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LIFE

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.LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the March edition are due by **Sunday 12th February**

Editorial Notes

Snowdrops fill the front cover and they symbolise: New beginnings, Hope, Rebirth, and the ability to overcome challenges. More facts: They hang their heads so that their pollen is kept dry for the winter insects. They are supposed to bloom at Candlemas, so they are known as 'Candlemas Bells'. A lover of snowdrops is called a 'Galanthophile'.



On page 6 you can read about the New Year walk, and on the back cover is a montage of pictures taken of that walk. Thank you Pat for organising it and for the refreshments afterwards.

The 'Jive Aces' are featured on the bottom of the back cover and you can read Celia Linney's report on the dance on page 8.

We have read in Life-Line the sad news of several people known to us who have departed from this life in the past month and we pray for all those who mourn for them. Two of them brought me personally a deep sadness, Brenda Lampert and Peter Preston, both known for their involvement in our churches here in Street. We will remember Bob, Sarah and family, and Janet and family in our prayers.

I was interested to see a picture of the first casting of the new Cypher of King Charles III on a bell in an article in the Manna section in this magazine, you may see the picture more clearly on the website version of this edition of the Life magazine.
Roger.

The Rector's Letter

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" Matthew Chapter 9 verse 37

Dear Friends,

I am excited that this year we will again be engaging with the Diocesan led initiative 'Everyday Faith'. Throughout this coming month, our Sunday morning sermons will be based on the themes relating to the living out of our faith in our daily lives.

"Everyday Faith is about where and how we encounter God as we go about our lives. Everyday Faith enables the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday, 365 days a year." To read more, please go to the Diocesan website (if you are able to access the internet).

I hope, like me, you will be able to join in, whether online or in other ways.

Sometimes living out our faith in the modern world with so many other voices clamouring for our attention can be a real challenge. As Christians, we are not alone, we can journey together and do be encouraged to sign up, take part and share with Christian brothers and sisters.

The whole essence of everyday faith is that it offers support and encouragement for ordinary people to live out their faith in their ordinary lives whether at the workplace or the WI, the gym or the allotment, or wherever you spend your time, 'everyday faith' provides ideas and inspiration on how to be a Christian presence and witness to those you meet.

It might be that you are the only follower of Jesus in your club, work team, family or elsewhere, how can you be salt and light and if not you then who?

There is an old joke about a sign on a vicar's door which said, 'here am I Lord, please send someone else!' In 2023, let's aim to be a church family who can say, 'here we are Lord, send us.' Yours, with my love and prayers, Ana

Elections – Deanery Synod, Wardens, PCC.

As we approach our Annual Parochial Church Meetings, there will be the opportunity to stand for elections for various roles. Please prayerfully consider whether this is something for you. We will be looking for new members to serve on our Parochial Church Councils (PCC) and if you'd like to know more about what being on a PCC involves, please talk to one of the PCC members or contact me. In addition, every three years, we elect deanery synod representatives – we are able to have two from Compton Dundon, two from Street and one from Walton and this year, elections will be held for representatives to serve for the next three years. Deanery Synod is a place where decisions affecting the local network of Anglican churches are made and there will be significant issues for us to wrestle with over the coming years. Finally, wardens are elected every year, and if this is something you might consider, please also have a word with me or one of the current wardens.

Ana Lawrence

APCM Dates

The year's APCM's (Annual Parochial Church Meetings) will be taking place in April. Dates as follows: Holy Trinity Walton, Monday 17th April, St Andrew's, Compton Dundon, Tuesday 18th April and Street, Thursday 20th April. All three will start at 7pm and should last no longer than an hour. Please put the date for your parish in the diary and join us as we look back with thankfulness to the past year as well as reflect on the year to come. There may be cake!

Ana Lawrence

Walton Matters

The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; He is more awesome than all who surround him. O Lord Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O Lord, and your faithfulness surrounds you. Psalm 89. V's 5-8. NIV.

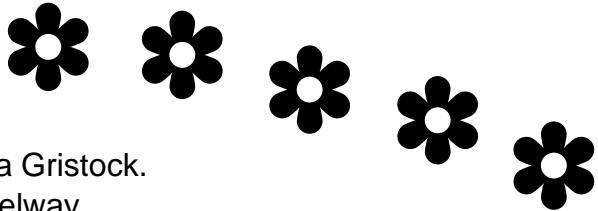
What wonderful Christmas services we had and thank you to all involved. How lovely seeing people come back into Church after a hesitancy last year due to covid. The school's services were a joy as always and it was lovely to welcome them back into Church for their Carol service. We give thanks that the Open the Book team have been able to go back into all our local schools this past term and we look forward to this term being able to dress up and act out the Bible stories.

Thank you to Pat and Steve King who organised our excellent January walk at Compton Dundon and for the delicious refreshments afterwards. It was lovely to catch up with so many old friends and to meet several new friends as well. We look forward to the next walk.

This month has seen us saying goodbye to Margaret Parsons who has been a member of our Church for many years. Margaret had moved to Taunton and although we will still be keeping in touch, we all wish her well in her new life.

We also say a goodbye to Colin Holmes. Colin was sexton at Walton for many years and left us when he moved into Street. It was with sadness we heard of his sudden death. Our dear friend Liz Brown is also in need of our prayers and support. Liz lost her husband suddenly and then had a stroke which has left her hospitalised. Dear Liz has been a friend to the Church and to many of us and we all enjoy her quizzes either in teams at the Church or paper form at Christmas. We send our heartfelt sympathy and get well soon messages and prayers.

Flower rota.



4th February. Sandra Gristock.

18th February. Liz Selway.

Sandra.

Walton Christmas Services delivery

As part of Holy Trinity Walton's Christmas outreach, the church family were asked to deliver a Christmas services leaflet to every household in Walton. The church rose to the challenge and leaflets were delivered speedily to every household. Well done, Walton!

If you have other stories to share about Christmas outreach, why not pen an article for Life?

Ana Lawrence

NEW YEAR BENEFICE WALK

The most recent Benefice walk took place on Monday January 2nd in Compton Dundon.

It followed a week of almost constant heavy rain that turned the fields into lakes and the paths into mud baths. The proposed walk was therefore revised a couple of times in order to avoid the worst tracks and by necessity had to include some (albeit quiet) roads.

Good thing there was pre-walk advice to wear wellies.

We were blessed on the day however with beautiful sunshine and 27 intrepid walkers and two friendly dogs met at the Village Hall in the afternoon. Setting off through the swing gate opposite the Hall, we encountered our first village residents, two inquisitive pigs and an assortment of alpacas and llamas. We were now on the 'Church Path,' which just as it says was used by villagers walking to the school or to church from across the main road in Compton Street. The path was paved over in Victorian times and many have trodden it since.

Uphill through grassy fields, still on the paved path, and we emerged by the Primary School.

At the end of the lane, we crossed over and took the path towards Lollover Hill. But rather than negotiating a HUGE puddle and a steep ascent to Lollover, we turned left, skirted another not quite as huge puddle and made it to drier ground. I did wonder whether Louie the chihuahua would need a snorkel to get him to the other side.

Next we took the public pathway between the buildings of the Earth Spirit Centre. Through a very muddy field, ignored by the horse, and finally on to a dry road (Hayes Lane.) Time for a group photo before moving on up Peak Lane towards the church.

After a stop at the North side of the church to admire the views on such a lovely clear day (and another photo) on we travelled down to the Village Hall for some well-earned refreshments after our 3.7-mile walk. Tea or coffee and a muffin were very welcome,

as was time for a chat amongst friends from all four churches and visitors too.

We look forward to the opportunity to get together socially for another walk, enjoying each other's company and the beautiful countryside that surrounds our Benefice. Pat King.

Carbon Fast for Lent

This is a short article to let you know about the Carbon Fast we, as the Eco Church group, are proposing in Lent. Basically, it will be various ideas as to how you can reduce your carbon footprint by changing either small or larger behaviors.

When I started looking into this there were some changes I had already made because of articles I had read or things I had seen online but others I thought, wow, yes, with a tweak here and there I can accomplish that. We as a team are not trying to tell you what you may already know or tell you what to do but you might find some (or all) of the challenges new, interesting and doable. Personally, I like challenges where someone else has done the thinking for me and I just have to say yes or no to things so this would particularly suit that personality type but it is for everyone. Also, if you have made other changes to reduce your carbon footprint then please let us know and we can let others know about them. If you started the New Year with the fun idea at the January Tea Afternoon by bringing some clothes or a present to swap you will have begun your journey towards the Carbon Fast from February to Easter.

Suzie Williams for SWCD Eco Church group

The Jive Aces in Compton Dundon!

The Jives Aces arrived in Compton Dundon direct from Athens in Greece, next stop Torquay and elsewhere before a tour in America in March.

We were lucky to intercept their whirlwind lifestyle, when on Saturday January 7th they entertained more than 120 people at Meadway Hall. This was a fundraising evening for the Bell Appeal and very successful in that respect. Sponsor Gerald Doble witnessed a spectacular event with the dance floor full from beginning to end: thank you Gerald, your support is much appreciated! Numbers such as 'When you're Smiling' 'In the Mood' and 'Hound Dog', food provided by Sarah and Chris (thepignicpeople) and the Bar courtesy of Brian and Trevor, kept everyone happy and a thoroughly good time was had by all as the pictures show well. Thank you to everyone who made this such a wonderful evening. Fundraising certainly can be fun.

Celia Linney



**READING THE
NUMBERS**

In the coming weeks various papers for our Annual Parish Church Meetings in April will be published, including the annual accounts for each of our parishes.

Faced with a document full of numbers and tables, it can be all too easy, particularly for those of us who are less financially clued up, to glance at these and move quickly on, without spending much time seeking to understand the story that our parish accounts are telling us.

Yet it is worth spending a bit of time to understand both the figures and the written reports from our Treasurers, which will be included with the numbers. Over the last few months we have been providing regular updates in 'Life' on church finances together with suggested ways we might respond. Our annual accounts will tell us, in black and white, how we are doing financially, what difference our actions and individual financial responses have made. The state of church finances are also, surely, one sign of the health of the churches as we seek to be generous stewards for the mission and ministry of our parishes.

If the figures do not make any sense to you or they prompt particular questions please do take the time to ask your Treasurer about what you have read. Our parish Treasurers do a fantastic job, often in the background, in preparing and publishing these figures and, even if you do not have any questions, why not simply contact them to say thank you?

Whilst we do not yet know what the figures will tell us, we do know that substantial financial challenges remain, despite the considerable progress that we have seen during 2022. Maybe the figures will prompt you to review or increase your giving, and, if that is the case, please also let your Treasurer know?

You can find details of who the Treasurers are for each parish in this magazine.

Kevin Lawrence. For the benefice Stewardship group

January Afternoon Teas happened on a cold, icy day, with some winter sunshine. People came along with clothes and gifts to swap. Several people took away something different. This activity was done as part of the ECO Church initiative. People helped themselves to tea, cake and biscuits before sitting at tables and talking amongst themselves. The photograph was taken by Jane Tompsett and shows some of the people who attended.
Pam Harmsworth



Afternoon Teas

Friday 17th February

2-30pm

Mission Church Street

Everyone Welcome

A Crafty Afternoon with Jenny Collins

Listening – a Lenten sermon series

At a recent ministry team meeting (benefice clergy & readers) we chewed over a little, the area of listening and the importance of listening well when alongside others. Some people may have natural gifts in this area, but there are tips and techniques one can learn to be a better listener. During the Sundays in Lent, our sermons will have a focus on listening as we explore what this might mean in a Christian context and what the bible has to teach us.

Come and listen! A reminder that sermons are recorded and can be found on our website should you miss one on Sunday.

Ana Lawrence

Lent Groups

This year I would love to encourage you to join a Lent Group, to meet either in church or in someone's home for a 6-week period. Lent Groups are a great way of digging deeper into the bible, sharing and praying together and can be a good Lenten practice as we seek to grow closer to God. This year, the studies will be focussed around the area of listening. If you are interested in joining a daytime or evening group, please contact the office so that we can put together groups from across the benefice.

Ana Lawrence

Do you like to tell stories? Would you like
an Opportunity to join the
Open the Book team?



Open the Book offers primary school children an opportunity to hear and re-enact key Bible stories. Our team in Street and Walton has volunteers from our local churches who go to Brookside, Hindhayes, Elmhurst and Walton. The sessions are about 15 – 20 minutes and we use a three year rolling programme with material provided by the Bible Society. The stories all come from the Lion Storyteller Bible. At Elmhurst Junior School we lead a series of sessions based on Christian Values also provided by Open the Book. All the sessions are on a Wednesday.

If you feel that you have the passion and drive to help with Open the Book and love to share stories with young children you may be just the person we are looking for to join the team. The sessions are lively where the children dress up and act out the story. They also join in a variety of wonderful action songs. You would need to allow 45 minutes including preparation time at the school preparing the resources.

You will need to have a DBS, which can be arranged with the safeguarding officer of your home church. You will also need to undertake a safeguarding course. This can all be sorted very easily. It does not have to be every week. Believe me it is a lot of fun and you come home feeling so blessed and full of joy.

If you think this might be something you would like to join and for you to become a storyteller please contact Pauline by email for any more information paulinehatrey@gmail.com [Pauline Hatrey](#).

Messy Church

Messy Church is an interactive craft-based way of introducing the Christian faith to families in our communities. Very different from Sunday morning and other midweek worship, Messy Church engages in fresh ways as we seek to reach new generations for God's Kingdom. I am really excited that we now have two Messy Churches up and running in the benefice with growing numbers of families attending and a committed and talented team making it all happen.

Messy Churches during the first half of this year will be meeting in February (Tuesday 7th in Walton & Thursday 9th in Street), March / April – Easter Messy Church (Tuesday 28th March in Walton & Good Friday 7th April in Street) & June (Tuesday 20th June in Walton & Thursday 27th June in Street).

If you know of families with primary school aged children, please invite them to come along – we'd love to see them! If you'd like to join the team, no previous experience necessary, just a heart for kids, please have a word with Ana. Even if you are unable to be part of this, you can still be involved by praying for the sessions. For more information, please talk to Ana or one of the Messy Church Team.

Ana Lawrence

SWCD Youth

We have a group of teenagers who meet in the Rectory on Wednesday evenings 7.30 – 9pm. We meet roughly once a month, for chat, games, snacks, encouragements, prayer. If you are aware of any young people in school years 7 – 13, please do consider inviting them – we would love to see them and welcome them. Kevin & Ana Lawrenc

manna

From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells  February 2023

Giving life to our churches

What does ministry look like where you are? Does it look the same as it did five years ago? In Bath and Wells we have been encouraging the bubbling up of a variety of ministries – lay and ordained – as we seek to release the gifts of all and, in the process, help to give life to the Church.

Suse Osmond, Vicar of St Mary's Bridgwater says, "Everybody has a gift to bring to their church and when people are encouraged to use those gifts that's when church works best. There are a million and one things that I am not gifted with and welcome those with the gifts to support me - we all need others to support us."

In St Mary's, Suse has been challenging the perception that only the vicar can lead worship by encouraging others in small ways; asking others to lead Café Church worship, think of creative ways to pray, or a develop a theme for a particular service. Those blessed with other gifts are also recognised, including café volunteers, who offer pastoral care not just a hot drink,



Revd Suse (right) with Bishop Michael and St Mary's cafe volunteers.

and a church member with a passion for positive mental health is being encouraged to explore ways the church can offer a combination of mental health and spiritual support.

Says Revd Suse, "We can be nervous about starting something new as we feel we don't have enough people but I have found that if you step out in faith the support can come. In times of crisis, for example when we wanted to support Ukrainian refugees, the community has heard our story and stepped in to help. We have also found volunteers on websites such as Spark Somerset. One volunteer, who ended up joining our congregation, has since volunteered her gifts to become our new PCC Secretary."

Want to encourage a conversation about what church looks like where you are? Visit bathandwells.org.uk/enabling-ministries ■

Looking out for Jesus

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

Culture, it's said, is 'how things get done around here'. This suggests that our understanding of the world is largely formed by our experiences and what we're accustomed to. That's all fine until everything around us, as it does, keeps on changing. Then we're then set on a collision course between how we think things should be, and how they actually are. Anybody aged over 40 who's had to ask a nine year old how to use their new phone will understand this dilemma perfectly.

Cultural collisions aren't just restricted to technology. They affect churches too. Many of us grew up with a model of church set up by the Victorians. This mostly meant that each parish had one church building with its own vicar, who took responsibility for most aspects of the ministry needed in a particular place. Yet even this was new in its day. Look much further back and things worked very differently. The New Testament speaks of churches where lots of different people played many different roles, each operating out of the particular skills and gifts

given them by God. In Ephesians the writer describes a church where 'some [are] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers'.

So what would be the right model of church for our day? The Victorians' assumption that the vicar would do almost everything would seem to be a crying waste of the gifts and passions that together we share. And as more of our clergy care for three, six or more parishes, the nineteenth century model is increasingly leaving our vicars tired, overstretched and liable to burn out.

We need a better way; one that draws on the rich talents, abilities and skills that our church members have. Here in Bath and Wells we're calling this 'shared local ministry'. Examples of what that can look like exist in many places around our diocese. Neither first century nor nineteenth century, but an emerging twenty first century way of how we want 'to get things done around here'. A better way to inhabit well the faith we've inherited in our time and generation.

Bishop Michael ■

News in brief

Everyone, everywhere growing in faith

People throughout Bath and Wells are exploring growing in faith in the first week of February in our Everyday Faith event.

The event started with a Zoom service on Sunday 29 January and every day during the week people are exploring the themes of Growth, Rhythms, Others, Word, Together and Hope before taking the opportunity to come together on Saturday, 4 February. You can still sign up during the week of the event and access the resources when the week is over.

[Find out more at \[bathandwells.org.uk/everyday-faith-event\]\(https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/everyday-faith-event\)](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/everyday-faith-event) ■



Threads through Creation

Bath Abbey is hosting 'Threads through Creation', a stunning exhibition of twelve enormous, embroidered silk panels that explore the story of Creation.

Inspired by the verses of Genesis, the first book in the Bible, textile artist Jacqui Parkinson re-imagines this ancient story in a vibrant



Ring in the changes

A set of church bells from St Peter and St Paul's, North Curry are the first to be cast with the new cypher of King Charles III. The community raised £150,000 for the bells to be recast and some have visited the foundry to witness the recasting, including the church's vicar, the Revd Simon Bale. He says, "To see the bells actually poured into the cast is quite something. It's quite emotional, frankly. I was able to say a prayer of thanksgiving and of hope and gratitude as well for all this being done." The bells won't return to Somerset until later in the year ■



combination of layers of silk, hand-dyed materials, metallic leathers and gold leaf, miles of thread – and more than eight million stitches!

The exhibition opened in January and will run until 19 March ■

Inspiring faith

Julian Spicer is one of nine Lay Worship Assistants licensed in Quantock Towers benefice last year.



Julian Spicer (back row, left) and his fellow LWAs were licensed in March.

What made you all train up?

We had advance notice of our rector retiring and as churchwardens are practical problem-solving people and knew, post-Covid, how important it is for people to have confidence that we are maintaining our normal service pattern. We went out and asked our congregations who would like to join us and train up and in total nine of us trained up, including five churchwardens.

How did you find the training?

It was only four Saturday mornings, with just 11 people in total from our deanery, so it felt very comfortable. We felt there was a real benefit in us all taking the same training and getting a common grounding, even though churchwardens can already take services if needed.

Have you enjoyed being an LWA?

I think some people have found it a growth experience. They feel they really have moved on from one place to another place and we are all very happy to carry on doing services when we have a vicar back. We also have two more people in training so we will soon have 11 LWAs which is great.

Are you looking forward to having a vicar back?

There is a bit of a sense of 'we've proved we can do it but don't want to do it on our own forever'. It will be nice not to have to worry about finding someone to take a christening, for example.

Have you got any advice for someone considering training to be an LWA?

There is a real satisfaction in getting on with the role. If you feel it is something you want to do and would like to do, then it probably is something you could do as in some way it is a kind of self-selecting role.

Read more about Julian's experience of being an LWA, including establishing a nationwide Facebook groups for LWAs: bathwells.anglican.org/quantock-lwa

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Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Jesus understands

‘... [JESUS] HAS BEEN TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS AS WE ARE ...’ HEBREWS 4:15 NAS

Well-intentioned friends sometimes say, 'I know how you feel.' But deep down we think, 'No, you really don't.' But Jesus does! He was '... tempted in all things as we are ...' so He can interpret and present our feelings to God. And He does. When you pray in Jesus' name, pouring out your heart to God, Jesus acts as your attorney and says, 'Father, I know what this person is feeling. I know what it's like to be under pressure to sin. I stand with this child of Yours who needs Your help.'

You say, 'But Jesus was without sin, so can He really feel my sin the way I feel it?' Yes, He can. In fact, because of His purity He actually feels the pain of sin even more.

Perhaps an illustration will help. In our everyday world we live with germs all around us, and even on us. Because we aren't in a sterile environment we don't notice these germs and we learn to live with them. But it's an entirely different story in a hospital operating room. There, any contamination from germs is a real threat that demands the attention of the entire staff. So they sterilise everything because bacteria can kill the patient. The purity of the room demands close attention to the presence of even the slightest impurity that could lead to a life-threatening infection.

So Jesus' separateness from, and sensitivity to sin, actually increases His ability to sympathise with us. Bottom line: Jesus understands what you're struggling with!

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

