

August 2022

50p

Life



swcd-churches.org.uk



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 September edition are due by **Sun 14th August.**

Editorial Notes

We've returned from our excellent holiday in Wales and now it's time for the August magazine to be edited! The Heron and the Red Kite? on the front cover were taken at one of the Red Kite feeding areas in Mid Wales. At 3pm each day meat scraps from a local butcher are thrown in the grass by a lake and more than a hundred Red Kites descend. It was quite a sight, we went there twice!

Last month St Andrews prayed for Ukraine and on page 5 you can read Pat's report and her accompanying photographs can be seen at the top of the back cover. The bottom picture shows the Benefice walkers who took part in the July evening walk which Glynys writes about on page 9.

The remaining picture is of an Egret which I spotted at Ham Wall this week whilst planning the next Benefice walk, see page 12.

Why not join us and you may well see one for yourself, plus all the other wildlife on this lovely R.S.P.B. site near Ashcott.

Pages 6 and 7 find the residents of Compton Dundon getting excited about a project they are working on. Hopefully some of you attended the Benefice service on the last Sunday in July.

You may notice on the service pages in the centre, that the first Midweek Communion will be held in Street Parish Church, this is due to the first of the 'Holiday at Home' events being held in the Mission Church. If you attend one or both of these I hope you enjoy it (them). Lastly there is no Manna this month but you will find a letter from +Christopher Foster (Honorary Assistant Bishop Bath and Wells) on page 4.

Roger Harmsworth

Rector's Letter

“Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” Luke Chapter 10 verse 42

Dear Friends,

This is the season of summer camps & conferences, and over the coming weeks many thousands of Christians will be gathering to worship and deepen their Christian faith whether in big tops or other such venues. I myself have been and continue to attend such events as part of my own discipleship and pattern of worship and I know some of you have also enjoyed Christian festivals.

Whilst the focus at such an event may be to go deeper with God, to worship him and to enjoy his presence – we can of course do this anywhere!

I love the story of Martha and Mary, from which the above verse comes. A story of two sisters who welcomed Jesus, their close friend into their home. Martha was anxious, busy and distracted as the hostess and somewhat affronted that no-one else was helping! Mary, on the other hand was sitting at Jesus' feet, listening, worshipping, learning and growing. Jesus pointed out to Martha that Mary on this occasion had made the better choice. This was not the time for being domestic and busy, the focus instead was to be on Jesus, listening to and learning from him.

There is of course a place for both 'being' and 'doing' neither of which are mutually exclusive, and I wonder whether sometimes we are more comfortable in being busy, running errands, baking a cake for a church event rather than coming to a bible study, Christian conference or even a prayer meeting.

Maybe we need to consider our priorities knowing that we can listen to Jesus and worship him anywhere – though it is good, if we are able, to come alongside our brothers and sisters in church and elsewhere.

Jesus had deep affection for Martha, calling her name twice “Martha, Martha” and we know that even if on this occasion she had slightly missed the point, she is still a loved disciple, still a friend of Jesus within his close inner circle.

Where are you on this – do you need to hear that affectionate voice of the Lord calling your name twice – do you need to spend more time at the feet of Jesus?

With my love & prayers, Ana

Pudding Party at the Rectory



What could be nicer than sampling delicious puddings or sipping something cool amongst friends on a sunny (!) Sunday afternoon in the Rectory Garden?

Kevin and I would love to invite the whole church family to join us what is becoming something of an August SWCD Churches tradition.

On Sunday 14th August, you are welcome to join us from 3pm (in the Mission Church, if wet).

The way it works is that we ask you to bring either a pudding (homemade or shop bought is fine) or a bottle of something to share. We get to enjoy each other’s favourite dessert and drinks and enjoy each other’s company.

No need to book, just turn up. We look forward to seeing you there! Ana Lawrence

Bishop's letter

I'm new around here. Following retirement from ordained ministry last year Somerset has become my adopted county and Bath and Wells my adopted diocese. Sally and I are delighted to be full time now in this lovely and stimulating area. We join many of you who have been part of this diocese and county for a lifetime or for decades, and also some who have recently arrived like us. We have chosen to be here. Others arrive here because of a range of circumstances and decisions. Perhaps sometimes the journey seems haphazard or inexplicable. Some people come here as refugees fleeing persecution, injustice, or war, especially from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. They arrive with uncertainty, and often anxiety or trepidation in an unknown and entirely new place far from home. In our churches and Christian communities, we are committed to welcome everyone – those settled here and also those who are newer. We know we are sisters and brothers in God's family, regardless of background, nationality or indeed any other thing which distinguishes us. God's family is the family of humankind. It's not that we pick and choose whom to call family; we share the same flesh and blood. St Paul tells us that each one of us has been adopted into that family which is divine and human. God sent Jesus "so that we might receive adoption as children" enabling us to be gifted with the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 4:4-7) We don't belong out of personal choice, in contrast to my decision to chose here as my adopted diocese and community. We don't pick and choose our ultimate citizenship. God chooses and calls us without us desiring or deserving such adoption. That's why, following God's adoption of us, we never select who to welcome into our church or parish. All belong and all are welcome without hesitation. We have been adopted into God's family and we are thrilled to adopt everyone into our communities. Thank you for welcoming me! +Christopher Foster (Honorary Assistant Bishop Bath and Wells).



Praying for The Ukraine

On February 24th at 5 am, nearly 5 months ago, Putin began his 'military operation' in Kyiv.

By July 15th, as I write now, there have been 5,024 civilian casualties, including 343 children.

A further 6,520 have been injured (United Nations statistics.)

Furthermore, 10 million people have left their homes and we are facing the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

In St Andrew's Church last month we paused to reflect on the escalating situation in The Ukraine and all whom it affects. The congregation were invited to place a candle on the map of Ukraine as a symbol of our love and support for this nation. It was both humbling and moving to be able to remember them in this way.

Our intercessions included this beautiful prayer that I saw on the wall in All Saints Church, Castle Cary:

A prayer for Ukraine and all the troubled places of this beautiful, broken world

God of peace, justice, and mercy; we pray for the people of Ukraine, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and all the hurting places in the world. Empower those who seek peace and the laying down of weapons.

Comfort and come near to those who fear for tomorrow.

Give wisdom, discernment, and compassion to those with power over war or peace.

Enfold and protect all your precious children, at risk and in fear, holding them in your loving arms.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Amen

Pat King

St Andrews Bell Appeal

The Compton Dundon Bell Appeal is getting underway. The bells need attention to make them safe and once restored, we aim to rehang them so that they can be rung full circle once again. The village hasn't heard a peal of bells for over 100 years. This is an exciting project, and we welcome anyone and everyone from across the Benefice to be involved with our appeal.

The following article is in the current Compton Dundon Newsletter and gives a little more background while inviting you to St Andrew's Church, Compton Dundon on the 7th September to learn more about the Compton Dundon Bell Appeal. Please come and join us if you can between 3 and 7pm when we look forward to welcoming you. Pat King

Compton Dundon Bell Appeal

Have you got a story to share?

As part of our bell appeal, we are compiling a picture of the central role that St. Andrew's Church has played in this village over the decades. Sitting in the heart of our community, surrounded by glorious countryside, historic landmarks, enviable wildlife and nature, St Andrew's will have had an impact down the years.

Can you give us any anecdotes, reminiscences or photographs which we could include? For instance, did any member of your family ever ring the bells in the past? Does anyone know where the village foundry was located? Two of the bells were cast by the Austen family, here in Compton Dundon in the 1600's, and



we would love to find out where their premises were. Do you have stories about church or village activities?

What do visitors and friends and family feel about Compton Dundon when they come here? What in particular do they like to see or visit? What do you feel we should include in our profile about St Andrew's and Compton Dundon?

All the gems and titbits you give could be included in our appeal to various grant and funding bodies as we start raising funds. They will want to see what St Andrew's and Compton Dundon means to us all.

We would love to hear from you, so please help us in our quest.

Judy Skelding

On Wednesday 7th September there will be another Open Day about The Bell Appeal and everyone is welcome to come. Bring your pictures and stories with you any time between 3 – 7pm in the church and enjoy a chance to see our plans and have a chat. Refreshments will be available.

Or you can email us on comptondundonbellappeal@outlook.com

In the meantime, if you would like to buy one of these mugs to help our fundraising on its way, please call me on 07770 677977. They are £7.50 each. Thank you. Judy Skelding



Eco news



So I have the task of writing this month's eco piece and thought I would share some of the things I had done on a personal level. Of course as you know marriage is a compromise and so not all of the swaps and changes have suited my beloved but mostly he supports my eco journey. So the first swap I made to eco detergent for our clothes went badly as it brought other half out in a rash and now I have to wait a while to suggest that again! For me I have swapped to bars for shampoo and conditioner. The shampoo is fine but I am struggling with the conditioner as it sticks to my hair and I can't rinse it out, but will persevere but maybe try a different brand. I encouraged the keen gardeners at the retirement flats to start a compost for our veg and fruit waste as sadly the council don't collect ours and this is going well.

We are with Octopus energy and recently they asked me to take part in a countrywide turn down of electricity during the 'dirtiest' times. This means when everyone is using lots. It was for 2 hours at different times and if we cut down by 40% we got that 2 hours free. How exciting I thought I am sure I can do that. It meant tweaks to eating times/habits putting on jumpers rather than turning up heating, hubby not keen on this as he likes to sit with polo shirt on and heating right up..... don't ask; he just got cold. I was thrilled that I managed to get my electric free for 5/6 times I did it (ask me if you are interested in how much I saved he he) and over all the electric saved by everyone was 48 tonnes of CO2 the same as it takes 24,000 trees to sequester apparently. Who knew? Well me now because I am learning all the time!

Those of you who know me well know I like my holidays and even though I am offsetting my flights I am researching more eco friendly ways to holiday.

Lastly on advice of my son I signed up to Wren, whose aim is to help people tackle climate change. You fill in a simple lifestyle

questionnaire and they work out how much it would cost you to offset the energy you use. You also have a say in the environmental projects that Wren become involved in so it's easy to see how you are making a difference without having to do lots of lengthy research. It's not a fortune every month and largely cutting down on new clothes has got it covered. I guess we can all agree as Christians that we must care for the wonderful world that God made for us but it's down to individuals to ask themselves to what extent they want to play their part. I know there is lots more for me to learn and discover but it is a journey and I have far to go. Let me know of swaps or changes in lifestyle you have made and we can all learn together.



Blessings Suzie Williams, Eco team

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July's Church Walk

The day had been a warm one when we met at six o'clock in the car park at Walton village hall. We were a small group of church folk joined by four local Walton people and their little dog. Tim took us through kissing gates, fields, over stiles and along footpaths, emerging by the beautiful old Sharpham Park. We sauntered along the lane, admiring the venison herd peacefully grazing and trying to keep cool in the shade of the trees. We took the footpath through the wetlands RSPB reserve, crossed a picturesque bridge and back onto Asney Road. It was good to walk and chat in such beautiful surroundings and meet up with others from our church family and then there was the pub!!!

Glynys Ruddle

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Glynys Ruddle

Bank Holiday Walk

Monday 29th August

**Meet at Ham Wall Nature
Reserve car park (£3 all day)**

At 10am

Walk approx 3 miles

Dogs on leads only

(with restricted access)

Refreshments at car park

Contact

Roger Harmsworth 445291



FOCUS ON OUR MISSION PARTNERS

BARANBAS AID – SUPPORTED BY WALTON CHURCH

Barnabas Aid is an international Christian charity that exists to support the persecuted church worldwide.

Sadly the reality is that, in many countries and communities, professing a Christian faith remains dangerous, with persecution, arrest or worse facing individual Christians and church leaders. Churches in many parts of the world face attacks and discrimination, as recent headlines from Nigeria and Egypt, to name just two recent examples, remind us all too painfully.

Barnabas Aid describes their work thus 'as part of the family of God, Barnabas Aid stand with our Christian brothers and sisters around the world, including the West, wherever they suffer discrimination, oppression as a result of their faith. In this way we witness to the love of Christ and build His Kingdom'.

Their work includes financial support, encouraging prayer, raising awareness and contesting injustice.

To find out more, visit <https://www.barnabasfund.org/gb/about/>

A reminder that each of our parishes support a number of organisations each year as part of our giving. We are featuring those we support throughout the year in Life. To find a full list of who we support, visit our web site at www.swcd-churches.org.uk

Kevin Lawrence on behalf of the benefice charitable giving group

Walton matters

God is our refuge and our strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though it's waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Psalm 46. Vs 1-3. N.I.V.

Garage sale.

We had tremendously hot weather for our Saturday sale and brave folk walked around the village supporting the stall holders. The Church was a place of coolness and refuge, plus a welcome refreshment stop to energise you on your way again. Thank you all who supported this event in whatever way. We had amazing help in the church, putting up tables, manning stalls, baking and serving delicious lunches and cake. It felt a very happy, sociable time and I hope everyone enjoyed it. Thank you all so much.

A huge well done to Andy Savage for passing his final assessment and finishing his Lay Reader course. Absolutely brilliant news and we look forward to celebrating with you in October.

We are now proud owners of a lovely coffee machine courtesy of a grant from Mr Skinners legacy via our parish council aimed at community use. It will be a boon at our coffee mornings and other village events. Our thanks to the council and to Kevin Lawrence who spotted the need and applied for us. We can't wait to get started.



The sharp eyed amongst you will have noticed the clock has stopped again. It has been turned off at the mains at the request of Symon the repairer. It had stopped chiming again and was running fast. We hope it won't be too long before we are up and working again.



Sandra Gristock

FINANCIAL UPDATE

As more figures become available we wanted to share an update on 'where we are' on our benefice finances.

Firstly, three bits of good news

We are seeing the impact on our finances of those who have responded to the recent stewardship campaign by increasing their giving, with regular giving having risen across all our parishes.

The installation of solar panels at the Mission Church, thanks to an anonymous donation, means we are likely to see a reduction in our use of electricity from external providers and, indeed, some income as we 'sell' surplus energy to the national grid.

Walton and Compton Dundon had successful fundraising activities associated with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

But then, sadly, three pieces of bad news

Although giving is up, we are still running at a deficit in all our parishes. Giving has not yet increased enough to cover our costs.

Like many others, our churches are being 'hit' by the cost-of-living crisis, with rapidly rising charges for heat and light, for example.

As a result, we are still having to draw on our reserves, which are consequently still reducing.

Three things our PCC's are doing

Street have reviewed the fees for hiring our buildings, increasing them for the first time for a number of years. Whilst we don't want to drive users away, we must recognise the increased costs of using the buildings.

Walton and Compton Dundon are planning further fundraising events.

All our parishes are actively looking at offering online giving options and providing contactless giving terminals in our churches for both church family and visitors to make donations.

Three things you can do

Pray, for the finances of our benefice

Consider, if you have not already done so, increasing your regular giving or making a one off donation to the life and ministry of your parish.

Gift aid your donations if you are able and have not already done so. This increases the value of your gift to the church by 25% with no cost to you.

For more information, or to get hold of standing order or gift aid forms, please talk to your Church Treasurer, Sonia Beaty (Walton and Street) or Julie Gordon (Compton Dundon)

Kevin Lawrence

(On behalf of the benefice stewardship team)

Angels watching over you

'ANGELS ARE ... SPIRITS SENT FROM GOD TO CARE FOR THOSE WHO WILL RECEIVE SALVATION.' HEBREWS 1:14 NLT

Some of us struggle with the idea of angels watching over us. And what is the result? Listen: 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!' (Hebrews 13:2 NLT). Is it possible you have missed them?

'Tell me again what angels are supposed to do,' you say. Okay, but keep an open mind; you are about to come into a new awareness!

a) Angels are God's protective detail watching over you constantly. Your early cancer detection! That narrow escape! Those were more than just lucky breaks. Listen: 'He orders His angels to protect you wherever you go' (Psalm 91:11 NLT).

b) Special angels are assigned to watch over our children. Now you know why kids survive things that make parents go weak at the knees. Listen: 'do not despise a single one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of My heavenly Father' (Matthew 18:10 NLT).

An angel went before Israel's army guaranteeing their victory. An angel shut the mouths of the lions for Daniel. An angel opened prison doors for Peter, saving his life on the eve of his execution. An angel showed up in a storm to let Paul know that he would be okay.

So, did God suddenly do away with His Secret Service Department? Are they drawing unemployment benefit somewhere in heaven? No, they are still on the job. We just need to become wise enough and humble enough to acknowledge them.

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



