

December 2022



50p



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LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the January edition are due by **Sun 11th December**

Editorial Notes

As I write this we are approaching the time of Advent once again, hence the Street Parish Church Advent candles on the front cover. The back cover reflects on the Remembrance service at Compton Dundon and the well attended service in Merriman Park at which Ana led and Steve Morris one of our newer members of the Mission Church laid a poppy wreath on behalf of the Street Churches. (Picture bottom right).

On page 13 you will see that Trinity Handbells will be entertaining with some Christmas Carols at the Afternoon Teas at 2-30pm, we hope that there will be some willing hands to have a go.

I understand that the 'Tearfund' Big Quiz Night was a great success, raising £250 to date! Congratulations to Suzie, Andy, and all involved.

It has been 8 years since the last price rise of 'Life Magazine' therefore so that we can keep up with our outgoing, rising costs we need to increase the price. No decision has been made as I write this to what this will be, but you will be informed when the January edition comes out. Please keep your contributions coming in during 2023. Thank you to all who have contributed in some way to 'Life' during 2022.

I will end by wishing you all a HAPPY CHRISTMAS. Roger

Rector's Letter

'Follow the star – the Great Invitation'

Dear Friends,

In just a few weeks, we will be celebrating Christmas and once again sharing the greatest story ever told with friends, neighbours, family and our wider community.

This Christmas, the Church of England will be encouraging us to use their 'slogan' for the season which is 'Follow the star – the Great Invitation'. As I visit people in their homes, one thing I often notice are invitations proudly displayed on mantelpieces or elsewhere. Maybe to a wedding, a Christening, a Birthday party or something else. I think we all love receiving invitations be they on that traditional bit of pasteboard, face to face or even via Facebook! This Christmas you are all invited to come and hear again the Christmas Story at our services and events (more details elsewhere in the magazine) but could we be a people who not only receive an invitation but also offer it. There is no better time than Christmas to invite family, friends, neighbours and others to come with us as we follow the star. What's the very worst that could happen if you are bold enough to issue that invitation?

At our recent joint benefice service, Bishop Ruth encouraged us to be ready to embrace new things and this Christmas there will be one or two new things to enjoy as well as much that is traditional and much loved. Why not come along to our Advent Winter Warmers each Thursday lunchtime in December? Or perhaps bring the grandchildren to one of our Crib services or the whole family to a Christmas Morning celebration before into that

Christmas lunch. Can we be a people who try new things this Christmas?

Christmas time is also, traditionally a time when we remember those in our communities who may struggle. We heat, you eat will continue to run in the Mission Church every Saturday and our churches will continue to collect for the Street Salvation Army Foodbank as they offer help to the most vulnerable. Can we be a people who continue to look beyond ourselves to the needs of others this Christmas?

With my love & prayers for you and yours this season,

Ana

Your gift, your talent, your church

One of the things that you may hear talked about around churches is the concept of 'every member ministry'. Put simply, this is the belief that Jesus calls everyone of us to use our gifts and talents in the service and growth of his Kingdom. If Jesus calls us, he equips us and each one of us will have our own unique gifts and talents that we can bring to this work and ministry.

That may be serving in church or in our community, it may be up front or it may be in the background, it may be regular or it may be a one-off. If you're not sure what this might mean for you and how Jesus may be calling you to serve and minister, please do talk to me, I'd love to hear from you. The one thing I can promise you is that there is absolutely nobody who has nothing to offer.

Ana Lawrence

The Bishop's Letter



His light is never extinguished

As 2022 comes to a close, our hearts go out to the people of Ukraine whose country was invaded by Russia on the 24 February this year. In the months since, we have watched in horror as civilians, cities and infrastructure have been attacked, land occupied and atrocities committed.

The UK has received more than 100,000 people fleeing from the conflict. The gift of their presence among us reminds us that this is no "quarrel in a far away country, between people of whom we know nothing".

As we recall once again the coming into the world of Jesus at Christmas, our challenge is to connect our celebration of his birth with the realities and consequences of the conflict that is happening. Sadly, it's not hard to see the links. Jesus was born in a land (Palestine) that had been annexed by an expansionist foreign power (Rome) in pursuit of its territorial ambitions. The demands of the Roman occupiers meant that Jesus' birth happened not at home in Nazareth, but at a counting centre - Bethlehem. He was born in a stable because 'there was no room at the inn'. While still a baby, Jesus became a refugee when taken to Egypt due to warnings of atrocities to come.

Viewed this way, the Christmas story is no sentimental fable. It is a brutal foreshadowing of the events that Ukraine and our whole world have encountered this year. At the same time, it is also a story of hope. For it tells us that even in the very worst that can happen the Christ child whose birth we celebrate knows all too

well the realities of the human condition. As a result, in any darkness his light is never extinguished. For he is Emmanuel – God with us.

So as we come to the end of 2022 we give thanks that God is always with us in whatever we face. May he be with Ukraine. May he be with Russia. And may he be welcomed by us all.

A very happy Christmas. +Michael

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New Arrivals and other moving news

For those of you who have not seen the news in Lifeline, I am delighted to announce that we will be joined at SWCD Churches by a new curate next year.

Starting in June 2023, Rachel Pengelly will be moving to the benefice with her family to begin a 3-year training post amongst us. Please do be praying for Rachel as she begins to prepare for this move. I will be asking Rachel to write and introduce herself more fully in a future edition of Life.

From talking to church members who have been around for some time, I gather it is many years since we last had a curate here and I'll also be talking more about what to expect (and what not to expect) from our curate nearer to her arrival.

Whilst on the subject of curacies, many of you will remember Alison Tolson who was on placement with us for a year finishing last Summer. Alison has recently accepted a curacy in the Porlock benefice, about as far west in the Diocese and the county as you can go. I have passed on our congratulations to her and look forward to hearing how she gets on by the seaside!

Ana Lawrence

Walton matters

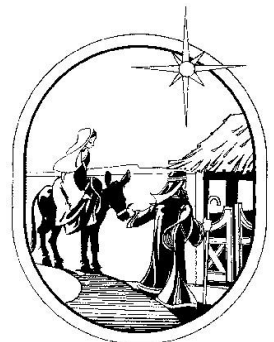
Mary's song. And Mary said: My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. NIV.

Samaritans Purse.

A huge thank you for the wonderful response for the shoe box appeal this year. As this December magazine goes to press, we will have taken 53 shoe boxes to Bagley Chapel ready to start their journey by lorry to a customs depot to be checked ready to be loaded in planes and ships to begin their special journey bringing joy to boys and girls around the world. Each prayerfully packed gift is an expression of God's love and means so much to the child receiving it. Some of you have chosen to send a box by email and we thank you for that too. I will let you know in the new year the final destination of some of our boxes. May God bless the children who will receive them and all of you who have generously given them.

Christmas cards writing.

It was a lovely evening listening to Christmas music and chatting over mulled wine and mince pies. I hope a few cards were written but it was a lovely evening anyway. Thank you for joining me.



Remembrance Sunday.

We had a lovely service around our war memorial which finished inside the Church for the last part. Thank you to those who took part. I have included a photograph of some poppies made on wood which we gratefully received from Sharon Milner made by some children at Bucklers Mead school, Yeovil. Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and for sharing them with us. They will be part of our Remembrance Day decorations every year from now on.



Flower rota.



10th December. If anyone would like to bring a poinsettia for our advent decorating this would be wonderful and Church would look lovely before the school service and our carols. Thank you very much.

Sandra Gristock

We will remember them

On Sunday, November 13th the congregation at St Andrew's, Compton Dundon gathered to remember those who have died, or suffer still, in the service of their country. The church was ablaze with poppies, including the wonderful 'poppy fall' containing hundreds of individual poppies knitted by villagers.

The white poppy wreath represented 'Peace' and the purple poppies the sacrifice made by animals in wartime.



We heard Bible readings and the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph from Peter Robertson and Bill Ingham, both ex-servicemen. Geoff Walker, Chair of Compton Dundon Parish Council, read out the names of those lost in the two

World Wars. Following the sounding of The Last Post, Geoff laid the poppy wreath, with these names, in the church porch.

Both Diana's Talk and Susie's Intercessions ended positively with the message of peace.

We continue to pray for war torn regions of the world, hoping for peace and reconciliation. We give thanks for glimmers of hope, such as the Russian surrender of Kherson.

'Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called children of God.'

Pat King

Compton Dundon Carol Singing in aid of The Children's Society

Each year in mid December a group of singers and instrumentalists enjoy carol singing around the village, with door-to-door collections in aid of a chosen charity. Wrapped up warmly, we begin our journey with light refreshments to see us on our way. This year we are pleased to support The Children's Society: 'We are a national charity working to transform the hopes and happiness of young people facing abuse, exploitation and neglect. We support them through their most serious life challenges and we campaign tirelessly for the big social changes that will improve the lives of those who need hope most.' There are many children in the UK suffering this Christmas, so everyone is very welcome to join us for this fundraising event. Let's make a difference to children's lives.

Monday, December 12th: Meet at Pat and Steve King's at 'Linden Lea,' Hayes Road, **6 pm.**

Thursday, December 15th: Meet at Chris and Celia Linney's at 'The Old Farmhouse,' Compton Street **6 pm.** Thank you.
Pat King



A New Year Benefice Walk



Monday January 2nd 2023

A short family walk, approx one hour, starting at the Village Hall Car Park in Compton Dundon at 2pm. Wellies advisable. Pat King



Street, Walton. Compton Dundon Book Club

'NIGHT OF FIRE' BY COLIN THUBRON This can be borrowed from the library or bought from all good bookshops. We will next meet to discuss this book at the Mission Church on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 11am. Hope to see you there, all are welcome. Caroline Fulton

Collection of £2 Coins The £2 coins have been trickling in slowly this year. So far we have collected 251 coins, £502. Please continue to let us have your £2 coins over the next couple of weeks or come and join us at the December Afternoon Teas and hand them in. Thank you to those who have donated so far. This will be the last year that Roger and I will be doing this fund raising activity.

Pam Harmsworth

Afternoon Teas November

Thank you to Jane for an interesting talk on Wild Scotland. It was good to join in and talk about the pictures as Jane showed them. We all felt included in the discussions about different places and the varied wildlife that was shown on screen. We finished the afternoon with a cup of tea and a variety of cakes and biscuits as we continued our conversations. Pam Harmsworth



Afternoon Teas

Friday 16th December 2-30pmm



Mission Church Street

Everyone Welcome

Trinity Handbells will be entertaining us.

We will be collecting £2 coins and other financial donations
for Holy Trinity Church Street, funds.

10% of the funds are given to the
Missions and charities that we support.

FOCUS ON CHARITABLE GIVING

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY – SUPPORTED THIS YEAR BY
ST ANDREW'S COMPTON DUNDON

One of our supported charities this year is the Children's Society, often in the spotlight at Christingle services in churches. The organisation was founded in 1881 when a Sunday School teacher was shocked to discover two boys from his class in London begging for food in the street, a problem all too common at the time.

Since then the charity has grown and is now involved in a wide variety of campaigns and projects, all designed to ensure that every child gets a good childhood.

You can find out more about their work throughout the UK and read stories of children they have helped at <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/>. The charity works with young people who may have experienced abuse, substance misuse, poverty or domestic violence or have been forced to flee their country and community as refugees. The charity describes its aims as 'to empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover their hope.'

Kevin Lawrence

On behalf of the benefice charitable giving group

A reminder that we will be asking the church family very shortly for recommendations for who each of our parishes should support through our charitable giving in 2023. Within the guidelines agreed by our PCCs, if you have an organisation you believe is deserving of our support, please do recommend them for consideration by your PCC. Details of how to do this will follow shortly.

FREE MONEY – UPDATE

You may recall that I wrote in the last edition of 'Life' encouraging more church family members to sign up to EasyFundraising (<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>), who give donations to the church or other charities you choose every time you shop on line with thousands of companies or brands.

Since writing the article, I have signed up myself and, just by shopping online as we normally do, have raised over £15 for the church in the last month alone. I would love to see more people joining me. It is absolutely free, easy to use and doesn't involve you in any extra work or admin.

So, if you currently shop online, whether occasionally or regularly, what are you waiting for? Just imagine if only 9 more people, joined me, each of us raising around £15 per month, that could be £1,800 extra in free donations to the church.

If you are not sure how to get started, I am more than happy to either talk you through it or find a time to set it up for you.

Give me a call!

Kevin Lawrence

On behalf of the benefice stewardship team

Advent Winter Warmers

As we journey through Advent, why not join us at our winter warmers every Thursday in the weeks leading up to Christmas (1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd). Starting with a simple soup lunch (prepared by each of our churches in rotation) we will then share a short Advent Reflection led by a different person each week. Lasting one hour from 12noon – 1pm, this will be an opportunity to focus on Advent themes away from the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparation.

This will take place in the Mission Church as it is warm and has catering facilities but is open to all across the benefice. Please book your place via the church office as we need to know numbers for catering.

I look forward to seeing you there.
Ana Lawrence

Get in the Picture

As you will have seen in Lifeline, we are offering the opportunity for our communities to 'get in the picture' by dressing up and being photographed in a Nativity scene. The pictures will be shared, with permission, on social media so that friends and family can enjoy!

This national initiative has proved a great success in inviting people to be part of the Christmas story and have fun. We are looking forward to offering it in Street on Saturday 3rd December as part of the Street Festive Market and in St Andrew's, Compton Dundon on Saturday 10th December as part of the Christmas Fair.

However, to make this work, we need you! Can you help to tell the story by volunteering as part of the team at either of these events. Thank you.
Ana Lawrence

Preparing and Responding

The season of Advent is a time of preparation. How are we preparing? Is it by stocking up on presents and food or by reflecting on how we can best follow the Christian message? One way of responding to that message is by caring for the environment. The natural world and humanity are under threat from the effects of increasing global temperatures. What can we do as individuals and as a church community?

As a Benefice we can respond to the call to make our buildings Carbon Neutral by 2030; already 7% of churches in the UK have achieved this. The Church Times (4 Nov 22) details some examples, a 13th century church in rural Warwickshire (the work done at a modest cost with a saving on energy and bills).

Similarly, savings have been made by more major works in Newcastle Cathedral. Two vicarages in the Worcester Diocese are also now carbon neutral. Our SWCD Eco Church Group are reviewing Energy Audits for 3 of our churches which should help PCCs in formulating their own plans to achieving this goal. We hope to provide more details in next month's magazine.

The COP27 conference reminds us that we are running out of time to prevent the catastrophic effects of the increase in global temperatures. Our Christian brothers and sisters in other parts of the world are among those populations who suffer most from droughts and flooding. Many Christians are involved in Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil. Whilst they recognise their actions may cause frustration, they explain that these are as nothing to the scale of disasters awaiting us if we do not act.

What is preventing us from taking action? John Bell, speaking at Ammerdown recently, suggests a number of reasons such as seemingly more pressing problems, vested interests and that we in the UK have hardly been adversely affected so far.

As individuals we can take steps to work towards reducing our own carbon impact. The Energy Saving Trust

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk> has advice about reducing carbon emissions in the home. We can think carefully about everyday purchases. Not everyone has a choice but if you do, think about your choices and the impact they have; remember to live simply that others may simply live.

Susan Ripley (Street parish), Eco Church Group

Blessing those who hire the Mission Church

If you come to the Mission Church in December, you may notice goodie bags in the foyer. The bad news is that these aren't for you but rather as a gift and a blessing to the many people who use and hire the Mission Church week on week. As well as a small Christmas gift there will be invitations to our Christmas services and events.

Ana Lawrence

Sharing new vision at SWCD Churches

Our PCC's and I have been reflecting over the last few months on the vision and mission of our benefice. From the middle of January, for three weeks, we will be sharing the fruits of these discussions as we consider together who we might be as SWCD Churches. Watch this space for more details.

Ana Lawrence

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

As you will have hopefully read in previous editions of 'Life', the stewardship group has been seeking to keep you up to date with the church's financial position, as a prompt both to prayer and practical action.

Our Treasurers (and please remember to thank them for all the work they do 'behind the scenes') have completed the figures for September, three quarters of the way through the year. Below is a summary of the position, showing totals for the benefice and also showing a comparison with last year, which we hope gives you a snapshot of where we currently stand financially.

Benefice wide figures for the nine months up to September (£)

	2021	2022
INCOME		
Planned giving (standing orders, regular giving envelopes etc)	35,623	41,503
Cash giving via the collection plate at our services	7,220	9,265
Other income including wedding & funeral fees, grants, income from room hire etc.	20,848	42,446
TOTAL	63,700	93,214
EXPENDITURE		

Parish Share (agreed contribution to the cost of clergy across the Diocese and other Diocesan costs)	48,891	46,227
Other costs including heating, lighting, maintenance, tithed giving, salaries etc.	28,408	48,033
TOTAL	77,299	94,310
DEFICIT	(13,599)	(1,096)

We know that not everybody finds figures easy to ‘translate’, but, in summary, these show an encouraging picture compared to last year, but we still have a way to go!

Although each of our parishes will have their own figures (and please ask your Treasurer if you want to see them), overall, we have both some good news, and some ongoing challenges to share.

The good news

1. Giving is up across all our parishes, many continue to give generously, whilst some have increased their giving this year. We are also seeing new people join our church family whose giving is now showing in the figures.
2. Other income has risen strongly in the wake of the COVID pandemic, we have seen growth in room hire income at the Mission Church and more wedding and funeral fees as well as some new one-off grants and other income. Of course, our churches now being open has also increased our costs.

The challenges

1. We are still running at a deficit. Simply put, more money is still going out than coming in. The deficit may have shrunk, but that doesn't mean it has disappeared
2. These figures come before the winter months, when costs for our churches will rise, particularly for heating and lighting, where we, like many others, are already seeing some 'eye watering' increases in our bill. Whilst some external help may be available, cost will undoubtedly be higher
3. Walton and Street, particularly, have identified significant problems with their buildings which are already incurring costs, with further, probably substantial, bills to follow.

Please talk to your PCC members if you want to know more.

In the face of these figures, please keep praying for the finances of our churches and continue to ask God how you might respond.

We believe we serve a generous God, who calls us to be a generous people. Wouldn't it be great if, instead of discussing deficits, we were wondering which benefice ministry initiative we should invest our surplus funds into?

Kevin Lawrence

For the benefice Stewardship group

Everyday faith

We will be encouraging involvement in the Diocese wide initiative.

A recent mailing from the Diocese describes the event as follows: The theme for 2023 is 'Everyone, everywhere, growing in faith' and the key dates are Sunday 29 January – Saturday 4 February. We want to encourage everyone, everywhere in our diocese to think about their faith journey so far and how they have grown in their faith over the years as well as in recent times. Sharing stories of how others have been helped to grow in faith, as well as recognising the challenges, and encouraging one another to grow in our faith as we journey together.

Please put the dates in your diary with more to follow.
Ana Lawrence

Manna News

Bishop Michael gifts 1,000 saplings at installation

Preaching on the reading from the Book of Acts Bishop Michael said in his sermon that his gift was an example of just one of the things we can do to bring about the harvest of God's life into God's world and asked all those present "will you plant a sapling as a sign that under God each of us, in every place, can play our part in working for change, for transformation, for life? Small actions that when we undertake them together make a big difference."

Out and about from Bath to Wells

A phrase that has stuck with Bishop Michael from the service when he became a bishop is 'bishops know their people and their people know them'.

As he seeks to live out that sentiment, rather than make a conventional car journey home from attending Morning Prayer at Bath Abbey back to Wells on the morning of his installation, Bishop Michael took a different

approach, using different forms of transport and meeting the people of Bath and Wells along the way.

A service marked with tradition and symbolism

Bishop Michael was installed 80th Bishop of Bath and Wells wearing the Coronation Cope; originally commissioned for the Coronation of HRH Edward VII in 1902. His Oath of Allegiance to the King was taken on Bishop Robert Creyghtone's Bible which dates back to 1633, and he received the 15th century episcopal ring.

Representatives from every parish across Bath and Wells attended the service, young and old. Members of clergy together with parish lay representatives and guests from local schools, businesses, and civic society. All were encouraged by Bishop Michael to "...be people who long for a harvest - a world transformed into a place of peace, fairness, service, justice, loving-kindness."

Interview

Offering a warm welcome

The community in and around Wiveliscombe has come together to offer support to their Ukrainian guests, which will be vital over Christmas.

How did you set up your community support?

When we realised Ukrainian refugees would be coming to our area we realised we would need to have a co-ordinated approach so we set up a community organisation, Wivey Welcomes Refugees. Because of our rural setting we tried to bring people from the same area here together and thanks to the Facebook group, Taunton Homes for Ukraine, we matched about 95 per cent of people.

What support did you first offer?

Our visitors first priority was to learn English and that's when we started planning to set up a Welcome Hub. St Andrew's in

Wiveliscombe was the first to open their doors to us. They already ran a Café for All on Thursday mornings and made it clear we were welcome to come and use their space for whatever we wanted to do. One lesson a week quickly became three.

What did that develop?

The wrap around care is important. The community volunteers come into the lessons to help and also offer friendship and trusted practical support for our visitors. The opportunity to build up friendships with fellow Ukrainians, has also been really important, especially for those who are living out in the countryside and not near any fellow Ukrainians, and that has created a wonderful atmosphere.

What about Christmas?

Christmas will obviously be a difficult time as every one of my guests has loved ones back in Ukraine who they are worried about, especially with the recent targeting of power structures in Ukraine. They are strong and resilient people but a Christmas away from home will be challenging and the friendships, hospitality and support will be particularly important. One of our community partners is making plans to mark Orthodox Christmas on 7 January and we hope to follow up the success of our recent joint service with a Ukrainian/British carol service.

Find out more about Wivey's welcome and how you can offer similar support at: bathwells.anglican.org/wivey-welcomes.

'Spirit Friends'

'ELIZABETH'S CHILD LEAPED WITHIN HER.' Luke 1:41 NLT

Here's an interesting chapter in the Christmas story – one that teaches us about 'spirit friends'. The Bible says: 'A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea ... She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth ... exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed ... Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home"' (vv. 39-42, 56 NLT).

Besides being cousins, Mary and Elizabeth were 'spirit friends'. They didn't just connect socially, they connected spiritually at a deeper level. That's why Mary 'hurried' to see Elizabeth, and why she spent three months with her. It's also why Elizabeth confirmed the miraculous purposes of God that were being fulfilled in Mary's life, and commended her for her obedience.

When God introduces you to someone who has been touched by His Spirit and carries within them a vision that's conceived by the Holy Spirit, reach out to them, treasure them, and build a relationship with them. The connection between these two women didn't take place because they were part of the same family. The truth is, sometimes our families are the first to criticise us and the last to understand us.

Notice, when Mary greeted Elizabeth, the unborn child within her leaped in her womb. How do you recognise a 'spirit friend'? When they speak, something within you will resonate. That's because you are both filled with the same Holy Spirit and empowered to do God's will.

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

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