

Happy New Year



Readers of Life

I bring you good news, and don't we need it too, after all the bad news of 2022. Losing our Queen of 70 years, people still getting Covid in great numbers, all the goings and comings in Parliament, lots of natural disasters around the world, wars, and before Christmas many people finding rising costs a real problem. We certainly need more prayer in our lives.

We think of and pray for those we have lost in our Benefice, the most recent being Rose Wheeler, and on page 7 you can read some memories of her. Anyway, I digress, as I started with the words, 'I bring you good news' and I do. In December I said that we are reviewing the 2023 price of 'Life' and I'm pleased to tell you that through 2023 the price will remain the same, thus: 50p a copy, or if you have it delivered and pay for the year, £5. In these days of everything getting more expensive, I am pleased to give you this news.

At a recent visit to the N.T. property of Stourhead in Wiltshire during a cold and frosty day I produced the picture on the front cover. Trinity Handbells were busy in the run up to Christmas and we can be seen on the back cover playing carols in two of our benefice churches, alongside pictures from Compton Dundon's big breakfast.

I hope you will all be blessed with a better year in 2023 and find Joy and Peace in the love of God. Roger.

Articles for the February Magazine are due on Sunday January 15th

Rector's Letter

“At SWCD Churches we are a church family who aims to:
Worship God, love our communities, grow in faith”

Dear Friends,

As another New Year dawns, I wanted to share with you some thoughts on our new vision statement (see details elsewhere in the Magazine). What might these words mean?

‘Come, let us bow down in worship’ (Psalm chapter 95 verse 6).

As Christians, God's church, this must be our primary calling, to worship God and acknowledge God for who he is, to give him worth – ‘worth ship’, which is where the word worship originally comes from. How, when and where we worship will look different for each of us, but the key thing is that we do worship God.

‘Above all, love each other deeply’ (1 Peter chapter 4 verse 8).

As Christians, God's church, we are to be a people that commit to love one another. A Christian community that truly loves can be a tremendous witness to the world around. As we love one another, we reach out and love our communities. This love will look different for each of us and each of our churches but whatever it looks like, it should be rooted and grounded in God's love for us.

‘..the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him’ (John Chapter 2 verse 11).

As Christians, God's church, we are to grow in faith. Whether you are a newly minted believer or are rich in years in your Christian journey, we are all disciples; we all have more to learn about the God who we serve and worship. Each of us learn in different ways, but none of us know even a fraction of all there is to know.

I am excited about what may emerge as we begin to explore what this focus might mean for us as SWCD Churches. A reminder that when you called me here, it was to walk with you; let's continue the journey together.

With my love and prayers,

Ana

Joint benefice services

The week after Christmas Day (Sunday 1st January) there will be a joint benefice Communion Service at 10.30am in the Parish Church, Street.

Then on Sunday 29th January, which is the fifth Sunday of the month, we will also be holding a joint benefice service as part of our four times a year pattern of meeting together in one of our churches. This too will be in the Parish Church Street (it's their turn!) and we look forward to welcoming church family from across the benefice to worship and receive communion together at 10.30am.

Ana Lawrence



To Roger Forsey who celebrated a 'significant birthday' recently.

New Vision for 2023 at SWCD Churches

Some eighteen months ago, all three of our PCC's gathered together at Bagley Baptist Church for a day of thinking, dreaming and sharing. At that day, we began to think about how we move forward as a benefice whilst recognising that each of our parishes and churches has and continues to maintain its own distinctive characteristics. Since then, I have been thinking and praying, as well as discussing with others and each of the PCC's, from which has emerged a new vision statement.

Moving towards a vision statement that we can adopt in all our parishes seeks to describe who we are and what we are aiming to do, if you like, it is an attempt to describe our DNA as a benefice. It gives us an overall direction of travel, against which we can review both current and planned future activities and events etc.

As 3 parishes, we should be characterised by our worship (gatherings on Sundays & at other times in the week), by the ways in which we seek to look outwards and reach our communities with God's love and by a desire to know God more fully, to grow in our discipleship as we grow in confidence to share our faith.

Reflecting the above, can I offer to you the following vision statement for our benefice:

“At SWCD Churches we are a church family who aims to:

Worship God, love our communities, grow in faith”

This can be summarised as:

Worship
Love
Grow

How we work this out in what we do and say both as a benefice and in our individual parishes and churches will emerge over time but I hope this will give us a sense of the bedrock on which we collectively base all that we do.

In the second half of January, we will be exploring what this means in a little more depth through a short sermon series. Please continue to pray that God would be showing us how we should worship, love and grow in our churches and communities in 2023. Ana Lawrence

Safeguarding team.

Thank you so much to the 18 people who completed the Safeguarding leadership course in the Mission Church. It wasn't as scary as we thought. Although the course



work had changed since we last completed it, Jacqui and Anita were so approachable and ran the course so well.

C0 and C1 courses are available on line to do and are very straightforward. All of us with any role in Church must have C0 up to date and the home communion team and pastoral visitors must have C1. You can book into a course by logging on to bathandwells.org. Do get in touch with Jane, Steve or Sandra if you need any advice about how to do these courses.

The safeguarding team at Wells are working hard to update us all and to advise us of the changes. Thank you for helping us take safeguarding seriously and for supporting us, your team, in keeping up to date. Sandra Gristock

Walton Matters

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel". The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too". Luke 2. Vs 28-35. N.I.V.

Thank you to everyone who donated poinsettias to decorate the Church and for Patrick and Andy for putting up the Christmas trees. Also to everyone that cleaned and tidied and to Chris for the coffee to keep us warm. The Church looked lovely in time for the school Carol Service and our Christmas events too.

It was so lovely to represent Walton at Compton Dundons big breakfast. We are always welcomed so warmly and we did well with our stall plus of course, enjoying a beautiful breakfast. Well done to you all for such an enjoyable event.

We also were able to help out with 'Get in the picture' both in Street and at St. Andrews. What a joy it was to see people getting in the nativity scene and having their photo taken. A reminder of what Christmas is actually about. Thank you to Ana and Diana for organising this.

Sandra Gristock

Flower rota.

7th January Jane Wilcox

21st January. Jo Pain

Rose Wheeler

Many of you, like us, will have been saddened to hear of Rose's passing but would, also like us, have many fond memories of her. Over the years she had served the church in many ways – including reading the lesson, leading intercessions, being a Communion Assistant and taking out Communion to people in their homes. She also was a member of the Women's Fellowship and attended house groups where her contribution was always considered and valued.

We can hold onto particular individual memories – Jeff can still picture Rose in the mid 1980's worshipping in the Tin (Mission) Church with her son Frank, and remembers her welcome when he joined the house group at Delyth and Andrew's cottage in 1984.

And many will remember her joyous wedding to Mike in the Mission Church. Jeff Brewer.

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The wedding started off with Rose and Frank arriving in the Mission Church to the 'Goldies' a choir of local people who enjoyed singing 60s songs, regularly at the Community Centre in Street which she enjoyed being a part of, singing one of her favourite songs: 'The Rose' and 'Going to the chapel and we're gonna get married'. Mike and Rose were married by The Rev John Greed.

Going back, ... She was a member of the team raising money for the 'New Mission Church', and at a fundraising event she dressed up as Andy Pandy. She was a member of the P.C.C. back in the days of the 'Tin Church'. More recently Mike and Rose have enjoyed the 'Afternoon Teas' in the Mission Church. She once attended 'A special celebration party, at which she did the twist. We will miss her dearly. Roger and Pam.

Compton Dundon News

Christmas Events in Compton Dundon – a busy month!

Big Breakfast

Christmas cheer began at the end of November in Compton Dundon, with our ever popular annual Big Breakfast. The Village Hall was packed all morning with both villagers and those from further afield enjoying a delicious cooked breakfast. There was also an opportunity to browse the Christmas stalls around the perimeter of the hall with their variety of gifts on offer. By 11.30, 150 breakfasts had been served and £760 had been raised for St Andrew's. Well done to our intrepid chefs and all those who helped in so many ways on the day and leading up to it. And of course thank you to everyone who supported us and enjoyed the wonderful freshly cooked food and the camaraderie of the morning.

St Andrew's Christmas Fayre

Following on from the successful December Saturday Christmas Markets held at the Linneys, this year it was proposed that we have a Christmas Fayre in St Andrew's Church on Saturday, December 10th. Having made this decision, we did initially wonder would we have enough to sell? Would people come to buy? We need not have worried because as we set out our goods the day before, there was a plethora of Christmas gifts (many homemade), produce of all sorts, a Lucky Dip, Bells mugs and decorations and Amie's stall selling beautiful homemade wreaths. On a cold but bright day the tea or coffee with mince pies or shortbread was welcomed. The village mulled cider went down a treat – guaranteed to warm right through! In the afternoon we were treated to Christmas carols played by the Benefice Handbells group, a very jolly festive sound. Throughout the day many visitors,

both children and those a bit older than that, enjoyed 'Getting in the Picture' as a Nativity character with a stable backdrop. There were some Nativity animals in evidence too, acting appropriately in role fitting for their costumes! All in all, a most enjoyable and successful event and we look forward to finding out how much was raised for our church funds.

Thank you to all who worked so hard preparing and selling and to everyone for being there on the day to be part of it. Pat King.

Celebrate@6

Our Celebrate@6 service returns on Sunday 15th January at 6pm in the Mission Church. An informal time of worship, teaching and ministry open to all. Maybe you have never been to this kind of service at all or perhaps you haven't attended an evening service for many years? Why not make 2023 a year of new beginnings and come along?

We also want to welcome those who might normally serve in other churches in the mornings and please extend invitations to others from our neighbouring churches who you may feel would value this space and time. Ana Lawrence

Embracing the digital age

Whatever you may think about Facebook, twitter, websites and the like, there is no doubt that they provide fantastic opportunities to share good news and publicise all that SWCD Churches is doing. If you haven't yet checked out our website or Facebook page, please do so. Not only are they a great source of information about all that is going on, but they also provide an easy way of you sharing SWCD Churches with your friends and contacts. Ana Lawrence

Christmas card writing at Walton.

By the time you read this article, we will be in January 2023 and all memories of Christmas will be fading, probably! But our memory of Christmas card writing 2022 will stay with us for months to come.

Usually we write our Christmas Cards, quietly at home but 2022 was the year we were all encouraged as a church family, to try 'something new' and so in November 2022 we went to Walton Church on a damp and dark evening to take up the invite for Christmas Card Writing. Inside was anything but damp and dark. We were warmly greeted with bright smiles, cheerful laughter, companionship. Warm mulled wine (or teas/coffees) and mince pies (Peter wants to mention how good the homemade fudge was, thank you Sandra).

Thank you Walton for opening your doors to the church, and your hearts to welcome us. It made Christmas card writing so much more fun and we shall look out for the 2023 date to join you all again! Peter and Fleur Tudor.

Alternative New Year Resolutions

Instead of just going on that post-Christmas diet, starting that exercise class or other similar new year resolutions, why not make some spiritual ones too?

Why not take up a spiritual exercise such as a new pattern of prayer or bible reading or consider exploring a new ministry opportunity?

The New Year can be a time of new beginnings; what will yours be?

If you are looking for ideas and inspiration, please come and talk to me. Ana Lawrence

Collection of £2 Coins

From January 2023 we will no longer be collecting your £2 coins. You have donated 292 coins during 2022, making a total of £584. You also donated £53 in other coins. A total of £637 has been paid into Holy Trinity Church Street funds, 10% of which is given to the Missions and Charities that we support.

Thank you to all those who have donated so generously over the years. Pam Harmsworth

Christmas Afternoon Teas

The Afternoon began with Ana (our Rector) giving a very short talk, reminding us about the real meaning of Christmas.

After the talk the Trinity Handbell group played several Christmas Carols. Then it was time to join in. Most of us had a shaker or tapper instrument that we attempted to play. We also sang along, making a joyful sound.

Time for tea and cakes next and lots of conversation. Pam Harmsworth

Afternoon Teas

Friday 20th January 2-30pm

Mission Church Street

Everyone Welcome

Meet in a warm space. Drink tea/coffee and eat cake/biscuits

.Post Christmas Double Swop Event

Clothes Swop

Bring your Nearly New clothes on a coat hanger, to swop.

Gift Swop

Bring gifts to swop

Energy Audits on Street & Walton Churches

The following data and comments are a précis based on the energy audits carried out on our request by Green Journey, an organisation used by the Anglican Churches in their efforts to progress to a Carbon Zero state in Churches by 2030. Reports on each of the three Churches were commissioned and have been received. These reports contain details of energy usage by installed equipment, comments on the efficiency of this equipment and recommendations for future replacement. The reports also comment on possible reductions in energy usage by increased insulation of the buildings and heating installations, together with encouraging the more efficient use of the heating and lighting equipment.

The lighting in all three churches was considered energy inefficient, where possible LED bulbs should replace filament bulbs when replacement is required. Low voltage halogen and florescent lighting equipment to be replaced with LED equivalent lighting as they need replacement.

The heating and hot water boilers in the three churches are not of the most efficient latest designs. These should be replaced by more efficient modern equipment as they become unserviceable. The heating systems being adapted to use modern condensing boilers with the possible use of heat pumps as an alternative or an addition to augment the main system. In the Parish Church lagging of the boiler piping in the boiler room should be carried out as soon as possible.

Where ever possible all equipment being purchased should be of the most energy efficient design.

The windows in Street and Walton parish Churches cannot be replaced with double glazed units but could be fitted

with secondary double glazing. The Mission Church windows and doors can be gradually replaced with double glazing, especially the louvred windows which are excessively draughty.

In each of our churches a GREEN CHAMPION should be appointed, these could be a member of each church already a member of the benefice Eco-Church group. Their role would be to monitor their church's progress towards the Anglican Church's Net-Zero policy of zero carbon emissions by 2030. They would also implement action plans to ensure energy is not wasted in heating or overheating of little used areas and the switching off of lights when not required, also that the purchasing of equipment is in accordance with the above recommendations.

These are the basic recommendations of the reports, details of the consumptions of consumables are included in the reports and can be supplied on request.

Written on behalf of the Eco-Church group by David Yemm.

Everyday Faith

For the last five years, the Diocesan Archdeaconry Days have formed an important gathering point in the year for people across the diocese to gather around a theme to explore and grow. Following feedback, these have now been renamed, and they will be known as the Everyday Faith event.

The 2023 theme is 'Everyone, Everywhere Growing in Faith' and the event will take place from 29 January until 4 February 2023.

Sometimes being a Christian is hard work, we feel stuck in a rut, nothing changes, and we may even feel like we go backwards in our faith journey. At other times, it feels like our relationship with

God grows and develops and we learn more about who He is and draw closer to Him.

In 2023 the Everyday faith events are going to explore what faith growth means and looks like, affirming and encouraging you along the way. Throughout the week we will be exploring six themes spelling out the word GROWTH:

1. Growth
2. Rhythms
3. Others
4. Word
5. Together
6. Hope

Resources available

- Daily video content and supporting resources.
- A 6-week Small Group course to do leading up to the event, during the event or after.
- 6 weeks' worth of Youth Group material that mirrors the Small Group resource. Coming soon.
- Collective Worship material for schools.
- Theological reflections on each of the themes.

Gatherings

Online launch service – 29 January at 3pm. An opportunity to gather locally, whether in your church building, your home or elsewhere to join in with this together.

Archdeaconry gatherings

4 February at The Blue School, Wells: 10:00 – 11:30 (arrival and refreshments from 09.30).

For more information and to register, please visit the Diocesan website or call them on: 01749 670777.

Ana Lawrence

A Christmas visit to Elmhurst School

Some children of Elmhurst school were invited by Diana Greenfield to Street Parish Church for carols and to learn about The Birth of Jesus before they broke up for the Christmas holidays.

Diana had visited the school and the children were asked to write about the birth of Jesus. The following are some of the children's unedited stories:

So as we all know an angel called Gabriel came to a girl called Mary and said you will have a baby his name will be Jesus and will be Son of God. The very next day at night in a dream Gabriel visited Joseph and said don't worry to marry Mary.

One day Mary and Joseph set off on a donkey to Bethlehem so they can register. Their journey across the dessert was pretty hard because it boiling hot in the day and freezing cold in the night. When they got to Bethlehem there was no room the only room was in a barn.

All of the inns were full but a kind innkeeper let them sleep in his barn. So they went to the barn. It smelt like hay and poo because there were lots animals including pigs, cows, sheep chickens, horses and donkeys plus one goat and a few ducks. But then suddenly Mary said "I'm having a baby" So Joseph ran over to comfort Mary. Suddenly there was a cute baby lying in Mary's hands. Joseph said to put the baby in a manger So Mary said "good idea" "Happy Birthday Jesus" Mary said!

Thanks to Diana Greenfield for sharing these sentences with us and to the children for the 'down to earth stories' of the birth of Jesus. There are more, so maybe I will share them with you another time. Roger (Editor).

Manna News

A unique gift

A Ukrainian guest staying in Somerton who regularly attends St Michael's church with her hosts has used her artistic talents to present the church with a unique gift, an icon of St Michael who is also the patron saint of Kyiv. She produced the painting to say thank you to all those who have helped her, and her six-year-old daughter, settle in Somerset.

Eco Award for Bath and Wells

The Diocese of Bath and Wells has received a bronze Eco Diocese award for its commitment to caring for creation. The award reflects the work undertaken by churches in all parts of the diocese to help take better care of God's world.

Bath and Wells Climate Justice & Environment Adviser, Sara Emmett said, "The Eco Diocese Award means that we have demonstrated our commitment and progress towards Creation Care and Net Zero Carbon as a diocese. In order to progress to a silver award we need to have 30% of churches with an award, 10% of which are silver, so this is our biggest challenge and one which we need everyone to commit to working towards."

A new patron of Somerset Day

Bishop Michael has become a patron of Somerset Day, a day of celebration of all things Somerset which is celebrated each year on the second Saturday in May.

Commenting on becoming a Patron, Bishop Michael said "I'm thrilled to be here in Somerset and to be able to see and celebrate so many different aspects of our life together. Somerset Day is a brilliant way for us to give thanks for so much that's good in our county. I'm very much looking forward to supporting its work".

Bishop Michael will be patron alongside existing Somerset Day Patrons, including Bishop Ruth and Michael Eavis.

Bishop's Letter

Are you looking out for Jesus?

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

In January, our churches enter the season of Epiphany which my dictionary defines as 'a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization'. I wonder what your epiphanies have been? When have you seen things for the first time? Experienced the penny dropping? Understood things in a new way?

In our churches, the readings for the Sundays of January are all about moments that revealed who Jesus is. The arrival of the wise men showed that Jesus is for everyone, not just the people of Israel. Jesus's baptism revealed his relationship with his Father and the Holy Spirit. The production at Cana of enough top-quality red plonk to take several baths in made clear the abundance of God's love for us. The end of the Epiphany season, the feast of Candlemas (actually 2 February), marks the moment when Jesus was seen as 'God's salvation for all peoples' (Luke 2: 31).

The challenge with epiphanies is whether we're looking out for them. If our eyes are wide shut, we don't see an awful lot. Sometimes we need to stand in a different place to spot things we haven't perceived before. So the question I'd like to ask you as our new year begins is 'Where and when are you looking out for the Jesus who has been revealed to us?'

A practical step you might take to help you on your way is to sign up to be part of the ['Everyday Faith' events](#) that will be happening around our diocese from 29 January until 4 February. The aim of these events is to help us look at our faith afresh and see things anew from some different perspectives.

I'm going to be taking part in the Everyday Faith events and they're going to be great. As we enter a new year, why not come and join me? After all, an invitation to an epiphany isn't something that comes your way every day!

A very Happy New Year to you all, Bishop Michael

Time to Clean House!

'SANCTIFY THE HOUSE OF THE LORD ... CARRY OUT THE RUBBISH.' 2 Chronicles 29:5 NKJV

In Scotland they have a New Year's tradition that involves cleaning out your house, dumping the old ashes from your fireplace, and paying off your outstanding debts. It's about clearing out the old to make room for the new. And from time to time, you must clean your spiritual house too. The Bible says, 'Carry out the rubbish.' Why? Because over time wrong attitudes, shoddy workmanship, and bad habits creep in and blind us to what's important.

Sheila Coleman says: 'Ten years ago I cleaned house from top to bottom. I dusted every nook and cranny ... scrubbed the bath and every sink until they shone. I even took a toothbrush to the grout in the kitchen. That house had never been so clean. And today – ten years later ... it's still clean. I've never had to pick up another duster ... vacuum ... or wash the kitchen counter ... and my house looks as clean as it did that day, right? WRONG! We continually need spiritual house cleaning because we live in a dirty world. Just as our homes ... cars and clothes have to be maintained ... our hearts – our spiritual homes – need to be cleaned on a regular basis. Not once a week or once a month, and certainly not once every ten years, or once in a lifetime. We need to let God have His way in us every day, to clean us up and renew us ... Is there a room in your "house" you haven't allowed Him to clean?

If it's been a while since God did a thorough heart-cleaning, make this your prayer: *Lord clean my heart so You can live and shine through me.'*

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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Life



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