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50p

Life



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Magazine aims to reflect the life of the church and to encourage the growth of the Christian faith in all our readers.

LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the June edition are due by **Sunday May 15th**

Editorial Notes

On pages 8 and 9 you will be able to read a letter from Annie Makoni who is one of Walton's Mission partners at One Hope Church Harare Zimbabwe. The front cover is made up of the pictures which accompany the letter, they are Tanatswa with Tinkerbelle, Ephie and Manu, Maci D and Johnso weeding the beans with maize behind, Sheila and Annie with Comfort, and Tanatswa's birthday. I will let you work out which is which! The back cover is a selection of 'Easter happenings' around the benefice, including the Coombe Hill walk, the Good Friday service at Compton Dundon with everyone holding a palm cross, Liz Sowerby and her daughter enjoying a cuppa after helping with the Easter flower arranging at the Parish church, a lovely Easter display at Walton and Rev Philip Mwali former vicar of our link in Mfuwe, Eastern Zambia on Palm Sunday. There are various articles throughout this edition about the events for the forthcoming Queen's Jubilee that are taking place in June at our benefice churches. We look forward to celebrating along with the rest of the country, the long reign of our Glorious Queen with whom we have great admiration and love. Roger

Rector's Letter

“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” 1 John Chapter 4 verse 11.

One of our priorities this year as a benefice is to build and grow community. It is wonderful that there are many ways in which this is already happening, including the coffee mornings, Open Doors, the benefice walks and other one-off events. As Christians, part of our calling is to be community together as well as offering, in Christian love, community to those around us. As we offer community, this should look different to that which any other club, society or organisation offers, as with the church, we are distinctive in bringing God's love into a hurting and broken world. As the verse above reminds us, that just as God has loved us, we too should love one another. Genuine Christian love, shared in community, is deeply attractive. Others, seeing how we love one another, will be drawn into our community.

I am excited that as we are looking towards the summer months, there are yet more opportunities of being and offering this community. See details elsewhere in the magazine. In addition, we are planning a 'holiday at home', set to take place in early August in the Mission Church (more of this next month).

Whether you are introvert or more extrovert, be bold in offering this Christian community to others. This might be through a phone call, an invitation to something at church, a chat over a cup of tea, or something else. Even if the recipient says 'no', the reaching out will be appreciated. We live in a society where there is a well-documented crisis of isolation and loneliness. As Christians, we can all play our part in beginning to change this.

With my love & prayers, Ana

APCM's

A reminder that our three APCM's (Annual Parochial Church Meetings) are due to take place this month, one in each of our parishes: Monday 16th May, 7pm, Walton; Tuesday 17th May, 7pm, Compton Dundon & Thursday 19th May, 7pm, Parish Church, Street. Nomination forms are available in our churches and online for PCC member and church warden. Please prayerfully consider whether you would like to stand and pick up a form for more details. Copies of the Trustees Annual Accounts & Financial Reports, together with agenda and other reports for each parish will also be available on our website. If you would like printed copies of these documents, please contact the church office. To save paper, we will only be printing these 'on demand' so please get hold of a copy ahead of the meeting.

Ana Lawrence

Serving your church community

We all have different gifts and as a church family, we offer our gifts for the building up of our churches. Whether reading, welcoming, leading prayers, serving coffee, volunteering with our children's work, PCC, or practical tasks etc, we all need one another and a key part of our call as Christians is to serve one another. In 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 10, it says: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace."

To all of you who are currently serving in whatever capacity, thank you! To those of you who have not yet found your area of service or are unsure of what the needs are in your parish, please have a word with your church warden. Finally, a gentle challenge! If you are reading this and thinking that there is nothing you can offer, please contact me and I'd love to discuss this with you.

Ana Lawrence

Walton Matters

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Luke ch 24. NIV.

What a wonderful Easter we had. Thank you so much to Ana and Kevin for taking over after David and Pauline's illness. We all hope and pray that they both have made a complete recovery and will be back with us soon. Instead of the Seder meal on Maundy Thursday evening, we had a contemplative communion service which was very meaningful and set the scene for Good Friday and the last hour at the cross. Saturday we had a wonderful band of people to decorate the Church ready for Easter Sunday and the Church looked beautiful. Thank you all so much. Easter Sunday service taken by Kevin was a joy and we are so grateful that we could walk the Easter story together in so many different ways this year.

Church Fun Day.

We are looking forward to seeing you on the 7th May between 10.30 and 2.30. Hopefully the weather will be good to us as several of the events will be outside, and we want to encourage as many people as possible to see what is happening in the churchyard. There will be worm charming, hook a duck, table football, welly wanging, target practice and many more activities. Bacon and sausages will be on the BBQ tempting us all and cakes, tea and coffee available to.

There is a family charge of £5 and an individual charge of £2. We also plan to have a craft stall, plants and produce.

Queens Platinum jubilee celebrations.

Sunday June 5th will see us celebrating the Queen's jubilee with an afternoon tea. Lots of lovely treats both savoury and sweet. Music is arranged and food planned, we just need you to come along and join us. The cost is £7.50 with a reduction for children.

Garage sale.

On the 16th July there will be a village garage sale where, from their own homes, people can have a stall and sell any items they choose, for which they will be asked to donate £5 to the Church. Refreshments will be served from the Church. More details in next month's magazine.

We have two weddings in May to look forward to. There is no flower rota this month. Sandra Gristock



Thy Kingdom Come

This national prayer initiative will run from Thursday 26th May (Ascension Day) through to Sunday 5th June. This year, we are focussing on an encouragement to 'pray for five'. Are there five people that you know who you long to come to know Jesus better? They may be family members, friends, current or former work colleagues or indeed anyone else who God may have put on your heart. We will be saying more about this as 'Thy Kingdom Come' draws nearer but please be considering who the 'five' might be for you.

There will be special resources available to help you in your prayers which you can either pick up in our churches or have delivered to you in your home if you're not anymore able to get to church for whatever reason. If you would like a copy of the resources to be delivered, please contact the church office.

Ana Lawrence

Compton Dundon News

A Village Jubilee

In Compton Dundon we are looking forward to a range of activities during the first week of June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

On Wednesday, June 1st the month begins with our regular CAMEO coffee morning in the Village Hall. Do come along and share a cup of tea or coffee, a choice of delicious cakes and a chat amongst friends. Also on Wednesday scarecrows of all varieties will appear in village gardens for our scarecrow competition, ready to be admired before the judging on Saturday. Our last scarecrow contest produced some amazing creations.

The following day, Thursday, is the much anticipated launch of St Andrew's Flower Festival. The church will be decorated throughout with floral displays linked to the Platinum Jubilee theme. Many imaginative displays are planned so well worth a look, with the added incentive of tea and cake refreshments. In addition there will be a plants, books and produce stall to browse outside the church. The Flower Festival runs daily from 10 am to 5 pm on June 2nd to June 5th.

If you enjoy dancing, come along to the Disco on Saturday evening from 8 pm - tickets only £5. In the afternoon there will be a free children's disco from 5 to 7 p.m.

On Sunday, June 5th instead of a morning service we will join together at 6.30 pm for 'Songs of Praise.' We hope for a good number in church to raise the rafters.

During the afternoon of the same day there is an outdoor street party at the Village Hall, another lovely opportunity to gather and bring food to share with friends.

Finally, we are hoping to join the nationwide lighting of a beacon on June 2nd as a shared symbol of thanksgiving for our Queen's reign. All in all an eventful start to June and a fitting Compton Dundon tribute to Queen Elizabeth II and all she has done for us.
Pat King

The path to the Cross

'As the crowd led Jesus away to his death, Simon of Cyrene, who was just coming into Jerusalem from the country, was forced to follow, carrying Jesus' cross.' Luke 23, v 26.

After Diana led our Good Friday Service of Reflection, we walked the path up to Lollover Hill to plant the three crosses as a poignant symbol of Jesus' death and resurrection. Particularly meaningful this year, following two years when we were only able to take one cross and could not worship together at the top of the hill.

During our church service we heard those powerful words from the Gospel of John describing Jesus' final day, ending in his death on the cross. Our hymn 'When I survey the wondrous Cross' concluded with the beautiful words reminding us of Jesus 'love so amazing, so divine.'

Let us hope that with its prominent position on the hill, many will be able to survey the wondrous cross and share in this amazing love at Easter time.

Foodbank donations

For several months we have been collecting donations of food and toiletries for the Salvation Army in Street. They are especially in need of tinned goods, rice, coffee and tea, squash, shampoo and shower gel. The two collection boxes, in the church and the village hall, are quickly filled thanks to the generosity of villagers in Compton Dundon.

My car boot has been loaded with carrier bags brimming with goods several times now and these are always gratefully received. John at the Salvation Army tells me that donations are needed at this time more than ever. Rising fuel and utility bills have made the Foodbank an essential service for more and more families, many accessing it recently for the first time.

One lady commented that she used to be able to give items to the foodbank, but these days she needs it herself. Thank you to all those who are making such a positive difference to people's lives.

Pat King

BENEFICE CHARITABLE GIVING

FOCUS ON 'ONE HOPE CHURCH, ZIMBABWE', SUPPORTED BY WALTON

Hello from Zimbabwe!

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Annie Makoni. I'm originally from Kent in England. I'm married to Malvern and between us we have 5 children: Esther, Promise, Manu, Ephie and Charmaine. We live in Mazowe which is a rural area about 15 miles from the city of Harare. We live here with a number of young people who were once in the street but are now transformed and are dearly loved family members, enjoying a new life away from the streets.

I am excited and grateful to tell you how your love and support is helping to impact the lives of some of the children and young adults who we meet daily in the streets of Harare.

Chipo was 14 years old when he ran away from home. Since the death of his mother, life had become unbearable for him at home. His new step-mother abused him both verbally and physically and his father told him that there was no longer money to send him to school.

Feeling he had little to lose, he stole his father's wallet and jumped on a bus to Harare. Perhaps the city would offer him something better....

Hundreds of youngsters, like Chipo, end up in the streets due to poverty and family breakup.

Far from offering them the future they hope for, the streets are a place of constant hunger and bullying where it is survival of the fittest and drugs provide the only way of escape.

One Hope is more of a family than an organisation. A close knit group of people, mainly volunteers, whose passion is to reach out to youngsters like Chipo, with the love of God and with hands-on care. Most of our team are ex-street people. They know what it is to scramble for existence in the alley-ways and back streets: Stealing, begging, sniffing glue, checking the bins for thrown away food. Beaten by the police. Despised and feared by society.

It is the love of God which has transformed these once hopeless lives and set them free from their destructive addictions.

Our aim is to provide firstly for immediate needs of hunger, loneliness and sickness. Building on friendships over a period of time, we try to offer those who are serious about leaving the streets, a way out.

Sometimes this is through education, sometimes through reunification with family, sometimes through learning a skill such as agriculture.

We spend a lot of time simply visiting those in the street at their different hideouts. We invite them to come along to some of our programmes: Informal Bible studies and discussion groups, hot nutritious meals, basic education for those who are illiterate and recovery courses to help with drug addictions.

Over the past few years we have been amazed and humbled by the tremendous support we have received from Walton Church.

Thank you for enabling us to continue to reach out to the hopeless and homeless in Harare. May God bless you.

"Father to the Fatherless...God sets the lonely in families; he sets prisoners free and gives them joy."

WATCH - "Wars and rumours of wars"

Peace in Europe was shattered in late February by the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Surely it should never have happened? But the reality is that the peace which has characterised our lives since the end of World War 2 in 1945 is over: in spite of the obvious benefits of decades -of peaceful co-existence.....BUT not everyone was caught unawares. Ukrainians had been afraid of a full blown invasion since 2014 when Russia occupied the Crimea and backed rebel independence separatist movements in 2 regions of eastern Ukraine. Our own government had been secretly training and equipping the Ukrainian armed forces with defensive weapons which have proved themselves in forcing the invading forces to abandon - temporarily at least - their plans and redeploy. A palpable sense of relief can be detected across the rest of Europe: in former Iron Curtain countries Such as the Baltic States and countries that border on Ukraine such as Romania. Nevertheless millions have been forced to flee with only what they can carry leaving their menfolk to fight for the freedom of their country from tyranny.

What should we be thinking / doing as followers of Christ? What is the relevance of our faith? What does God say in the Bible?

Loving our neighbour as we love ourselves leaves no room for nimbies ("not in my back yard"). These refugees need food and shelter and our government will give us £350 a month if we are able to help. Is that me / you? Second, we should be praying: this is a clear example of good against evil. The characteristic of the devil is that he is out "to steal, to kill and destroy" (John 10:10). I see no problem in praying for victory for the Ukrainian armed forces. It is a David and Goliath situation. And praying for the refugees....and for those who for one reason or another are unable to flee.

Is the Bible silent on what's happening? I don't think so. This is as clear a situation of light and darkness as you could find. And we must remember that Putin and his cronies do not reprint the Russian people. Their ruthless elimination of any political opposition is testament to this. We should be praying for the Russian people no less.

Jesus said "You will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that your heart be not troubled." (Matthew 24:6, Mark 13:7) In Revelation - that mysterious last book of the Bible which makes the sensational claim to

be written by none other than Christ himself (Revelation 1:1) about “things which must shortly come to pass”. God does not want to leave us in the dark about what is going to happen in the last days leading up to the glorious victorious return of Christ in his Second Coming (Revelation 1:7). God continually tells us to keep watch and not to be afraid - he’s knows what’s going on, he’s got it under control even when it doesn’t seem like it. (“He’s got the whole world in his hands”). Nobody knows the date and time of Jesus’s return: not even Jesus himself: only the Father knows (Mark 13:32).

Tough times are coming - so tough that unless God cuts the persecution short no believers faith would stand up to it (Matthew 24:22, Mark 13:20). Have you read about what the Chinese government are doing to the Uighur people in the west of their country? If you haven’t, you should, you need to. You’ll find it on Google. We’ve most of us heard of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. You’ll find them in Revelation 6. Well, it strikes me we could be into the first and second already. Make no mistake, the atheist god-denying Chinese Communist Party in government are bent on world domination and economically speaking they command the wealth and increasingly the armed forces, to achieve this.

We are time and again warned in the Bible to Watch: so that we will not be caught out unprepared. In our churches as individual members of his body the company of all believers we need to prepare by encouraging one another and building and strengthening our spiritual resources, and putting into practice - and testifying to - what we believe. There is work to be done. These things can happen out of the blue as suddenly as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, but there is no excuse for any Christian to be caught unprepared. It’s all there in the Bible for anyone to read.

Bernard Sinclair

Jubilee Fete

Preparations for our Platinum Jubilee Fete on Saturday 6th June are well under way now. We have several local musicians playing as well as stalls and old fashioned games like coconut shy and Hook a duck.



Details of the recipes to be used for the cake competition will be on the church website so get practicing those Victoria sandwich and Lemon drizzle cakes.

We now have a variety of stalls so please bring any donations to the Mission church. Donations needed before the day

Bathroom items

Bottles of any type

Books

Bric à brac

Any red, white or blue item

Donations on the day

Cakes and biscuits for the teas and coffees

Plants although if you speak to Sue Ripley or Kay savage they may take them a little earlier.

Huge thanks to all those who have already volunteered to help we could do with a few more..... Also please spread the news by word of mouth and social media we want this to be a huge blessing for our community. Thank you

blessings

Suzie Williams

Church walk on Easter Monday



On Easter Monday morning a group of 18 people and 4 dogs assembled in Combe Hill carpark for a walk along the Polden Way. The weather was perfect, sunshine and cloud, the birds were twittering and the primroses were in abundance. Tim Hindle led us southwards, over the (slightly wobbly) wooden bridge that crosses over Combe Hollow and onto the ridge above Gilling Down. Here the view over Compton Dundon and the levels was wonderful- a patchwork of fields and woods. The dogs ran back and forth, covering lots of extra ground. We came up through Bunch Wood, (where a sign told us there has been woodland since 1600 at least) and into Great Breach Wood. The paths were mostly dry but here there were some patches of squelchy mud and even rainwater pools, to the delight of the two spaniels. There were lots of bluebells and the chiffchaffs were calling. We came through the woods, climbing over or skirting a few fallen tree trunks, and back over the bridge to the carpark. We had covered a little over four miles and felt invigorated and refreshed after such a lovely morning's exercise. It was good to meet folk from all four of our churches and get to know them better. Thank you, Tim, for such a great walk.



SWCD Women's evening

I am really excited that we plan to hold a special event for women across our benefice. 'Save the date' of Thursday 16th June for a meal in a local pub followed by a short talk. This is a great opportunity to bring a friend, neighbour, family member to a relaxed, informal and fun evening. More details to follow. Men, if you're feeling left out at this point; watch this space for future events. Ana Lawrence

A STEWARDSHIP LETTER REMINDER

A huge thank you to all those who, having received a letter about church finances, have either let their church treasurer know that they have reviewed and increased their giving to the church, or have done so directly via their bank.

If you have received the letter, but haven't yet taken action on the contents, please can we encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

If you didn't get a letter, or can't now locate the one you received, please contact the church office and we can let you have a replacement.

Many thanks

Kevin Lawrence (on behalf of the Benefice stewardship team)

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD VOTE

As local elections are due to take place in early May, here are 10 excellent reasons why Christian should vote, taken from the web site of 'Christians in Politics'

(<https://www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/>)

1. Voting publicly recognises that we submit to the authority of the political system in our nation as established by God.

(Romans 13:1-7)

2. Voting recognises the equality of all people and their right to speak and be heard. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

3. It is one way that we can obey God's command to seek the good of those around us and our nation as a whole. (Jeremiah 29:5-6)
4. It shows that we care deeply about who our leaders are as we are urged to offer prayer and intercession on their behalf. (1 Timothy 2:1,2)
5. It is a simple yet significant way we can do something about politics in our nation. 'All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing', Edmund Burke. (Psalms 34:14)
6. It makes a difference the way a grain of salt makes a difference, and that is how we are to influence our society for good. (Matthew 5:13)
7. It is a privilege not to be taken for granted. Those of us who reap the benefits of living in a democracy should play a part in upholding democracy.
8. Not voting is a form of voting, as it will influence the outcome. We need to take responsibility for our actions, as well as our lack of actions. (Luke 10:25-37)
9. Voting has biblical precedence for example Acts 14:23 describes that the early Christians elected elders by voting.
10. Voting is part of our stewardship to use all the resources we have been given in ways that honour God; to waste a vote is to squander a gift.

Kevin Lawrence

DOING LIFE TOGETHER AT SWCD CHURCES

One of the images we use a great deal when describing the church, is that of a family. Of course, like any family, the church family comes in all shapes, sizes and ages. We have different interests, preferences and live in different places, but what unites us is the faith and worship we share.

Also, like any family, however, I hope we enjoy spending time together to get to know one another better, to have fun, share stories and quality time, not just at Sunday services or other 'churchy' things, but also at other times as we do other things together. You may have noticed more and more events in the church calendar which give us the opportunity to do that, the opportunity to 'do life' together if you like.

Whether coffee mornings or walks, youth get togethers or book clubs, hand bell ringing or quiz nights, all exist to give us opportunities for us to spend time together. Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list of things, and we would love to hear from others with an idea or passion that they could share with others in the church family. Maybe you are into photography, or crafting, bird watching or something else, why not see if others want to join you and organise something to 'do life' together through your idea or interest?

Whilst we may describe ourselves as a 'family' however, in one important way the church family is different to any other family as anyone is free to join if they want to. Your friends and neighbours, birth family or work colleagues are all welcome at any of the 'Doing Life' events. Maybe however, they might find it easier to come along with an invitation from you? As well as enjoying whatever it is you might be doing together, it is also a

great opportunity to meet the wider church family, to find out who we are and the kind of things we do.

One new thing we are planning for the autumn is Flicks@themission, making the most of the great facilities we have at the Mission Church to gather to watch a film together and maybe share some popcorn! Watch out for further details.

If you have any other ideas for ways of 'Doing Life' together, please do get in touch and meanwhile, look out for future events in Lifeline, on Facebook or on our web site calendar, come along and invite others to join the church family in 'Doing Life'. Ana Lawrence

ARE YOU NEW HERE?

It has been exciting to see growing numbers of new people in our churches over recent weeks and months. Please continue to give visitors and those joining our congregations a warm SWCD Churches welcome when you meet them.

For people newer to our churches, we also have two resources which we would love for you to pass on. Each should be found in your church, but if you can't locate them, please have a word with a warden.

An introductory postcard, with details of what is on offer at SWCD Churches and contact details to find out more
A new 'Welcome card', which encourages new people to give their contact details so I can be in touch with them as part of our welcome. Please pass any completed cards, via your warden, to the church office.

Thank you for your help in this and for being part of the welcome at SWCD Churches

Ana Lawrence



Our congratulations and best wishes to

Bill and Kathie Ingram, St Andrews Compton Dundon
On their Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Manna

A safer church for all

How can we build a safer church for all together? In Bath and Wells, safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse or harm is a priority. We have a network of safeguarding officers in churches across the diocese. They are supported by a team of safeguarding professionals, who have experience in the probation, police and prison services.

Along with the rest of the Church of England, a comprehensive, independent review of past safeguarding cases was undertaken in Bath and Wells in 2020. The Church of England will be publishing the results of the review soon and alongside that we will be sharing our action plan to address those areas highlighted in the report as needing improvement.

Bishop Ruth says, “I am deeply grateful and humbled by all survivors who have stepped forward to expose the failings of the past. Their bravery has allowed us to make the improvements in our procedures and behaviours that we have made - and continue to make, but we know there is no place for complacency.”

Everyone involved in church life should know what to do in situations where a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed. Each parish or benefice should have in place a safeguarding person who knows how to respond and where to seek further help and advice.

Anyone who wishes to report abuse or exploitation needs to know that they can do so and receive the support they need. Find out more about Safeguarding in Bath and Wells at bathandwells.org.uk/safeguarding, including training and how to report a safeguarding concern

News in brief

The power of art

In collaboration with local artist Sami Green, St John's church in Highbridge is hosting an art installation, The Transformation Project. In a bid to bring people together after Covid, community groups from the area created hundreds of origami butterflies made from recycled vintage newspaper which were then hung from the church rafters. Local women's groups, Churchfield school, and Highbridge Guides and Brownies are just some of those who got involved.

A chaplaincy team for courts

A new chaplaincy team has begun in Taunton serving staff and users at the magistrates' court.

Michael Hayes, courts team convenor, says, "We have been given a warm welcome and already had several significant encounters. A lot of waiting happens at the courthouse and people can be anxious and bewildered; friendly reassurance is valued."

The five-person team (with two reserves) works on a fortnightly basis with plans to move to weekly on Thursdays.

School gets busy outdoors

Not only has St Margaret's Primary School, Tintinhull completed an outdoor space for the children and local community, they've won a prestigious Gold Award from the Woodland Trust and planted more than 30 trees, each with a plaque dedicated to a person or group in the community. They've received a letter of commendation from Her Majesty the Queen for their efforts.

Life in abundance

A message from Brian Castle, Honorary Assistant Bishop for Bath and Wells

It all happened so quickly. I went to A&E with severe back-pain which affected my mobility. The NHS was outstanding. Within a dizzying few hours, I heard I would need an immediate MRI scan and possibly rods to support my spine. I dreaded the thought of going into the scanner, let alone the surgery. As I was being wheeled along the corridor, Lauren, my Godson's 10-year-old daughter, came into my mind.

Lauren is a talented girl passionate about football. Just over a year ago, it was discovered that she had a growth at the base of the spine which would need radical treatment to prevent spinal curvature. She would also require rods in her back which could be regularly extended by surgery as she grew into adulthood. In addition, this ten-year-old would be spending lonely hours in a soul-less scanner. Lauren is lovingly supported by her wonderful family and magnificently treated by NHS professionals, but while it can be shared, the load is ultimately hers to carry. Parents bear the agony of powerlessness. In the middle of this painful dilemma, young Lauren is instinctively grabbing the God-given gift of abundant life which is for all and which lies at the heart of the Gospel. As we get older, less passionate and more cynical we can lose faith in this gift.

As I was being taken to the radiology department, I realised that I was being strengthened and inspired by this young girl, six decades my junior, facing far greater challenges than me. My own fears were being transformed by Jesus Christ's gift of life

mediated through Lauren's courage. Life may turn out differently from what we expect, but that does not restrict its abundance.

The young are an inspiration. It is the role of the older generation to ensure they can grow into the special people God has created them to be so that they can release the gifts they have for us all.

Thanks, Lauren.

Despite all she faces, Lauren continues to play football.

+Brian

A breadth of experience

Our new Safeguarding Manager, Ben Goodhind, shares his thoughts on how safeguarding is supported across Bath and Wells.

How does your probation background help you in your new role?

Many people don't realise that the Probation Service was founded by Church of England court missionaries in 1907, so unsurprisingly, it helps a great deal. Not only have I managed, and risk assessed many who may seek to cause harm, but I have also supported thousands of people in making significant changes to stay safe and move on a different path.

What has surprised you most in your role?

My biggest surprise was just how good a safeguarding team we have. By this I mean the hundreds of voluntary Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) from backgrounds including education, nursing, criminal justice and law and also the professionalism of my own team. Their breadth of experience in

the police, probation, prison and social work would be the envy of many statutory teams.

How important are Parish Safeguarding Officers?

PSOs are the key to everything we do as a safeguarding team and as such I have made supporting them the key priority. I have so much respect for them and the fact they choose to give their time freely to protect others.

How can we all play our part?

By viewing safeguarding as a part of our faith and, when things don't look right, always challenge them. Educating ourselves on safeguarding with training is vital and keeping up to date with wider topics in the media is also helpful.

Read Ben's interview in full at: bathandwells.org.uk/a-breadth-of-experience.

