

March 2025



60p

Life



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MAGAZINE EDITOR LIFE

Roger Harmsworth

rogerwilliam@talktalk.net

01458 445291


Articles for the April edition are due by **Sunday 16th March**

The first signs of spring are showing in our gardens and churchyards, and Rachel is getting excited about snowdrops as she writes the Curates page. I have included some snowdrop pictures at each of our four benefice churches on the back cover.

At the end of January, I joined with about 20 others from St Andrews, Compton Dundon to journey to Nicholson's Engineering Works at Bridport to see the refurbished Tower Bells, and you can read Geoff Walker's report on page 13. I have placed some photos on the back and all seven bells along with the structure to hold them in place in the tower can be seen on the front cover.

On page 5 there is a forward notice for a Working party at the Parish Church. The purpose of this is to protect and enhance the shed, and to tidy out the cellar. There is also a need for the cellar door to be painted and the perimeter wall to be capped, but this may have to be done at another time. Workers will have a need for refreshments, so if you are able to volunteer for this job, please contact me.

February's Life contained an article about the panto, written from an audience point of view, this month we have an inside explanation from a performer, pantomime artist, actor, call them what you wish, describing the plot,

and if you think,  miss out pages 16, 17, and 18! won't! Pat won't be pleased.

Oh no,
not again!

you had better
"Oh no you

Continued on next page

This month I am including a Poem, written by the late Jenny Hall, who was a worshiper at the Mission Church, with permission from her husband Tony. It is taken from her book, “Wonderful Love”.

We welcome back, Ana and Kevin from their travels to the other side of the world, and the ‘Rector’s Letter this month is written by our curate, sister Rachel. (see below).

The April edition of Life should contain all the dates and details of the Easter services and events in our Benefice, so if you have anything to include in that issue, please get it to me by.....

Sunday 16th March.

Thank you, Roger.

Curate’s Letter

Philippians 3:13: Forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead.

Late winter seems to have brought an abundance of snow drops. I do not think I have seen quite so many. It hopefully bodes well for many of the beautiful spring flowers that have always been my favourites.

Our Bible passage from Paul’s letter tells us to forget what lies behind. Some of us are entering spring with many worries and difficulties and are hopeful of brighter times to come. We are advised to strain forward to what lies ahead. To strain forward. To perhaps carry on into the future rising above the path ahead. If only the road of life was straight! No bumps, twists or turns! But it

is not. Christians believe that God is alongside us, whatever we face. I truly believe and feel that is true. We live in a world that feels pretty tough right now. As Christians we look forwards to the coming of Christ, we sometimes forget that the Holy Spirit was left with us and we try to struggle on, with our own strength. We are never truly alone; we need to lift our chins from the ground and look up. I do not mean to the sky. That's not where God is, God is all around us and wonderfully, within us. We see God in the every day, the simple things. God in creation, God is in our friendships, but also in the quiet times. The quiet is often when God speaks loudest. We just have to take time out of our lives to stop and listen.

But it is not easy for us to leave the past behind, is it? Our passage tells us to try and to strain forwards, not to easily go forwards, no moving forwards can be a struggle, but the small steps we take can be huge, life changing. Frightening at first. But God is with us every step of the way, and so are we, as the church family we are here to love and support you too, so please reach out if we can help you.

Personally, I see God outside. I love being in nature. Strangely though, I am the worst gardener and cannot even keep a houseplant alive! But seeing how intricate nature is, each petal of a flower perfect in its design, imagine that God saw that the world needed one of you too, unique and perfect made in the image of God. As we move towards spring and Lent, we journey side by side with Jesus and try our best to live out the Gospel. We too are straining towards Jesus; the trick is not to do it alone. Perhaps you could join us at church and learn about Jesus with us, or join in at Easter and hear the gospel for yourself? We would love to meet you and journey with you.

With peace and blessings. Sr Rachel.

Ash Wednesday

To mark the start of the Lent (40 day) period, our Ash Wednesday service will take place on Wednesday 5th March at 10am in the Mission Church. During the service there will be the opportunity to receive the 'imposition of ashes' as a symbol of repentance at the beginning of a season in which we are encouraged to be in an attitude of penitence. All are welcome and refreshments are served following the service.
Ana Lawrence

House groups in Lent

During Lent, our Sunday preaching series will be based on the prayers of Jesus. During the week, our midweek housegroups will be exploring these prayers in more depth using a dedicated study book.
Ana Lawrence

Celebrate@6 Services 2025

Our monthly celebrate@6 services are more informal in style and flavour. We meet in the Mission Church on the 3rd Sunday evening of the month (6pm) for around an hour for a time of sung worship, teaching and ministry. This year, our preaching focus will be based on Paul's letter to the Romans. In February, to launch the theme, we watched a short video presentation by Andrew Ollerton of the Bible Society. Andrew's book 'Romans, a letter that makes sense of Life' is a great read and would be a good companion during the year. This book, as they say, is available from all good booksellers or online.
Ana Lawrence



Parish Church Working Party

Saturday April 12th 2025

Refreshments

Provided

See Roger for more details



LETTER FROM YOUR TREASURER

In the coming weeks you should find a letter from your Church Treasurer for you in the church where you normally worship. Please look out for this, pick it up, and prayerfully consider its contents.

If, for whatever reason, you do not find a letter for you, please contact the Treasurer for your parish (see below) and we will put that right.

Thank you

Julie Gordon

Treasurer

Compton Dundon

Kevin.

Sonia Beaty

Treasurer

Walton and Street

A Life's Story

At the Connections@theMission group in February Sue Ripley (Street) took us through her life story in words and pictures.

The afternoon started with a photograph of Sue when she was a child, along with family members. Several more pictures including places where Sue has lived over the years, followed. University, marriage, becoming parents and eventually ending up living in Street.

There was a thread running through the talk, with lots of references to loving nature and being outdoors, from an early age.

Most recently Sue has helped us in Street, Walton and Compton Dundon to gain ECO church Silver Awards.

We hope that Rachel Pengelly will lead our March

Connections@theMission group. Everyone is welcome to come along and bring a friend or acquaintance along as well.

Pam Harmsworth (Street Mission Church)

Connections@theMission

Thursday 20th March

2-30pm till 4pm

Come Along and Hear About

'My Faith and Motherhood'

with

Rachel Pengelly (SWCD)

There will be a cuppa and cake



News from Walton Church

As we mentioned in the last magazine, we are having a friends meeting on the 13th March at 11.30 after the coffee morning. This is principally to arrange our fund-raising events, but also for new ideas for our refurbishment fund. We would welcome new people to join us and new ideas for us to focus on. We need to think bigger and bolder.

Don't forget to put 12th April in your diary and join us for the barn dance in the village hall at 7.00pm. You don't need to worry if you don't want to dance. Come along to enjoy the music and the fun. It promises to be a great evening. There will be a bar and hot dogs in the interval. This will be our 1st event for the refurbishment fund. Tickets are available from Andy Savage 07563372107 and Sandra Gristock 07435567903.

As Mothering Sunday falls on the 30th March, our benefice service has been brought forward to 23rd March at the Mission Church. We look forward to joining with everyone for this communion service and uniting our congregations. It is always wonderful to worship God together.

The following week for Mothering Sunday we will be having Morning worship with gifts of flowers distributed. You are welcome to join us.

As many of you will be aware, Liz Selway has been unwell and in hospital. She sends her thanks for the amazing support of prayer she has received. It means so much to her and she feels uplifted and held by it. Do keep praying. Sandra.

Open yourself afresh

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

Did you ever wonder where the term 'Lent' comes from? The word is a gift from our Anglo-Saxon past. It means 'lengthen', a naming of the longed-for reality of this time of year when we become aware that, at last, the short days of winter are coming to an end, the nights are drawing out and the days are getting longer, they're lengthening.

As well as naming what we're seeing, Lent has its meaning within the life of the Church. Its season of 40 days is a time of preparation for the coming of Easter, our annual celebration of Jesus rising from the dead. It reflects the 40 days that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after his baptism. So, for much of Christian history it's been a time of prayer and fasting - the origin of our 'giving something up for Lent'.

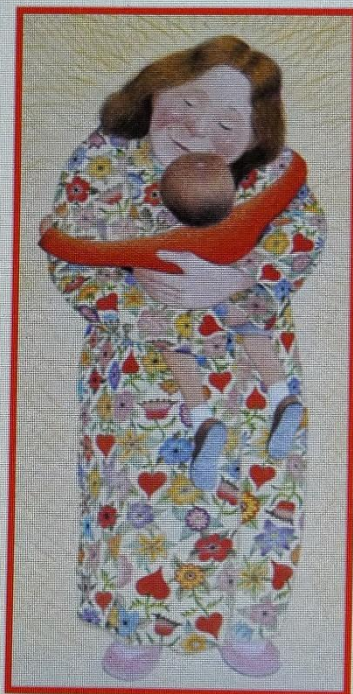
Lent developed from the practice of the early Church. Back then, as still happens today, converts entered into the faith through baptism. The main time that baptism took place was Easter Eve, the night before Easter Sunday. Lent marked the final, intensive 40 days of preparation experienced by those to be baptised (known as catechumens) in readiness for their embarking fully on their new life with Christ.

The time to get ready for Lent is now. This year its first day, Ash Wednesday, falls on the 5 March. There's so much we can do to bring this season home into our hearts. Why not join your church's Lent Group? Read one of the Lent books available at this time of year? Take something up? Commit to a regular time of prayer? Find out about getting confirmed? Lent is a rich gift to us to go deeper into our Christian life. As the days lengthen and the light comes, I encourage you to use this time to open yourself afresh to the one who comes to us afresh with new life at Easter - the risen Lord, Jesus Christ himself.

Bishop Michael



A Celebration of Mothering Sunday



**Who will
you invite?**

**Sunday
30th March
10.00 a.m.**

**The Meadway Hall
Compton Dundon**

**Breakfast (croissants and coffee/tea)
served from 9.30 a.m. Craft Activities**

My Faith Journey: - A Re-affirmation of faith"

People often ask me as the husband of a vicar, "you must have a really strong faith too". It has not always been the case. As a child I attended Church through school and enjoyed Sunday school and "Seekers" a faith after school club in our village. Rachel and I married quite young at St Michaels in Yeovil, and had our children christened, but I never really felt a pull toward the Church. Marriage, Parenthood, life, friends I had, or so I thought a pretty full schedule and there wasn't much room for anything else. Even when Rachel embarked on her faith Journey, I was overjoyed that she felt so close to God and wanted to embrace it with her, but still I could not get close to God. I see God working through Rachel, but never felt his presence. My life was good, I would always try to live like a Christian, doing good where I could and occasionally attended Church with Rachel. I had a job which I enjoyed, driving new vehicles every day. I loved it, it could be a new van destined for a water company, a brand-new top of the line Mercedes for a high-flying businessperson, or the return of a cherished but battered NHS community vehicle. Every day was different, different towns, different people. One winter afternoon I was travelling back home. I had just collected a very big motorway maintenance van from a depot in Birmingham to deliver the following day to Cornwall. My day was nearly done, I was on the home stretch or so I thought. I was happy, the weak winter sun shining through drizzly clouds, the radio in the background. I distinctly remember looking up as I approached a junction, three people on the bridge. To my horror, the last view before I went under the bridge was three becoming two. A lady jumped, she fell hard onto the carriageway and I am travelling at 60mph with no time to react and only a few meters between us. I do not remember braking and don't think I braked at all. It all happened so fast without any time to react, but somehow the van

stopped, completely blocking lane one. I climbed out of the van, into lane two with vehicles swerving and beeping to avoid a van and now a person on the motorway. I was calm, a peace came over me that I can't describe. I sat on a rain-soaked motorway, chaos all around me and took the lady's hands and comforted her. The words that came from me were not my own. It was an outpouring of love for a complete stranger. A broken soul, in search of escape. The lady said she had been there for hours in deepest sorrow, completely unloved and alone. It could of been minutes or hours, but the light had gone when a police officer helped me up. What should of been a traumatic experience filled my soul with love and peace. I feel God with me still, but I think my journey with God has only just begun. Jon Pengelly.

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Our outing to Bridport

We have been raising funds to restore the bells at Compton Dundon to full circle ringing and as part of the process we visited Nicholson Engineering Ltd in Bridport who are refurbishing our bells. We were made very welcome and visited the various sites where the carpenter makes the wheels and the area where there were many different sizes of lathes. In the main area, our bell frame was under construction with spaces for the 6 bells and an extension above the frame to hang the largest of the old chime which is being retired and will be used as a tolling bell. We have acquired 2 bells via the Keltek Trust which are being rehomed – one from Lingfield Sussex and another from Church Kirk Lancashire. We were able to view our bells which have been refurbished and tuned, one was cracked in the crown but has been welded and is now fit for use!

A rewarding day with many photos taken (see cover), and we can feel we are on the way to welcoming back the bells to Compton Dundon where they can be hauled up the tower and placed in the new frame. Geoff Walker. (Captain of Compton Dundon Tower).

Giving up something for Lent?

Lent is the time when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, facing challenge and temptation. It is a time when we reflect on God's purpose for our life. Traditionally many people (as a substitute for fasting?) give up something that they enjoy, such as chocolate. Instead, or in addition, I would like to suggest that this year you consider taking on a challenge in line with the Church's Fifth Mark of Mission: **Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.** This involves an action that would benefit the environment, the planet on which we live, the air that we breathe and our fellow Christians, to limit behaviour which damages God's Creation. This challenge is to **reduce your use of single-use plastics.**

Why should we do this?

So often we visit a favourite place or walk down the street and see littering our path stray pieces of plastic spoiling our surroundings. Plastic is not inherently bad in itself, it is cheap, flexible and in many instances life-saving especially when it comes to medical uses. The biggest problem is our everyday, almost unnoticed, unnecessary single use of plastic, items that are used once and then thrown away. This is what is causing the biggest impact on our lives and environment as litter and waste. We have developed a throwaway culture that is not healthy for society or for creation including the oceans. Plastic is a necessity in most people's lives, we cannot easily manage without it for some uses but alternatives are possible, and available, in many others.

An overview of plastic and waste

- Over 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s.
- 49% of plastic is used once and then thrown away.
- The average person in the UK generates 76kg of plastic waste a year, 20 times more than 50 years ago.

- Just over half of all plastic bottles are collected for recycling; many, not all, of which are recycled.
- Plastic takes hundreds of years to decompose.
- UK homes throw out 100 billion bits of plastic packaging a year, an average of 66 items per household per week.
- Of the plastic collected for recycling some is recycled in the UK, with the rest being shipped abroad, burned, or sent to landfill.
- The oceans are already littered with plastic, three quarters of litter on beaches is plastic.

A few things you could do

- ❖ Don't stop recycling, but also be aware and aim to reduce your consumption of single-use plastic as much as possible in Lent and after.
- ❖ Reuse shopping bags, always take your own rather than getting a new one each time.
- ❖ Stop buying vegetables and fruit wrapped in plastic; there are local shops, some supermarkets and market stalls where you can buy non-wrapped greengrocery.
- ❖ When you go out remember to take a reusable water bottle or coffee cup that can be refilled and not thrown away.
- ❖ Stop using cling film, find reusable covers, or use foil which is more easily recycled.
- ❖ Look for places where you can refill containers such as washing up liquid bottles instead of buying a new one each time.
- ❖ Choose natural fibres when possible. Wash clothes less often - artificial materials shed microfibres when they are washed.

You can find more ideas to reduce the use of single-use plastics, and other ways of living a sustainable lifestyle on the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/how-you-can-act/sustainable-lifestyle>

Susan Ripley, Street Parish Church. SWCD Eco Church Group

‘It’s beginning to look a lot like a Mystery!’

Picture the scene – Christmas Eve and the family gathers around the Christmas tree, presents ready to open, fire blazing, all in eager anticipation of the long held tradition of deciding who this year would be placing baby Jesus in the Nativity scene manger. The cheerful hostess Kelly and her long suffering husband Jeff attempt to organise the motley crew. Cue Christmas music, and a golden box is passed between family members, as in ‘pass the parcel,’ but instead a very special box containing the tiny swaddled figurine of baby Jesus.

But WAIT! Something is wrong. The music stops, and young Annie eagerly opens the box, only to discover...the box is empty! Where is the baby Jesus?

Fortunately (or unfortunately, as it turns out) amateur detective cousin Wanda Smart is on hand to help solve the mystery of the missing baby Jesus. This is no easy task, as she is dealing with a set of family characters who could all plausibly have a reason for wanting to take the baby figure.

The first suspect is Glenda, who collects religious figurines and to justify her innocence has to carefully count 92 of them, but not including Jesus. Next up Donald the Great, the not-so-great magician, who has to prove that Jesus is not hiding in his hat. I doubt if he could perform any hiding tricks with that useless wand. And so it goes on, Wanda working her way through all the suspects present, each with their own quirky ways and reasons for not stealing the lost baby.

It turns out not to be Lydia, who has tried to sneak out at any opportunity, not deaf Granny, not the competitive best-selling (really?) authors Sarah or Stella, not Aunt Jean who is too worried about parrot attacks, certainly not her husband who was

hiding not the baby but those shocking pyjamas, not the children (bossy Annie, games player Carter or Rocky, who had a

penchant for throwing toys into the fire.) And it can't be cousins Brad or Derek since they were so lost in their soccer game that they didn't even realise the baby had disappeared.

In addition to the MYSTERY, the household also had to contend with the regular appearance of Mr Winters from next door. There is always a panto villain and there he was, complaining about parking, noise levels and anything else not to his liking. Meanwhile the poor carol singers were sent packing while the scene unfolds indoors.

As the tension builds and the author sisters fall out, Rocky eats more cookies, more goals are scored on the TV screen, Polly the parrot is squawking, Mr Winters is back, Granny still can't hear and Donald's tricks still fail to impress, and one by one the family members are eliminated from blame by 'detective' Wanda. So where could the baby Jesus be?

In desperation Wanda requests the whole pass-the-box game to be re-enacted. As the box reaches Annie (who else?) the music stops and the box is opened, only to reveal baby Jesus lying inside!

It turns out that this whole game tradition and other Christmas Eve activities had become meaningless, or as Kelly points out 'We've just been going through the motions, doing the same thing year after year...and forgetting why we do them in the first place.'

Granny (listening in, now not so deaf), agreed that 'we've forgotten the meaning of Christmas' and reminds everyone that her grandmother had saved until she could buy the Nativity set 'to help us all remember why we gather together on Christmas Day.'

In a poignant conclusion to the story those gathered together are reminded of 'the love God has for each and every one of us – and the love we have for one another.' Granny's wisdom to the fore once again. Lydia decides to stay and the sisters make their

peace. Kelly tells them 'There are so many special events of Jesus's birth to remember.' The events of the Christmas story are described by the individual characters as the Nativity figures are placed in the manger one by one. Wanda is rewarded for her tenacious detective work by being given the honour of placing baby Jesus in the manger.

Rather than being 'so wrapped up in ourselves,' as Stella points out, the family is now reconciled and focused on the real meaning and message of Christmas.

Mr Winters is invited to join in the celebrations as the carol singers are finally welcomed in.

As Jesus is placed at the rightful centre, the whole cast joins together to sing 'Joy to the World.'

Whilst there was much fun and frivolity in the script, and certainly in rehearsing it, there was a clear message at the end celebrating Jesus' birth and the significance of the Christmas story on the way we go about our everyday lives.

This was a most enjoyable way of bringing the Benefice together, those in the play and those in the audience. Thank you to Sarah and David for giving us the opportunity to share the script and to share the Christmas message with you all.

Pat King, Compton Dundon

Consider.....
(based on Luke 12:22-26)

Consider Jesus and His love,
And take one day at a time.

Consider the birds how they live,
And go about their nests,
They do not sow or reap or store away,
Yet Jesus cares for them.

Consider how the lilies grow,
And all the flowers so bright,
Yet Solomon was not dressed like one of them,
For Jesus shines on them His light.

Consider the beauty everywhere,
As Spring shows its face again,
How much more does He care for us,
In sunny days and rain.

So above all, consider Jesus and his love,
Trust Him every day,
Take those nail-pierced hands in yours,
And walk with Him all the way.

A poem from the book, Wonderful Love,
A Collection of Poems by Jenny Hall

Temptation

'GOD'S PEOPLE ... PROTECT THEMSELVES BY WATCHING
WHERE THEY GO.' Proverbs 16:17 CEV

No matter how spiritual you become you never outgrow temptation! Actually, temptation is a compliment; it means satan fears your potential. So, the closer you get to God the more he'll attack you. While you're praying he'll suggest an evil thought to distract and shame you. Don't be alarmed. Satan fears your prayers and he'll do anything to hinder them. Instead of condemning yourself, just 'pull his covers', then refocus on God. Here are two things that'll help you overcome temptation:

1. Identify your patterns! Ask yourself, 'When am I tempted?' Usually we're most vulnerable when we're tired, alone, bored, depressed or under stress; when we've been hurt, angry, worried or after a big success or spiritual high. Identify your patterns! Listen: 'God's people ... protect themselves by watching where they go' (Proverbs 16:17 CEV).
2. Request God's help! 'Call on Me in times of trouble. I will rescue you' (Psalm 50:15 GWT). So why don't we turn to God more often? Because at that moment we just want to do what we want to do! Right? Or we're embarrassed because we keep giving in to the same temptations. But God doesn't get irritated or impatient with us. Listen: 'Let us ... approach God's throne, where ... we will receive ... grace to help us just when we need it' (Hebrews 4:16 TEV). If you've to cry for God's help 100 times a day, He'll be there for you! Just as the roots of a tree grow stronger when the wind blows against it, each time you stand up to a temptation, you become a little more like Jesus.

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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