

I feel it is where I am meant to be. It is where God has called me – it may not be what I set out to do, but it is where I am and it feels right. The knowledge and skills that I have gained on the way seem to be what people need at the moment.

What makes it feel like your calling?

I was a ballet teacher but a drunk driver put paid to that by crashing into me so I retrained as a primary school teacher and started helping out in my church office when I wasn't working. After having some medical issues I moved back to mum and dad's and started helping dad – who trained for ordination as I was training to be a teacher - with a bit of admin. It just seems I've always been pulled back to church administration.

Did you always consider it your ministry?

No, I became aware of it over time. As I felt I kept being called back, it came to feel it was my ministry. I took on more admin responsibilities when my dad became ill and when he died I was asked to take on the admin of eight parishes. I am now full time and look after 18 parishes in Exmoor deanery.

Do you see other people living out their ministry when perhaps they don't?

Absolutely, I see it in people from the organist to the person who is good at listening. We need to get over the fact that ministry is for everyone and remember we are all the body of Christ.

Read the full interview at [www.bathandwells.org.uk/my-ministry-tracey](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/my-ministry-tracey)■

## U.S.B.

### What kind of soil are you?

“... A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW HIS SEED ...”  
LUKE 8:5 NKJV

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The seed of God's Word is always productive. The only variable is the soil of our hearts. In the parable of the sower Jesus discusses different kinds of soil:

- 1. Hard soil.** In Bible times hard-packed footpaths ran alongside the farmer's field. Any seed falling there just shrivelled and died. Be careful; when you've been walked on and disappointed, you can become callous; you can develop a tough, impenetrable shield that makes it easy for satan to come along and steal the seed of God's Word before it has a chance to grow. Prayer will keep that from happening, so '... break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord ...' (Hosea 10:12 NIV).
- 2. Superficial soil.** In Jesus' day much of the farmland was just a few inches of topsoil over rock, with nothing to sustain roots. One Bible teacher writes: 'Superficiality is the curse of the age. We live in a world of shallow relationships, superficial conversations, and hurried moments of prayer. We bounce from one spiritual activity to another without any real root system.'
- 3. Cluttered soil.** This ground was overgrown with weeds. There was no room for anything else. Clutter happens so easily, and it's dangerous because it's so subtle. Ever notice how often you're bombarded with guarantees that material things will bring you happiness? Like the car manufacturer who advertises, 'You can't buy happiness, but you can drive it!' Get real! Do a soil analysis and weed out anything that's hindering your spiritual growth. Once your heart's tender, your devotion

deep, and your life uncluttered, you'll be good ground that yields fruit for God.