

April 2024



50p

Life



swcd-churches.org.uk



LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the May edition are due by **Sunday 14th April**

Editorial Notes

This month's Life pages are like the Ladybirds on the front cover hibernating at Street Parish Church, in their multitudes!! 32 pages in fact! Lots to take in and digest or put in your diaries, starting with dates of the A.P.C.Ms which are coming up this month.

The first Repair Café in Street, has the back cover all to itself, giving the pictorial view of what it's all about, but on page 22 Sue Ripley gives you the details.

There is an encouraging piece on page 7 from a learner Tower Bell Ringer, and it is good to have news of Annie Makoni from Harare. Roger.

Afternoon Tea

Thursday 18th April

2-30pm till 4pm

Mission Church Street

**You are welcome to come along and meet up
for tea, cake, biscuits and conversation**

Pam Harmsworth and Helpers (Street)

Rector's Letter

We are Easter people!

Dear Friends,

We are now in the season of Easter as we celebrate the rising of Jesus from the dead. But Easter was never meant to be a one-off event, in the coming days, months and actually throughout our lives believing in the risen Lord and living this out makes us Easter people even after all the Easter and chocolate is finished. Sometimes I get asked the question: which is more important, Christmas or Easter? The world makes far more of Christmas from a commercial point of view (interestingly, Easter is also increasingly commercialised) and as Christians at Christmas, we celebrate the incarnation, but I think that the death and resurrection of Jesus surely has to be at the heart of who we are as Christian people. Mary's words on meeting the disciples 'I have seen the Lord' (John chapter 20 verse 18) is testimony and witness to the Christian faith that makes it so much more than a nice story with a happy ending. As Christians, we continue to live the Easter story wherever we are. Our Diocesan strapline 'Living the story, telling the story' Reminds us that our faith should be real and evident to all in our everyday lives and situations.

So, here's the challenge? Do our family, friends and neighbours know we are Easter people? Do our lives, actions and attitudes testify that we serve a risen Saviour? I once sang under a choir conductor who used to frequently remind us that nobody seemed to have told our faces about the joyful words we were singing.

This was his attempt to get us to smile as we performed but I do wonder if we sometimes need to remind our faces that Jesus is alive and we have the victory!

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

With my love & prayers,

Ana.

My Faith Journey

I was born in Compton in 1930 and christened in the church there. Then when I was about 4 years old, my family moved to Butleigh. My family didn't go to church, but my grandfather believed in keeping Sunday as a special day. I remember him telling my father that he shouldn't be gardening on a Sunday.

I remember going to Sunday school at the church in Butleigh with my brother and sisters, then when I was a bit older, I got involved with the bell ringing.

When I was 18, I left to do my national service with the Royal Engineers. One thing which sticks in my mind was another soldier who used to kneel by his bed to pray each night, despite being teased by the other men. I was impressed that this didn't stop him. After the training, I then left on a troop ship from Liverpool, to go to Libya in North Africa, which had a big impact on my life.

After my national service, I met and married Brenda and we started going to church here in Street, as I had joined the bell ringers and eventually became captain of the bell tower.

I've always believed in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ. I know He guides us through life and teaches us to treat others, as we would want to be treated, something I've tried to live by. I am also grateful to friends at church, who have helped and supported me since my wife Brenda died last year.

Bob Lampert (Street Parish Church)

Bishop's letter – Worship is key

From Michael Langrish, Assistant Bishop for Bath and Wells

In January I was back in my old Diocese of Exeter, marking the death of Sabine Baring Gould 100 years before. What an extraordinary person he was, with an incredible range and roundedness of learning and interests, in an equally full and fulfilled life. He was a great traveller and prolific writer of biographies, folklore, travel books, theology, novels and hymns, including some, such as 'Onward Christian soldiers' that remain popular today. He was a linguist and translator; and, as an archaeologist on Dartmoor, very much a pioneer in the field. For many, his greatest achievement was his collecting the old folk songs of Devon and Cornwall, providing inspiration for such composers as Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Holst. He was also the Squire of Lewtrenchard and, being ordained, he appointed himself as parish priest as well!

This he saw as his true vocation. His responsibility, and that of the local church, was the cure of souls from cradle to grave. This meant a care for the spiritual wellbeing of all in the community and for their bodily and social welfare too. Striving for good health and housing must go hand in hand with growth in faith and prayer. All should be encouraged to full humanity, to holy discipleship, to the recognition, and use, of whatever gifts anyone possessed for the common good.

But, underlying all of this, one other aspect of this great man's life speaks very strongly to me now. That is how he understood worship and its relationship to the whole of life. 'To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind

with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God’.

This edition of Manna contains encouraging stories of New Christian Worshipping Communities in Bath and Wells. Worshipping is key. I am reminded of the later words of Archbishop William Temple: ‘It is sometimes said that conduct is supremely important, and worship helps it. The truth is that worship is supremely important, and conduct tests it.’

Bishop Michael Langrish, Assistant Bishop for Bath and Wells

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Spring at St Andrew’s

It has lifted the spirits that following the snowdrops featured in last month’s ‘Life’ we now see daffodils on banks and verges in the village and look forward to bluebells in the woods next month. Spring is on its way and I have discovered that the official first day is not March 21st, as I thought, but apparently March 19th in a Leap Year.

Lent lunches

The lead up to Spring in the Christian calendar includes Lent, our lead up to Easter.

In Compton Dundon throughout Lent, we have gathered weekly in the Village Hall with friends from across the Benefice to share a simple lunch. Thank you to those who provided delicious homemade soup and bread. As I write Rachel has led prayers and a Reflection time after the first three lunches, based around

our Lent theme of being good stewards of God's earth and its resources. Following a Bible reading, we have shared some lively discussion around the tables, challenging ourselves to find ways in which we can become responsible 'green' Christians. This week there was a competitive element with a Fairtrade quiz, identifying Fairtrade crops grown around the world. The quinoa stumped us all! The Lent lunches have given us an opportunity to share in many ways, involving members from all four churches – the setting up, cooking, serving, clearing away, but most of all the sharing of ideas and suggestions to enable us to enjoy and protect God's creation, surely part of our Christian responsibility for his world.

Cream Tea

On Saturday, March 2nd once again we welcomed Compton Dundon villagers and visitors from our Benefice and further afield to the Village Hall to enjoy a delicious Cream Tea. In numbers, 120 scones were home baked, 55 people were served and a total of around £250 was donated towards the costs of our Flower Festival in May.

We set out 32 seats around the tables and there was not an empty chair all afternoon!

Thank you to everyone who helped with baking or during the afternoon and thank you all for supporting us at this happy event.

Pat King, Compton Dundon



Bell Ringing

Have you ever thought about taking up bell ringing?

It's a great thing to do and has many benefits: it's contributing to the community; it's acquiring a new skill; it's working as a member of a team; it's meeting new people; and it's great fun.

So how do you get started?

After making initial enquiries at my local church and village hall I was introduced to Bev and Les Perry at **The Bell Ringing Centre** at Holy Trinity Church, Street. Bev and Les are highly experienced bell ringers and are fully qualified to teach their art. I realised that there would be a lot to learn but they are extremely encouraging, give freely of their time and know how to develop skills and confidence in manageable stages.

Overall, bellringing is not a question of strength but of timing, feel and stamina. Thanks to the training I have received through the centre I am now at the stage whereby I can ring to a basic standard in local church towers (where the teams are equally as supportive), and I am looking forward to becoming a fully-fledged bell ringer in due course.

Norma (Bell Ringing Learner)



Annual Parish Church Meetings (APCM)

During April we will be holding our APCM's in each of our churches. These are open to all on the electoral roll of the parish. We come together to hear reports on all that has been going on in the church over the last year, to elect our church wardens and members of the PCC, to pray together and to look forward to the year to come.

This is much more than a business meeting, although it is also one of those; it's an opportunity for the church family to celebrate together, thanking God and each other for all that has been done and praying together for what God will do in the coming year.

Your presence at an APCM would also be a real encouragement to others, and so please try and make this a priority in your diaries.

Please also be prayerfully considering whether you, or someone you know, could stand for election as a church warden or a member of the PCC? Nomination forms will be available on our website and in our churches.

The meetings are as follows, each at 7pm:

Walton, in Holy Trinity, Monday 15 April

Compton Dundon, in St Andrews,' Tuesday 16 April

Street, in the Parish Church, Thursday 18 April

As part of our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint we are not, as a matter of course, printing copies of the reports, agendas and accounts that will be presented at the meeting and available beforehand. These can be downloaded from our church website,

or, if you prefer, contact the church office and they will print you a copy. Kevin Lawrence

Charitable giving 2024 (and earlier!).

At our PCC meetings in February, we discussed the charities and organisations which we are proposing to support as part of our charitable giving in 2024. Whilst Compton Dundon PCC is still considering their decision, we can share the support decided on by our other parishes.

Each of the supported organisations now has a 'champion' from amongst the church family, whose role is to keep as updated with news from our supported charities including prayer requests for intercessions on Sunday and updates in this magazine and elsewhere. If you want to know more about any of the charities below the first point of call is probably that champion.

WALTON

MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS. Champions Bernard Sinclair and Hilda Grint

<https://www.mwbuk.org/>

Working in the poorest countries in Europe -Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia.

ANNIE MAKONI / ONE HOPE CHURCH. Champion Bernard Sinclair

Working with street kids in Harare, Zimbabwe.

PARISH OF MFUWE, ZAMBIA. Champion Kevin Lawrence
Diocesan link.

STREET

TEARFUND. Champion Kevin Lawrence

<https://www.tearfund.org/>

International Christian development charity

PARISH OF MFUWE, ZAMBIA. Champion Kevin Lawrence
Diocesan link.

And, in case you thought giving money to deserving causes, was something new, I wanted to share two entries from the churchwardens' accounts at Street. (I would really like to know the stories behind these gifts!).

1692 – paid to a blind woman and a Dutchman. 6 pence

1717 – gave unto eight slaves redeemed from Turkey. 1 shilling

Kevin Lawrence

Parish Giving Scheme

This new way of giving to our churches is being introduced across all our parishes. The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is not designed to replace existing methods such as standing orders or envelopes; rather it offers another option for those who would value it. An extract from the paper presented to our PCCs by our Treasurers is given below, which hopefully explains more:

You will be aware that the finances at our churches are very tight. Whilst we are extremely grateful for all donations given, in whatever way, one of the problems with those that give regularly by standing order or envelopes is that it can be easy to forget to update and increase that giving on a regular basis in line with inflation, pay rises, pension increases etc.

Full details of the PGS are given below but one of the principal benefits, as well as reducing administrative work for our Treasurers, is that the PGS makes it possible for those who opt in to automatically increase their giving in line with inflation (givers are always given the option, in advance, to opt out of any such change).

The PGS will be entirely voluntary and will not replace any of our existing giving schemes, rather complement them as another option. A number of members of our churches have already asked if they can use the scheme.

Further details (taken from our Diocesan web site) are given below.

PGS is a convenient and secure way for regular givers to support their church. Using direct debit, PGS collects gifts monthly, quarterly or annually on the 1st of each month and pays these directly into the church's bank account as one lump sum within a few days. PGS automatically claims the associated gift aid each month and pays this to the church as soon as it arrives.

Givers can also opt to increase their gift each year in line with inflation to help your church income keep pace with rising costs.

PGS is currently used by over 4,700 parishes in the Church of England and collects gifts from over 75,000 givers. Since their launch PGS has processed over £365m of gifts and gift aid on behalf of churches and every gift is covered by Direct Debit Guarantee.

Why is PGS good for churches?

- Reduced administration for Treasurers and Gift Aid Secretaries
- Detailed reports help you track your givers and thank them
- Improved cashflow with monthly gift aid claims
- Inflationary increases help combat static giving †
- Powerful conversation starter to help kick-start a review of giving
- No transaction fees for collecting regular gifts and gift aid so your church receives the full value of each gift.
- One-off gift function helps attract additional giving

Just over half of all givers using PGS have opted to increase their gift annually. Of these, 98% accept the annual increase or increase their gift to a level above inflation each year.

If you would like to find out more or join the scheme, please contact your church Treasurer.

Kevin Lawrence

Coffee Chat and snacks

Over the winter months, each Saturday morning, we have been offering 'Coffee chat and snacks' in the Mission Church which, as the name suggests, offers a warm Christian welcome and refreshments to anyone who wants to pop in.

After discussions with the team and those who come regularly, we have decided to extend this beyond March as it is much appreciated. As one attendee told us, 'we were lonely, but we aren't now.'

Although many of the team want to continue, some, for a number of perfectly good reasons, now need to step back and we are therefore looking for one or two more people to join us. This is a benefice wide ministry with people from all our churches involved and we are looking for people who can offer, on occasional Saturday mornings, to make a cup of coffee, offer a warm welcome and enjoy time chatting to others.

You would be working alongside others from the church but, because of the nature of what we do, a DBS check may be required. If you would like to know more or would like to come one Saturday to see what it is all about, please talk to Ana or Rachel, our curate, in the first instance.

And, of course, if you are aware of people who would benefit from a friendly welcome and a chat, please invite them to come along. Kevin Lawrence

Little Stars

We are seeing more and more preschoolers and their parents / carers at our 'Little Stars' group in the Mission Church on Friday mornings during term time.

This is a great problem to have but it does mean that we could do one or two more helpers to join the team. All you need is a love of people (especially small people) and a willingness to chat and get alongside the families that come.

Julie Day, who runs little stars would love to hear from you if you want to find out more. If you're reading this thinking that you are 'too old for that kind of thing,' please think again. People from across the generations would be welcome!

Kevin Lawrence

Notice anything new?

A communications group, commissioned by our PCC's, met during last year and some of the fruits of their conversations are beginning to appear around the parishes. You may shortly spot new external notice boards at the Parish Church in Street and at Walton, whilst the foyer of the Mission Church now boasts a new display screen.

Work continues to improve our notice boards and display material and watch this space.

Kevin Lawrence

Church Administrators welcomed to new group in Street

Working through UCAN (UK Church Administrators' Network) a new local group for church administrators has been set up, with the inaugural meeting to be held at the Mission Church on Thursday 25th April at 10.30 am.

As I was involved in founding UCAN as a national organisation supporting church administrators, it is a real pleasure to be launching this group to offer mutual support and information sharing.

If you know church administrators in other local churches who may find this of value, please encourage them to contact me or visit the UCAN website to find out more

Kevin Lawrence

Christian singer brings national tour to Street

Our friends at Street Baptist Church are hosting the event below to which you would be most welcome.

Come and enjoy Philippa Hanna performing an acoustic set as part of her Stained-Glass Stories live tour.

Tickets £10 adults/£5 children (16 and under) - Available from Street Baptist Church or via Eventbrite

Doors open at 7:00pm, performance starts at 7:30pm

PHILIPPA HANNA is an internationally acclaimed performer racking up over 1500 shows in 25 countries. Since her industry debut in 2007, she has released 5 critically acclaimed studio

albums and published two books, winning fans in the likes of Leona Lewis, Lionel Richie and Little Mix. The Yorkshire born, half-Irish, Singer-Songwriter is a rarity in the UK Music Industry, bridging the elusive gap between Gospel, Pop and Country music. Known for her relatable songs and soulful, Country-tinged vocals, Philippa has drawn comparisons to the likes of Ed Sheeran, Dolly-Parton and Taylor Swift. 'Move over Taylor Swift' [Maverick Magazine]. Her online videos have racked up millions of hits with her Gospel version of Ed Sheeran's 'Perfect' tipping almost a million Facebook shares. As well as annual headline tours in the UK, Philippa has performed at the prestigious London Palladium an impressive 6 times as a support act, the O2 Arena and a sold-out Royal Albert Hall in May 2019 as special guest for Royal wedding singers 'The Kingdom Choir'.

Kevin Lawrence

SWCD CHURCHES BOOK CLUB

Did you know that the benefice has a book club, to which you would be more than welcome?

Each couple of months we choose a book and then meet together over coffee to discuss what we have read...

The current book we have chosen is 'Three Cups of Tea' by Greg Mortensen & David Oliver Relin and you would be welcome to join our discussions, even if you haven't quite managed to read it all! We next meet on Tuesday 7th May at 11:00 am in the Mission Church.

Open to anyone from across our parishes please just come along or contact Sue Ripley (Parish Church) or Caroline Fulton (Mission Church) to find out more.

Kevin Lawrence

Compton Dundon 4 Churches Challenge

For St Andrew's Compton Dundon Bell Appeal 2024

Could you support the St Andrew's Compton Dundon Bell Appeal on 6th May in a circular sponsored walk from St Andrew's Church Compton Dundon to Holy Trinity Church Walton, Street Mission Church, Holy Trinity Parish Church Street and back to St Andrew's Church Compton Dundon? The walk is 10 miles long, with an entry/registration fee of £5 (family of 4+ £15) payable on the day. Registration is from 9am for a 10am start at St Andrews Compton Dundon. There will be a detailed mapped route available for those who want to set off on their own before 9.45am. Otherwise walkers will be guided and there will be a backstop too. There will be a medal for those who complete the whole walk. A drink and biscuit/cake will be available at Walton and the Mission Church for a donation.. Cream teas (£5) will be available at St Andrew's Compton Dundon from 1pm for weary walkers, supporters, friends and family at the end. Sponsorship forms are available in each of our churches and in Compton Dundon at the Post Office and G Doble Engineering. Donations and sponsorship money/cheques after the event, can be dropped off at our church office or sent to

C/O Linney

The Old Farmhouse

Compton Street

Compton Dundon

TA11 6PS

Thank you to the benefice church family for supporting this event. We hope to be able to reciprocate in the future. Perhaps this 4 Churches Challenge can become a regular event supporting each church as needs arise?

Celia Linney Compton Dundon

Walton Matters

I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this and the Holy One of Israel has created it. Isaiah 41. V's 18-20.

We had a very successful quiz evening on the 23rd February with lots of teams being challenged by our quiz master Liz Brown. Thank you Liz for all your work and to the team that provided lovely refreshments. I don't think we could have squeezed anyone else in so thank you to all who attended making the evening such fun.

Sunday 14th April we will be having a cream tea in the Church. This will be from 3-5 o'clock and the cost will be £5. It will be lovely to relax and catch up with folk.

The Walton Parish Council are holding their APCM on 19th April and we have been invited to have a table there. We will be attending showing some of our activities that go on as a benefice. The Parish Council are very supportive of the Church and we are so grateful. We look forward to supporting them on the evening.

We have a lovely lady who has befriended us in our fundraising and has made beautiful cards and crafts for us to sell. To cut down on her expenses she has asked if we can pass on any unwanted used cards that she can adapt and reuse. Birthday, anniversary, get well, congratulations or thank you cards would be lovely. I can pick up these cards from individuals or from our churches. Many thanks in advance.



Flower rota.

13th April.
27th April

Sandra Gristock
Hilda Grint

FROM HARARE TO WALTON

ANNIE MAKONI: TUESDAY 16th APRIL

For several years now Holy Trinity Walton has been supporting the work of Annie Makoni, my niece, with street kids in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Her work there goes back a long way, starting with a gap year 30 years or so ago.

Harare is the capital city and young people from rural areas are drawn there by the prospect of making a good living. Sadly it rarely works out that way and they end up living on the streets desperate and destitute. They may also be involved with gangs and on drugs. Some may be barely into their teens.

Annie has a real burden to show them that they matter and that God loves them. Working with One Hope Church, she works to provide hot meals, and other activities and enterprises to get them back on their feet and perhaps on to a college course or to be reunited with their families back where they came from. She has set up a range of enterprises over the years ranging from collecting plastic bottles to sell for recycling, to farming projects such as raising chickens and rabbits to sell and growing staple crops such as maize. These projects provide work and income.

Annie now has her home out there with her husband Malvern and two teenagers, Promise and Ephraim. They have recently started a new project for 4 boys to live in a cottage nearby and grow crops on some land they have: at the same time overcoming their addiction to drugs.

Over the years there have been successes as well as devastating heartbreaks and failures: but lives have been turned round and some youngsters have found a secure foundation and faith on which to successfully build their lives.

Annie is coming to Walton on Tuesday 16th April at 7pm to give us an update on her work and there will be an opportunity to meet her and share light refreshments. We warmly invite you to join us, even if you are not a regular at the church. It is a difficult time with the APCMs taking place, but please do come if you can: you will be very welcome!

Bernard Sinclair Street and Walton

Street Repair Café and why it is important

We are being encouraged to make things last longer. How often does your favourite sweater have a hole in it or a small kitchen appliance stop working? if you can't fix them yourself and commercial repairs cost more than a new item you maybe think you will just have to get rid of it. Perhaps the Street Repair Café can help you. The Repair Café meets on the 4th Saturday of the month, from 10 a.m.-12 noon at the Quaker Meeting House; in April this will be the 27th.

We had an excellent turnout at our first Café in February, with a wide variety of items including lamps, radios, vacuum cleaners jewellery and clothing. Over 40 items were brought in for repair of which over half were successfully repaired, some needed more specialist work, others were advised as to disposal. In addition, the Fixy van collected over 90 electronic devices for recycling and reuse as well as lots of cables.

Several individuals from SWCD churches are helping with this venture. You can support us by volunteering, bringing something to be repaired or just coming along to see what can be repaired. If you want to know more, find out who is involved and speak to them, or email streetrepaircafe@gmail.com

Waste

Repair Cafés help to reduce waste. Why is waste an issue? Most of the time, unless it's in the form of litter, we don't notice it, we put stuff in our bins, they're emptied and it's taken away. We wouldn't be out of pocket if we produced less waste so why do we not try to reduce it; is it inconvenience or lack of thought?

Reducing our waste reduces our Carbon Footprint.

Why should this matter to Christians? As Christians we are encouraged to look after the world, not to spoil it. The Bible challenges us on our relationship with material possessions and calls us to live differently.

What happens to our personal rubbish? Most materials put out for recycling are turned into new products, for example cardboard can be turned into a new boxes in about 2 weeks. Garden waste is rotted down into soil improver, food waste is turned into energy and compost. To find out more go to Somerset Council website. Unrecyclable household rubbish used to go to landfill and just sit there, covered over, not rotting down but releasing methane, a greenhouse gas; now it is incinerated generating energy but still emitting CO².

Apart from not throwing things away, instead taking them to a Repair Café to see if they can be repaired, what else can you do to reduce waste? Here are a few ideas:-

- Tearfund suggests doing a rubbish audit. Look at: What gets thrown away each week? What can be recycled or composted? What single use items could you replace with reusables?
- For a closer look at the issues of plastic waste and to support their Rubbish campaign check the Tearfund website.
- Could you aim for zero waste? It may not be totally achievable, but it could help you to reduce your waste.
- Buy less - think before you buy. When we buy stuff do we think about what happens to it when we don't want or need it any more?
- Avoid excess packaging
- Make things last longer
- Support local ventures that use supermarket food that would otherwise be thrown away
- Share your ideas and successes in reducing your rubbish with others

Sue Ripley (Street Parish)
SWCD Eco Church Group

Walton reordering plans

Since well before my time as Rector here there have been discussions in Holy Trinity Walton about the best way to reorder the building, to better meet both the needs of the worshipping community and the wider village.

These led to the granting of a temporary faculty in 2015, which saw the removal of the pews in the chancel in order to clear the space for more modern styles of worship and children's work such as Messy Church. This was a temporary arrangement and the pews have had to be kept whilst the church considered what more permanent solutions they wanted to propose.

Meanwhile, significant maintenance issues have been identified at Holy Trinity, including problems with the roof, which do now need to be tackled as a matter of some urgency.

A small group, commissioned by the PCC, and supported by a diocesan approved architect, have been looking at this issue and have now come up with a proposed plan. This will see the roof repaired, the chancel and nave reordered, an improved kitchen, extra toilet, new entrance and a mezzanine floor created at the west end of the church to allow for extra community space. The vision is to create a warm, modern, welcoming community hub, used throughout the week, both by community groups and the church.

These plans, and the thinking behind them, were presented to the Walton church family on the 17th of March and will be opened up to community consultation at an open meeting, held in the church on the afternoon of the 19th of May.

Much is yet to be decided and we are still at the stage of seeking opinions, comments and questions, both from the church and the wider community. If you are interested in finding out more, please put 19th May in your diary.

This is a major project and a significant undertaking for Walton. Please pray for them, for wisdom, vision and boldness as they continue to plan.

Ana Lawrence

Cathedrals, money and a new benefit of being on our electoral roll

Many of you will have seen local news stories confirming that Wells Cathedral has, reluctantly, decided to start charging admission for tourists rather than asking for a donation. Entry to the Cathedral will still be free for those wishing to come to worship or to pray. Whatever you may think of the cathedral authorities' decision, the fact that the Cathedral Chapter has decided on this reflects the tough financial realities that many of our churches, including us at SWCD Churches, are facing.

But now some good news! Those of us who are parishioners in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, whose names are on the electoral roll of our parish, can still get a free visitors entry pass to the cathedral via the new 'Parish Pass' scheme. You will need to download a form here <https://www.wellscathedral.org.uk/your-visit/wells-passes> (or pick it up from the visitors' centre at the Cathedral), complete it and get it signed by your church warden to confirm you are a member of the electoral roll in your parish. Then simply take the completed form back to the Cathedral where you will be issued with a free pass. This pass will last until the next revision of the electoral roll at which point it will have to be renewed.

If you're not on our electoral roll this is just another reason why you should consider joining what is the closest thing our churches have to a 'membership.' If you're not sure whether you are on the roll, or wish to join it, please contact the electoral roll officer for your parish, or the church office.

Kevin Lawrence

Some good relationship reads

During May we will start a new sermon series across all our churches looking at a Christian approach to relationships. Starting with our relationship with God and exploring other areas including relationships with one another within the church, friendships etc., we will also not shy away from the more difficult and controversial areas such as human sexuality and relationships.

All of these sermons will be rooted and grounded in a study of the Bible and, in preparation, can I encourage you to consider doing your own reading and thinking? To that end I would like to recommend two books, which will help us to think together:

The Relationships Principles of Jesus, by Tom Holladay, published by Zondervan

Tom Holladay is an American pastor and, whilst some of the writing reflects his American audience, this is nonetheless an excellent book which offers 40 days of short yet challenging reflective readings exploring what the Gospels have to teach us about good relationships as taught by Jesus. Each short chapter finishes with a verse to learn (if you can) and some suggestions for further thinking. This is a great book to use as part of a daily routine of prayer and study, but be prepared to be challenged!

The Best of Friends by Phil Knox, published by IVP

Better friendships are something we probably all want but what does our Christian faith have to say about being the best of friends? I'm currently reading this book myself but, from what I have seen so far, this is an accessible, practical but biblically

based exploration of what we might learn in this area of relationship.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and I can recommend other books or indeed would love to hear your recommendations of books that you have found useful on the subject of relationship.

My prayer is that, through this sermon series, we will learn to be in better relationship with both God and one another.

Ana Lawrence

Communications help at SWCD Churches

At our February PCC meetings, we agreed to create a new, voluntary role at SWCD churches. Helping with internal and external communication as well as support with some of the other admin tasks that fall to me, and which cannot be picked up by Sonia because of her limited hours in the church office; this one day a week position should enable us to communicate better with one another and with our communities.

The PCCs agreed to this role for a year with a review thereafter to see how it's going. Kevin (my husband) has considerable experience in this area in churches and has agreed to take this on. For obvious reasons I won't be line managing Kevin (see article on relationships in this edition 😊) but David Hatrey has kindly agreed to take this role on.

You may begin to hear from Kevin asking for information or articles about the ministry or events in which you are involved as part of his role and please also contact him if you have ideas or suggestions.

Ana Lawrence

Audit role in the Diocese?

The Diocese are looking for someone to join the Audit and Risk Management Group for Bath and Wells Diocese. (ARMG) and have asked is to publicise the following.

Ideally this will be someone who has a background in Business or Risk Management. We'd particularly welcome someone younger, female, perhaps with a broader cultural background in order to add diversity to the current group.

What is ARMG?

An independent group to which the trustees have delegated the task of identifying and evaluating risks, (financial, reputational, strategic, operational, and safeguarding) to the organization and planning and implementing mitigations.

Ensuring a proper financial audit is performed.

Members are expected to exhibit and use: -

- a curiosity and questioning demeanour
- be courageous in commentary and challenge
- a balanced and ethical approach
- the capacity to build relationships
- strong listening skills

Some members will have specific knowledge of finance and auditing, others will offer

a wide range of different background and experiences.

For an informal discussion or to find out more please contact Rev

Deborah Perreau on 07879698920

Kevin Lawrence

Remembering loved ones in our churches

We receive regular requests from bereaved families, asking if there are tangible ways, beyond gravestones and markers, by which they can remember loved ones who have died in and around our churches. I thought, therefore, that it might be helpful to share some of the possibilities.

We are often asked if families can plant bulbs or other plants in our churchyards, which they can return to and enjoy as a focus for their memories. This is, of course, possible, although we will always encourage discussions with those who maintain our churchyards to ensure that what is planned is in keeping with the way we care for these beautiful spaces. At a recent Compton Dundon PCC meeting, they decided to set aside an area of their churchyard specifically for this purpose, but we welcome this opportunity in our other parishes also. Please speak to your church warden in the first instance.

We also welcome approaches to install benches in memory of loved ones that can be enjoyed by all. Because these are more permanent structures, they do require official church permission and also formal PCC approval. Please talk to your church warden in the first instance, who will need to see the bench design you had in mind and the wording of any plaque you wanted to install on the bench.

There are also projects we love to do in and around our buildings that some may want to fund in memory of a loved one. If this is something that you would like to discuss more please have a word, in confidence, with me.

Ana Lawrence

Mediative Walk in February

Our mediative walk in February led us to St Margarets Chapel and Royal Magdalene Alms-houses in Magdalene Street, Glastonbury (Open 7 days a week from 10am-4pm/Free Entry). Originally the single barn like building served in 1250, as a Pilgrim Hospital and used as a place of purification, both physical and spiritual, before entering The Abbey. In the early 13th century, the site was developed into two rows of houses to accommodate the poor men of the town. Entering the rooms/houses today there is a real sense of what life would have been like living in those times. Overlooking the homes is The Chapel (built 1250) to support the hospital and dedicated to Saint Margaret of Scotland. Margaret was a Saxon Princess and Scottish Queen (1045-1093) who spent some of her wealth on building chapels near to major monasteries. The Chapel is still a sacred space and used for quiet prayer, meditation and contemplation today. On our visit we found a Finger Labyrinth, very thought provoking, and an inspiring mural 'Pilgrimage' created by local artist Jon Minshull in 2022.

Our thanks to Jane Tompsett who kindly organised and led the group, to Rachel Pengelly for her prayers, and to the group for their companionship.

'Where will we find ourselves in March I wonder?'

Fleur Tudor

Growing together

Spring is a time that we celebrate the signs of new growth, making it the perfect time to come together to share stories of growing church. The second Greenhouse gathering took place in March. Those who attended were able to share the progress on their projects to grow their churches, learn from each other and get creative together.

Megan Jones-Dellaportas is part of the team planning to start a new church on the new Orchard Grove housing estate in Trull. She says, "It's great to have the opportunity to get together with others going through something similar. I didn't know what to expect at our first gathering, but I came away inspired and with lots of ideas to share with my team. It also gives you an important time to reflect. When you are busy doing what you are doing it's easy not to realise what you have achieved, but today I've been able to reflect on the last six months as I share my news with others."

Sally Mottram and Barbara Taylor from Ilchester were also able to share their good news. They started a new church gathering in September 2023, in a school at the other end of the village from the church. They said, "We wanted to offer a way to access worship for those who aren't drawn to worship in a church building and we've already got a core group of families who come every month. Even when it poured with rain the other Sunday and we thought no one would turn up, they did, which is a very encouraging sign for the future."

Find out more about Greenhouse and how it can help you nurture new Christian worshipping communities: bathwells.org.uk/greenhouse.

Forgive them, and let it go

'... FORGIVE WHATEVER GRIEVANCES YOU MAY HAVE ...'
Colossians 3:13 NIV

We talk about grudges the way we talk about babies. You can hold a grudge, carry a grudge, bear a grudge, or nurse a grudge. The trouble is, when you nurse something you feed it, make it grow, and pretty soon it's full grown.

Are you carrying a grudge? Why? It doesn't make sense. Why would you pick up something each day that weighs you down and carry it around with you? 'But they hurt me.' Yes, but by carrying a grudge you enable them to keep hurting you. Don't do that to yourself!

We know we're supposed to forgive other people, but sometimes forgiving feels like we are giving up something. One of Lincoln's stories was about a man on his sickbed who had been told by the doctor that he didn't have much time to live. He summoned an old friend named Brown with whom he'd quarrelled bitterly. They hadn't spoken for years. The man talked of how he was going to die soon, of how petty their differences looked in the face of death, and asked if they might be reconciled. The scene moved everyone in the room to tears. Brown clasped the dying man's hands, embraced him, and turned to walk out of the room, a shattered man. Suddenly the man on the sickbed, having one final thought, raised himself up on one elbow and spoke for the last time: 'But see here, Brown; if I recover, the old grudge still stands.'

This story makes us smile and think, 'How foolish!' But if you are carrying a grudge, are you any different?

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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REPAIR CAFE
Saturday 10:00 - 12:00



