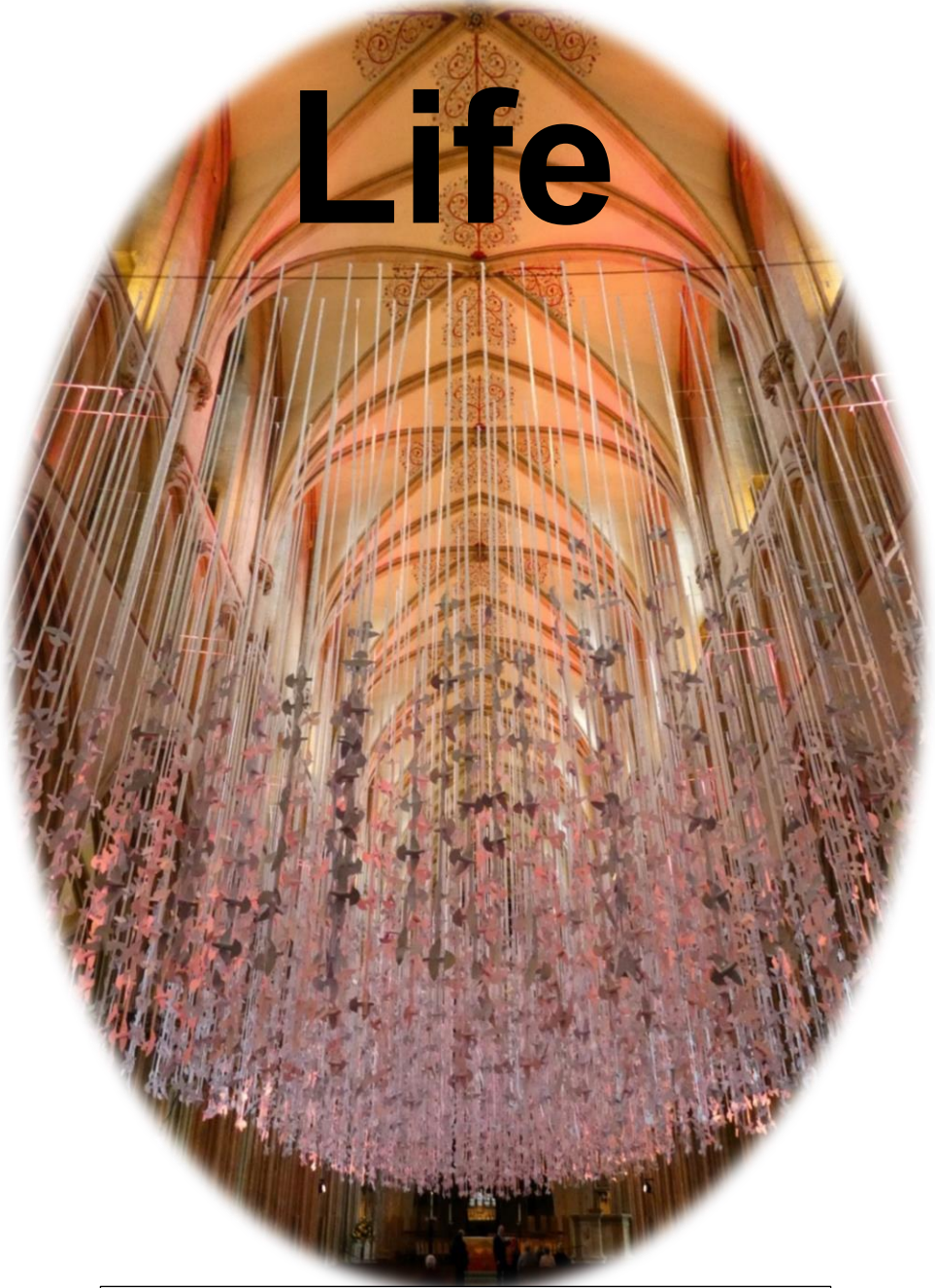


June 2024



50p

# Life



[swcd-churches.org.uk](http://swcd-churches.org.uk)



LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the July edition are due by **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June**

## Editorial Notes

It was good to see the font in its new position at St Andrews, and Pat writes about it on page 8. On the back cover however, you can see it for yourselves, 1) Adorned with flowers for a Flower Festival some years back. As I write this I am looking forward to the 'Flowers and Photographs' display, which will be reported on in the next 'Life'. 2) The builder 'making good' after its removal, 3) Looking good in its new position.

The sponsored walk pictures make up the rest of the back cover, including some doggie refreshment at the Mission Church, an advertising board at Compton Dundon, some refreshment for the walkers at Walton, a home made medal for all participants, and some walkers about to depart from Walton Church, on to the next stage, Street Parish Church. Hopefully next month I can report on the total raised on this walk.

The Wells Cathedral paper dove display takes the front cover position.

Roger.

## CONGRATULATIONS

To Peter and Susie Robertson (Compton Dundon) on recently celebrating a significant wedding anniversary.

# Rectors Letter

Dear Friends,

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 11.

One of the joys of my role is being recognised around the benefice even if it might take me a moment to work out who’s talking to me and where I last met them. Children are particularly good at this, and I have lost count of the number of times I have been hailed in the street by a small person saying ‘I know you, you’re rev Ana, you come to our school’ or something similar.

In our Sunday sermon series, we are currently exploring the theme of relationships. Drawing on the bible, we are looking at what God has to say to the church about how we interact with him and each other.

I suspect that most of us enjoy being known and recognised. We were created for relationship and yet relationships can seem difficult and complex at times. In our sermon series, we will not shy away from the more challenging aspects of relationship but at the heart of what I hope you hear is the longing from our heavenly father that would seek deeper relationships with him and with one another.

On our church website there is a section called ‘doing life together’, in it you will find many of the ways we try to strengthen our relationships with one another. Book groups, walking groups, coffee and handbells are just some of the activities listed there; do take a look and why not join something new as we seek to build stronger relationships with each other as SWCD Churches.

In worship, prayer, bible study and so much more, let's also commit to growing our relationship with God, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12. 2).

If you are looking to go deeper, can I recommend getting hold of the book that our house groups are currently reading as part of their study. 'The best of friends – choose wisely care well' by Phil Knox.

With my love and prayers, Ana

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### **Sister Rachels Priesting Service**

My priesting will be at Wells Cathedral on June 29<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm. It will be wonderful to have some familiar faces to support me and the other Bath and Wells Deacons on this amazing day. I remember last year; the Cathedral was full of people worshipping and giving thanks for our ministry as Deacons. The cathedral was full and it was a joyous celebration! If you can come along, please do.

I will be presiding my first Eucharist the following Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> at Compton Dundon at the Benefice service and there will be a gathering afterwards hopefully in the beautiful church yard. (Weather permitting) There will be cake and strawberries afterwards. As this is a benefice service, it will be at 10:30. I thank you all for your love and support this past year.

Sister Rachel

## **Walton Matters**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3. V's 16&17. N.I.V.

### **P.C.C. Away day**

It was such a joy to share in the PCC away day on 11th May. We weren't very far away but it was a little oasis in our busy schedules and always a blessing to come together as a benefice. A time to reflect on the past and to dream and pray for the future. Thank you, Ana, for organising the day and Kevin for lovely coffee and snacks.

### **Churchyard plant search**

After coffee on Thursday 6th June, Susan Ripley will be leading as many as would like, around the churchyard and cemetery to tell us what flowers and plants are there. This has come about because of a few people saying they don't know what to look for. Do linger after coffee and join us if you can.

### **Village Garage Sale**

We are holding a village garage sale on 20th July from 10 to 2. Anyone can book a place to be marked on the map of the village and collected at the Church.

Lots of bargains to be had as people sale from their driveways but as always anyone can book a stall inside the church if they prefer. We will have refreshments at the church too serving lunchtime rolls, cheese scones and of course, cake. Please let any church member know if you would like to have a stall so we can ensure you are marked on the map.

## Fun Day



Saturday June 15th from 10-2 is our fun day and we are so looking forward to it with an excellent team of willing volunteers to help out. There will be a £5 entrance fee for the whole family or £2 individual. All the activities will then be at no charge unless you partake in the BBQ serving hot dogs and bacon rolls. There will be activities inside

for those who need shelter with coffee and cake available. (a must I think)

You will find fairground games, attractions and sack races etc plus plenty of outside games and of course welly wanging and worm charming. A plant stall and a nature trail will be there so plenty to do. Do come along and support us if you are able. Just bring the sunshine with you.

## Always in our memories

It is with great sadness we said goodbye to Kay Burleton who passed away in April. Kay was a great friend to so many of us and one of our congregation for so long before her illness took its toll. We send our sympathy and prayers to all her dear family.

We have so many reminders of Kay in church, not least our beautiful wedding kneeler and our children's play bags. She will never be forgotten.

**Flower rota.**

**8th June. Brenda Stradling**

**23rd June. Jo Pain.**



Sandra Gristock

## **THANK YOU TO WALTON PARISH COUNCIL**

We are grateful for the grant from Walton Parish Council to the Parochial Church Council at Walton. These funds will be used to help us maintain our churchyard at Holy Trinity Walton and floodlight the tower in the run up to Christmas,

All such support is really gratefully received. Kevin Lawrence

## **SWCD Churches Book group**

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday July 16<sup>th</sup> at 11 am in the Mission Church, when we will be reading 'Lessons in Chemistry' by Bonnie Garmus. Copies are still available at The Works and on World of Books as well as available to order from Street library. We also agreed on the book for our September meeting (Tuesday 10th). It is 'How to Raise an Elephant' by Alexander McCall Smith and should provide some light reading for the summer with some interesting themes for us to explore. New members are always welcome, just come along, or please contact me if you want to know more.

Susan Ripley (Parish Church)

## **COMMUNITY GOVERNOR (S) SOUGHT AT WALTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Vanessa Adams (Walton) and I have the privilege of serving as Foundation governors, church representatives, at Walton Church of England Primary School. This is a fantastic opportunity to support the school and specifically their Christian distinctiveness as a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school. The headteacher and Governors are now seeking more community

governors and, if this is a role that you would be interested in, please have a word with either the head teacher, Vanessa or myself. An expertise in education is not a prerequisite, the school are looking for people who have a heart to see children thrive and flourish and can support the school in the work that they do to achieve this.

It would be great to see more members of our churches on the governing body. Kevin Lawrence

## **THANKS FROM 'YOUTH WITH A FUTURE'**

This local Christian charity, working with young people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness, was one that Walton church decided to support from their 2023 tithed giving. We have now sent out our donations and received the following message of thanks:.

*I am emailing to acknowledge receipt of the very generous cheque from*

*Holy Trinity Walton PCC for Youth With A Future (YWAF).*

*It was a lovely surprise to open the envelope! Please would you pass on*

*our sincere thanks to all concerned.*

*With thanks and very best wishes*

*Sue Crisfield (YWAF Secretary and Trustee).*

Find out more about this charity please visit <https://www.ywaf.org.uk/>



## News from St Andrew's, Compton Dundon

As you enter St Andrew's Church now, you will see a difference from a month ago...our font has been moved from the West end of the church to a more prominent place at the front of the nave on the right-hand side. This is not its first move; the font has also been positioned where the organ now stands. We were delighted to receive faculty permission to move the font, for several reasons. One such reason is that to enable the bells to be removed from the Tower for repair, and the bellringing work to commence, the font would need to be moved to create space. Secondly the font was not in a practical position when refreshments were served after services or during events. Walking around the font and down a step with a tray of hot drinks was tricky and there is now room for a table across that floor space, which has already been used successfully to serve cream teas on the Benefice walk day. Fonts of course hold the consecrated water used as people begin their journey as new church members and followers of Jesus. The congregation would have to turn to the back of the church during a Baptism before the font move and there was not a great deal of room for family and friends to stand around the font and feel part of the ceremony. Now we are all able to have a clear view of the Baptism font and everyone will feel involved in the ceremony and welcome into the church family. Indeed, we are very excited that our first Baptism with the font in its new position takes place in June. Many people have commented on the font as it now stands in its new pride of place at the front with the sunlight streaming across through the nearby window.

Conversations have included thoughts such as

"My eye is drawn straight to the font," "Far more room for the Baptism family to see what is going on," "We can now appreciate its beauty" and "Look at all that new space in the kitchen!"

If you haven't been to St Andrew's recently, do pop in and see what you think...

We especially hope that you will have been able to join us during the May Bank Holiday weekend, May 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, when the Flower Festival will include a magnificent display on top of the font that will be enjoyed by all. Pat King, Compton Dundon

## **Coffee, chat and snacks.**

Our coffee, chat and snacks group is held on a Saturday morning from 10:30-12 at the Mission Church. It started as a response to the cost-of-living crisis as a warm space but is now continuing as an outreach group to those in our area who may be experiencing loneliness. We are thrilled to see the group grow and flourish and recently we had to add an extra table to accommodate our guests. We are looking to expand the group and reach out to anyone who is isolated in our benefice. That may be older people or families. Everyone is welcome to join us for coffee snacks, company, and conversation.

We have people who play chess together, people who entertain us on the piano and we have the pleasure of seeing a display of petal paste flowers that one of our group made, that topped beautiful celebration cakes. There is a thought of the day to add a Christian distinctiveness to the group, anyone of any faith and none is welcome. If you know of anyone who is struggling with isolation and loneliness, please do bring them along or point them to us.

It has been a joy to see people talking to each other who possibly would be alone on a Saturday, they no longer need us to facilitate conversations as they have grown in confidence to be able to initiate conversation themselves.

We are currently in contact with Age UK, we are hoping to work with them to reach out further to the community to reach more people who do not know we are there for them. We hope and pray that we can eradicate loneliness in our area, we all know how costly to a person loneliness is. God is working through the hearts of this growing group, and it is a joy to witness.

Sister Rachel

# My Faith Journey

I was blessed to have been born in 1948 as a country boy in the little village of Westcott near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. I was the only child of two wonderful parents, Harry and Daisy. Living in the country as a child, I saw creation and the cycle of life, without being aware of it, it was just life, and how things were. My father was the church warden and treasurer of St Mary's our village church. I went to church three times on a Sunday, morning services, and even song with my Dad, and Sunday school in the afternoon. When I was 14, I was confirmed in Waddesdon parish church, very proudly wearing my Boy Scout uniform.

We had a wonderful vicar, the Rev. Cannon George Dixon who encouraged me to be an altar boy and server. He equipped me with my own cassock and surplus, and I had the privilege of being his server. I would also ring the one bell in the centre of the church for ten minutes before each service and toll it for funerals.

At 16 I left school and went to work, and as a consequence fell away from the church. I only went at Christmas, Easter, Christening, Weddings and Funerals. Then at 26 I got married and moved to Banbury and became associated with a group of Mormons missionaries, but I did not feel any spiritual connection with their doctrine. Just after the birth of my first son Adam, we were called on by some Jehovah's Witnesses. I joined their local group and became interested in bible study. After a couple of years, I went out on field service. A very interesting experience, knocking on people's doors and sharing "The Good News of the Kingdom," that nobody wanted to hear. Eventually I got baptised and remained a witness for eight years.

Sadly, after having three children, my marriage failed, and I disfellowshipped myself from the organisation, effectively losing all contact with most of my friends. I became very low emotionally, drank a lot and considered suicide. I prayed quite a bit to ask God for help to sort things out for me.

Well, after a while he did. By chance I met Pauline who lived in the same street. She is a Christian and normally went to the Mission church in Street. We became close friends and we got married. She took on me, my two sons and my daughter who has Downs Syndrome. Looking back a very difficult and challenging job. It is strange how we do not see the blessings we have or when they are given at times. Pauline was also the conduit and led me to finding my faith and returning to the church family.

One day at the first Passover service that the Rev. David Hatrey lead at the Parish Church in Street, we just happened to be sitting opposite David Hatrey's wife at the meal. She explained that her and David were going on a tour of the Holy Land next year, led by a friend of theirs called Gordon Smyth. I knew this was something that Pauline would really like to do. So, I looked into it and we booked our places to go.

During the tour, we had the opportunity to get baptised or retake our vows in the River Jordan. I really felt drawn to do it and hoped Pauline would also do it with me. I would not ask her, as I feel you must want do it for yourself, and not for others. The day before the "baptisms" Gordon the group leader said, well, seven of you are going to be "Baptised" tomorrow. Pauline put her hand up and said she would like to be included. I cannot express the emotions I felt at the time. Yet again, my prayers were answered.

Paul Atkins Compton Dundon

## **Bishop's letter – The gift of prayer**

By Toby Wright, who will be installed as the Dean of Wells on Saturday, 16th June.

It is a great joy and privilege to come and join you here in Bath and Wells as the new Dean of Wells, to serve the Cathedral, the diocese and the county. This is an area with strong links on my maternal side, with my grandparents being married in Bath, and many relatives from around this patch.

One of the many things which drew me to this role is the privilege of prayer in your beautiful Cathedral Church. Each morning, we gather and pray for the life of the diocese, and give thanks for that same life in the evening. Please be assured of my prayers for you in your mission and ministry and I warmly look forward to getting out to explore the diocese.

As I reflect on this time of change, I am mindful of the importance of finding patterns of prayer to sustain our lives, and nourish our spiritual growth. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said many years ago, we must 'think of prayer as a relationship.' We are to invest in it, and to find space so that it can develop, and this takes time. Or as the mystic Evelyn Underhill put it, 'On every level of life, from housework to heights of prayer, in all judgement and efforts to get things done, hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur.'

We all know the importance of taking time to invest in relationships, and I love the challenge that hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur. As we reflect on our own prayer lives, I wonder if there are ways that we can deepen our relationship in prayer? The Christian tradition is packed with ways to help people learn to pray. Maybe we can find ways to slow ourselves down and be more present to the gift of prayer, so that we may join in the Apostle Paul's prayer, 'we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding'. (Colossians 1.9)

Toby Wright.

## **SERVICES IN JUNE**

Due to clergy annual leave, we may not be able to 'cover' all our usual Communion Services, however I am still trying to find clergy for one or two services. The Communion service in the Mission Church will instead be morning worship on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Please bear with us. Thank you.

Ana Lawrence

## **APCM – THANKS AND CHALLENGES**

Thank you so much to all of those who came to our Annual Parish Church Meetings (APCMs) In April. It was good to reflect together on the life of our churches during 2023 and begin to think about the coming year. If you haven't read the reports and financial statements from your parish as yet, then do request a copy from the church office.

As well as the encouragements we were also able to share the significant financial pressures that our parishes are under, and you should all have received a letter from your Church Treasurer with more details. Please do prayerfully respond to this letter. We are the church and, as the church, we are all responsible for its finances.

As a result of the APCMs we also still have a number of vacancies across the benefice for churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives and members of the PCC. It is possible for our PCCs to co-opt people into some of these roles during the year (wardens must be elected at the annual vestry meeting, however) and if this is something that you would be interested in discussing or finding out more about, please have a word with either me or your church warden.

Ana Lawrence

## **Connections@theMission** (formerly Afternoon Teas)

Our May meeting involved most of us getting messy with glue and tissue paper. The idea was to paint glue onto a glass and stick orange, red and yellow tissue paper onto the glass, making a wonderful Pentecost candle holder. Alternatively we could colour a small cross that had a tiny dove on it. Some of us were so engrossed that we did both of the crafts that were on offer. Of course there was lots of chattering going on as we worked on our creations.

The conversations continued as we had a cuppa and cake. To finish the afternoon everyone helped to clear away and wash up. Thank you to Jenny for bringing the craft activities to us and staying to help us.

Something completely different to look forward to at June

Connections.....

Pam Harmsworth (Street)

# Connections@theMission

## Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June

### 2-30pm till 4pm

## Come Along and Hear About

## ‘My faith and Street Pastors’

### with

## Andy Savage (Walton)

*There will be a cuppa and cake*



## News From Annie in Zimbabwe

Hello!

Firstly, sorry for being out of touch for a while. We got back last week from a month in England: a very worthwhile few weeks of seeing family and friends and doing some fundraising in different places around the country. For some time we have been struggling financially just to keep things going here in Zimbabwe. Needs on the ground keep increasing against a back- drop of crazily high inflation and a drought looming. Many of our regular supporters in the UK have been hit hard financially over the past couple of years and been unable to continue with the same level of assistance so it has been good to take these few weeks to widen the reach of those who know about what we are doing here and are willing to back us up both with prayer and resources. As I tend to fly along by the seat of my pants most of the time, hoping for the best, I am grateful for my brother Ben for insisting that we took this month of rallying a bit more "back up" to ensure we will be able to continue with our work on the streets of Harare in the months to come. I have really enjoyed sharing stories about lives being changed here on the streets and connecting with new people. It was such a busy time before, during and after the trip, that I just didn't manage to sit down and write an email. So please forgive me for not being in touch as much as usual.

It's good to be back in Zim and I was very happy to find that the guys at home have stayed on track during our absence. They have thoroughly enjoyed learning carpentry for the past few weeks and have made most of the furniture they needed for their bedrooms, including: a shoe rack, a dressing table and bedside lockers. This morning as we sat as a team and thought about all that has taken place in the past year, it is hard to believe that the young men who are now so responsible and helpful at home, were part of a gang which was so violent and abusive a year ago. God truly has worked wonders in their lives.



Farai (Jabulani) has made a tremendous recovery from a point of desperation and despair, having tried to take his life at the beginning of this year. He was helped to come totally off drugs during his time in the psychiatric ward, and has reunited with his mother, whom he had not seen for some years. It has been beautiful to watch their broken relationship gradually being put back together again. At first, she wanted nothing to do with him and he was sure that she didn't love him at all. But gradually, she has changed and she has also seen that he is not the violent boy that he used to be. He is unable to live permanently with his mum as there are still issues with an abusive step father. So he set off two weeks ago to live with an aunt far away in Gweru. Sadly the aunt believed a lot of nonsense from a so-called "Prophet" who told her that Jabulani would bring trouble to her home.... so she chased him away again! So it looks like he will be coming back to live with the other young guys at Mazowe after all! This is also good because he will still be able to visit his mum on the weekends.

We discovered yesterday that thieves had snuck into our maize field and stolen all the best cobs in the middle of the night. This is quite a blow as, due to the shortage of rain this year, the harvest is not as big as we had hoped. Rain fell in abundance during December, but then stopped. So the crops shot up and then got scorched by the hot sun and withered. Hunger on a wide scale is predicted as the story seems to be the same across the whole country. Many people have failed to harvest anything at all. Our focus for the next few days will be to gather whatever we can from what was planted so that hopefully we will be able to have some food stored for the coming months.

Our street outreach is kind of bursting at the seams as the council continue their campaign to "clean-up" the streets. Our Base at Scripture Union has become something of a safe-haven where kids can come for some respite and just feel loved and

safe for a few hours. We are definitely needing to consider looking for a bigger room for our programmes ...

Schools re-open next week after the very long Easter holidays! Please keep Collen in your prayers as he is becoming a boarder which we hope will help him to get down to studying more. He is a very bright lad but missed a lot of school during the past few years of being homeless. He finds concentrating quite hard and is easily distracted. Luckily the school is a walking distance from our home so we will be able to pop in on him regularly and encourage him.

Also re-starting school also after some months of homelessness is fourteen year old, Ishe, who was recently reunited with his mum. She cried when saw him again as she thought he was dead. Sometimes it is hard for a child who has spent time in the streets to adjust back to normal home life with it's discipline and routines. We really hope both of these young men will be able to adjust.

Tonde is back to University next week and Caleb is back to building school.

Our own children, Manu, Charmaine and Ephie also start back at school next week. So it is all go! Esther and Promise have both left school now. Esther needs to retake a couple of GCSE's with a view to starting at catering college and Promise is hoping to do some courses in beauty with a view to starting her own business.

I think that's it for now.

Huge thanks to all of you who regularly pray and give to help us keep all this going and for those who have given gifts to help with specific needs like school fees. We are so, so grateful for your wonderful support. With love, Annie x

## Van Gough Flowers

We are made in God's image  
A vessel to receive the Holy Spirit;  
But life has blocked the way  
For the Spirit to enter and stay;  
So rest yourself and contemplate  
And plant these seeds to germinate  
To watch them grow towards the sun  
As the spirit grows with you 3 in one;  
This flower of faith and positivity  
Could become your new reality  
As you gaze into the thicket of Helianthus  
The blocks fade to enter the spirit of Jesus.

James Main 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024



When we entered the Mission Church for a recent Sunday service, we were all given a small packet of sunflower seeds, no explanation was given at this point.

James included the poem as part of the prayer time, based on the reading from Acts 10: 44-end

James says, *"I recited this poem, called Van Gough Flowers, because they are sunflowers but also because Van Gough had a close relationship with Christianity and spirituality."*

Pam Harmsworth (Mission Church)

# YOU ARE WELCOME!

With a number of new people joining our church family recently, it's been really encouraging to see the ways in which you have welcomed others and made them feel part of SWCD Churches. I thought it might be helpful, particularly if you are fairly 'new' or are speaking to somebody who might be new, to explain what we offer to new members of the church family and how you can get involved.

Everyone is welcome to any of our services whether they are a visitor, just curious, or looking to make a more permanent home with us. Do be looking out for new faces in our churches and give them a welcome without overwhelming them - some people just want to slip into our churches quietly! In our services we all do things that, to us, seem normal and ordinary, but to the visitor unfamiliar with church, may be almost incomprehensible.

Perhaps you could check newer people know what's going on and take the time, if they would value it, to explain what is happening?

Once people feel that they would like to settle with us we ask them to complete a 'welcome card' which you can find in each of our churches. These come to me, via the churchwardens, and I will get in touch to formally welcome them, ask if they would like to receive things like 'Lifeline' electronically and offer to meet them to get to know them a little better.

Periodically, we will organise a 'new members' event to which we will invite all of those who have more recently joined SWCD Churches. At this event, we will spend some time talking about who we are what we do and what lies behind our mission

statement of 'worshipping God, loving our communities and growing in faith'. This is also a time when we talk about how to get involved in the life and ministry of the church through service, giving etc. Some people will want to get involved more quickly but others will want to spend some time getting to know the congregation and be known before they want to 'launch in.' Everyone is different but I generally encourage people to spend up to six months 'being' in our churches before they start to serve.

To come into a new place with a whole bunch of people who you don't know can be a bit intimidating, and so thank you for your part in making people welcome. Time and again I hear from new members of our churches how much they value this and please keep doing it! Ana Lawrence

## **MAYBE ALPHA?**

We have had a number of requests over recent weeks and months from people who would like to explore the Christian faith further. This is really exciting, and, in response, I am thinking of running an 'Alpha' course in the benefice in the autumn.

For those of you less familiar with 'Alpha,' it is an eight-week introduction to the basics of our Christian faith which has now been run in over 100 countries and attended by millions of people. You can find more details at <https://alpha.org.uk/about>.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in attending an 'Alpha' course in the benefice please get in touch with me so we can see the level of interest.

Ana Lawrence

# Churchyards and Wildlife

June can be a wonderful month to enjoy the natural world with which we are blessed and to celebrate our churchyards. Most of the UK's wildflower meadows have been lost in our lifetimes and around half of our native flowering plants are under threat of extinction, some are more attractive than others but all have their place in the order of things, proving food and shelter for all sorts of living beings, animals, birds, insects and microscopic organisms. We share our lives with all of these and they contribute to our wellbeing in many unexpected ways. Our churchyards can be a haven for plants and the creatures to which they play host. They continue to be managed with wildlife in mind but with consideration for other users.

## Compton Dundon

If you haven't already looked around Compton Dundon churchyard on a visit to their Flower Festival over the Bank Holiday weekend, call in to see the wonderful way in which their churchyard team is managing the churchyard to protect the habitat and allow wild flowers to flourish.

## Walton

In the new graveyard the new hedge is growing and a management plan for the meadow area has been developed to benefit wildlife. Come and see at the Fun Day on June 15th, there are activities to enjoy including a churchyard treasure hunt. On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June after the Coffee Morning (about 11.30) there will be a walk around the Churchyard to identify some of the plants growing there.

## Street – Parish and Mission Churches

The Mission Church shows what can be done in a small space, mature trees provide shelter for birds and squirrels. Water and a stick pile provide for birds and insects. Some areas of grass are left un-mown through the summer for grasses and flowers to grow.

Two small wilder areas at the Parish Church continue to be kept under review and development with shelter also provided by the varied species of trees.

Open Churchyards week is celebrated from 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June but you don't have to wait for that or another special event; all the churchyards in our Benefice are open for you to wander through. See what treasures you can spot, birds, insects, plants including mosses and lichens. Please also consider reporting what you see in our churchyards or elsewhere to a Naturalist; this can be done on their App or on their website: <https://uk.inaturalist.org/>

There are many other ways of engaging with the natural world in our churchyards and elsewhere. These include:-

30 Days Wild, ideas for activities throughout June, for further information see - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/30dayswild>

Our churchyard plans have been inspired by the Diocesan and Somerset Wildlife Trust's project Wilder Churches. To celebrate their 60th anniversary the Trust suggest spotting 60 species before 30th September 2024. Some of the species could be spotted in our churchyards:

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/spot-60-species>

### SWCD Nature Rambles

If you'd like to learn more about the wonders of creation, join one of the monthly Nature Rambles, gentle walks to explore the natural world. We can't promise to identify everything we encounter but we can appreciate it's place in creation. Meet at 11.15 at the Mission Church on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June for a walk up Street Hill to look for orchids and other things.



Sue Ripley (Street SWCD Eco Church Group)

## **‘WHY DOESN’T THE VICAR VISIT PEOPLE LIKE VICARS USED TO?’**

Not by any members of our churches, but I've heard phrases like this said a few times around the parishes in recent months so I thought I'd share some thoughts which, should this question be asked of you, might help you to answer.

I'm not sure what the expectations are that lie behind such a question. Maybe some look back to a golden age, that never really existed except perhaps in Jane Austen novels, when the local vicar wandered the streets of his small country parish of a few dozen cottages, distributing bonhomie and visiting the sick and the poor, before taking tea with the local gentry?

There is no doubt that, in former times, vicars did have more time and less parishioners and so visiting like I have described was more possible, although I'm not sure the reality ever really matched what we might read in 18<sup>th</sup> century novels or watch on period dramas.

It's worth saying at the outset that I, and the other clergy, do visit people. If you need one of us to come to your home for a particular reason, please do get in touch with me or via the church office and we will do our very best to come and see you. The reality is that, even if I wanted to visit everybody in our parishes it would be a physical impossibility. If I spent all my time doing so, perhaps visiting eight people a day, six days a week, it would take 312 weeks, or just over six years, to visit every one of the roughly 15,000 people who live across our parishes. And that



would be with me doing nothing else (some of you might relish the consequent lack of sermons etc. – others might not!).

There is also, however, a deeper theological point here. I believe passionately that the ministry here is the joint responsibility of all of us. I'm therefore thrilled that we have a gifted and talented home communion team who are ready and willing to take communion into people's houses should they request it. I also know that much visiting and care is done by church members day by day, often unseen.

Finally, it's about priorities. When you called me here four years ago you asked me to walk with you to share the good news of Jesus with our communities. So, if somebody wants me to visit them and talk about Jesus, trust me, I'll be there!

Ana Lawrence

## **NEW WINE – NOT TOO LATE**

It's not too late for you to book a place at New Wine and join a group of us who will be worshipping with thousands of Christians on the Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet from the 25<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> of July. Either travel in for the day or camp with us as an SWCD churches group. If you do book, please make sure you link your booking to 'Street, Walton & Compton' church, so that the organisers know to put you with us on the site, and also let me know you are coming so we know who to look out for

Ana Lawrence

# 'Rich towards God'

“... RICH TOWARD GOD.’ LUKE 12:21 NKJV

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We're supposed to offer God our acts of service, but the gift He desires most is us. Think of Jesus' last conversation with His friend Peter. Peter was so human: he followed Jesus, learned from Him, served Him, doubted Him, misunderstood Him, praised Him and denied Him. Yet Jesus' final question to His friend was relational: 'Peter, do you love Me?' Three times He asked Peter that question. St. Augustine said all ethics could be summed up in this: 'Love God, and do what you will,' for when you love God you'll want to do what God loves. Though flawed like the Psalmist, you can say, 'I delight to do Your will, O my God ...' (Psalm 40:8 NKJV).

God created us so that He could be with us. In Eden He came and walked with the man and woman He had made, just to be with them. When He formed the nation of Israel He said, 'I will walk among you and be your God ...' (Leviticus 26:12 NKJV). Heaven announced the birth of Jesus, '... they shall call His name "Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us"' (Matthew 1:23 NKJV). It's as if God says each morning, 'I'd like to spend this day with you.'

One author writes: 'I can't make myself love God, but I can come to know Him better. And because God is love, the more I come to know Him, the more my love for Him will grow. Love is a by-product of knowing. So I can spend this day loving God. And tomorrow I can seek to love Him a little more.' That's what it means to be 'rich towards God.'

*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](mailto:ucb@ucb.co.uk)*

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