





MAGAZINE EDITOR LIFE

Roger Harmsworth

rogerwilliam@talktalk.net

01458 445291

Articles for the April edition are due by **Sunday 15th March.**

This month's edition has extra colour pages in it! how exciting is that? This will be a regular feature, and the price will remain the same! I hope our regular contributors supply me with enough colour material to make this possible.

The not so recent flower display on the front cover was taken in the front doorway of the Mission Church and reminds us that Easter will soon be with us.

The background to the back cover has many starlings gathering in the oak tree at the Mission church before flying off to Ham Wall? To roost for the night. The photos of the Python and the 3 dogs were taken by Rachel at the Pets service at the beginning of February in St Andrews, Compton Dundon, and she writes a short report on page 16. Yet another picture taken at the Mission church, shows a walking house!! Making it's way home to the shed after keeping some toddlers amused, read page 8 to find out more.

I was sorry to have missed John Greed's last service at Somerton, the inside pages tell and show you more. I guess some of you are saying...who is John Greed? ... he was the Rector here in Street and Walton until 2009.

This last Sunday I attended the 9-15 service at Walton to help David celebrate his 25 years in the ministry. There will be a report and pictures in the April edition of Life, along with the times and dates of all the Easter Services, however, page 3 of this issue gives details of all the Easter Celebrations. Roger.

Curate's letter.

We are certainly seeing signs of spring! Newborn lambs in our fields, spring flowers my favourites! and of course Snowdrops. The Snowdrops are showing a rather lovely display in our churchyards and verges. Did you know that they are also known by the name Candlemas Bells?

One of the earliest legends of the snowdrop is when the first winter was on the earth and Eve was pining for the beautiful flowers of the fields. An Angel caught a flake of driving snow, breathed life into it and transformed it into a flower for her. It was said to break the spell of winter and, at the same time, offer divine mercy. They are usually the first flower that we see in the New Year. Technically there are others, but it is the snowdrop that seems to resonate. For many of us it means hope. It is the sign of new growth and new beginnings. It is the promise of spring and that this tiny flower is surviving despite the cold and the dark. Snowdrops bring a lift in spirits.

We turn now from crib to the cross, with Candlemas marking the end of the Christmas and Epiphany season. Lent is upon us. Ash Wednesday marked the start of Lent that lasts about forty days. There are many examples in the Bible of people wearing ashes and using ash symbolically. The symbolism of marking oneself with ashes traces its history to ancient traditions. The Old Testament depicts several moments of figures who used ashes and sackcloth, both of which were often present when mourning or making a petition or repenting to God. In Esther 4:1, it says that "When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry". In an example of repentance, Job 42:6, as he repented before God, says, "Therefore, I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes" Today people tend to give something up. For me, the time has come to eat better and loose some of those extra pounds I have gained! Perhaps we could fast from worry? Fast from the anxieties of the world and fully turn to Christ. What are you fasting from? And how is it going? Sr. Rachel.

Easter celebrations

Easter Day this year is on Sunday 5 April and we look forward to celebrating the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection together.

Full details of our services and events can be found on our website and on Facebook and will be published in future editions of 'Lifeline,' But may I just highlight a few things here.

We are excited to be welcoming hundreds of schoolchildren into both Holy Trinity Walton and the Parish Church, Street for an interactive 'Easter Experience', this will be led by teams from our churches and, if you haven't yet volunteered to be involved in this fantastic opportunity, it's not too late to do so.

On Maundy Thursday we are meeting to celebrate a Seder (also called a Passover) meal together in Holy Trinity Walton. David Hatrey wrote more about this in last month's 'Life' magazine.

Our Good Friday celebrations include an all-age service in the Mission Church the much-loved service on Lollover Hill in Compton Dundon and a quiet last hour at the cross in the Parish Church Street.

Easter morning will be marked with celebrations and Communion in each of our churches.

Then on Easter Monday we see the return of SWCD churches walking group, and you can find more details of this elsewhere in the magazine.

Easter is good news let's celebrate it together!

Ana Lawrence

What is Eco Church?

Eco Church is an Award scheme coordinated by A Rocha UK; a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

Having received Silver Awards for each of the churches in our Benefice we should continue to uphold this standard whilst working towards Gold Awards. The questions in the Eco Church survey cover the day to day activities of our churches. Last month I wrote about Worship and Teaching; this month my topic is the second of the five sections of the survey as well as an appeal for additional group members.

Buildings and Energy

Relating to energy-efficient and innovative ways of managing our churches this category draws on practical steps to help towards 'net zero carbon'. The Church of England have set a target date of 2030 for achieving net zero carbon emissions. This section of the survey therefore focuses on reducing carbon emissions from our buildings and how we might use them better in a changing climate, as we seek to maintain them as welcoming spaces, glorifying God. Questions relate to good stewardship of our buildings to enable them to withstand the extremes of a changing climate including having a climate resilience action plan and good quality building maintenance. While 'church' is not the building we meet in, our corporate worship and activities mostly happen in buildings, and our use of these spaces is what generates the most significant aspect of our energy emissions. We can reduce

our carbon emissions by careful choice of energy supplier, using low energy products where possible, reducing waste and promoting recycling. Monitoring energy use including temperature and time controls is also helpful.

Some of this we already do; annually we calculate our energy footprint for the previous calendar year using the Church of England energy footprint tool (EFT) using the information from our energy bills. In addition, the Eco Church survey suggests using the Climate Stewards 360° carbon tool which takes into account all the carbon associated with church activities including travel and catering.

Would you join us?

We are looking for volunteers to join our Eco Church group; we would welcome new members from any of the churches in the Benefice but in particular we do not have representation from the Mission Church Sunday congregation and have only one representative from Compton Dundon. Being a member of the group is not a time-consuming or difficult task. The role of the group is mostly 'behind the scenes' monitoring, gathering information, and reporting. Other activities depend on availability and skills of individual members and the needs of each parish. We meet 2 or 3 times a year as group and have occasional informal discussions on an individual basis. If you are interested, or know someone else who might be, please do get in touch with me for more details.

Susan Ripley, Street Parish Church
SWCD Eco Church Group

Bishop's Letter

Draw near this Lent.

The Church of England's theme for Lent 2026 is 'Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent'. It's a very different way of thinking about the season. Often, we identify Lent as a time for prayer and fasting when we 'give things up'. More recently many have decided to adopt an opposite approach – of 'taking something up for Lent'. 'Draw near' has a much wider remit. Each week, it invites us to explore a different aspect of Christian discipleship – worshipping together, praying, exploring the Bible, sharing communion, offering service and sharing the good news with others.

The 'Draw Near' approach fits well with how Lent began. During the Church's earliest days, those wishing to become Christians were known as 'catechumens', people who were learning to live as disciples of Jesus. Preparation was intensive. It took place particularly in the 40 days before new Christians were baptised on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday. Our season of Lent comes from this ancient practice.

When the Church began, it didn't have the trappings we're used to seeing around us such as buildings, hymn books, pews, or paid ministers. Church wasn't an institution. It was known as 'the Way'. Christians met in each other's homes and sought to work out how to follow Jesus in their everyday lives. This wasn't so much about head knowledge, believing a particular set of doctrines. It was about the habits and practices that Christians constantly cultivated to help them draw nearer to God who is with us, in us, around us and beside us every moment of every day. 'Draw Near' comes out of this heritage. It's an invitation to make Lent a journey that brings us closer to God.

I invite you to make use of 'Draw Near' this Lent. It includes materials for adults, for families and for children, resources for schools and encouragement for churches. More information can be found at www.cofeio/DrawNear. As we approach Lent, let's draw near and join each other on the journey to God that is the Way.

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

=====

Annual Parish Church Meetings

Hopefully you have your Annual Parish Church Meeting in your diary already, but just in case you haven't yet seen the dates, they are below.

Walton Monday 27th April 7pm in Walton Church

Compton Dundon Tuesday 28th April 7pm in St Andrew's
Compton Dundon

Street Wednesday 29th April 7pm in the Mission Church

Come and celebrate all God has done in 2025, as well as exercising your democratic rights as we elect churchwardens and representatives to the Parochial Church council and Deanery Synod (the Parliament for local Anglican churches).

This may also be a good time to check that you are still on the electoral roll, which is the nearest the Church of England comes to a membership list. You also need to be on the roll in order to vote at these meetings. Your electoral officers are listed in this magazine and please contact them if you're not sure whether you're 'on the list' as it were.

Ana Lawrence

Help Us Love Our Local Community!



Have you ever stepped inside the Mission Church on a Friday morning between 930am and 11am? You will hear children playing, people chatting and a general feel of children busy exploring and having fun!

Our Little Stars Mums and Toddlers Group has been running since 2016, so in September we look forward to celebrating 10 years of families and fun!

In the last couple of weeks, we have been blessed to provide this fun space for 23 children and their carers.

We are really blessed to have a number of lovely helpers who make teas and other helpers who spend the morning welcoming and chatting with families.

We are looking for 1 or 2 people who could come along once or twice a month (term time only) from 8-30am until 9-15am to help with carrying the toys down from the attic to help set up. Might this be something you'd be interested in? We would love you to join us, to help keep this community outreach running smoothly!

Please chat to Julie Day if you might be interested in helping, thanks!

From the team, and leader Julie Day, (Mission Church).





The photo above was taken at the recent Women's Breakfast which was held in the Mission Church Street.



The photo on the left was taken at the get together in September 2009 in the Mission church, after John's last service in Street.

The group photo below shows John, Phyll and family at John's recent last service at St Michael's & All Angels Somerton.



WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

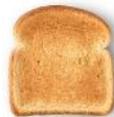
Saturday, March 7th

at 9:30 am

Compton Dundon

Village Hall

in the Meeting Room.



Do come and join us for food and fellowship.

Please let us know if you have dietary requirements eg gluten free.

We look forward to seeing you!

Pat King (St Andrew's Church) / Linda Clark (Mission Church)

SWCD Women's Breakfast

We held our first SWCD Women's Breakfast on Saturday 24th January 2026, meeting for this first occasion at The Mission Church. We were thrilled to have 14 women come along from across the benefice.

The breakfast took place in a buffet style where we could go up to the table as many times as we wished to help ourselves from the mixed fruit platter, yoghurt, croissants, granola, Jordan's crunch cereal, toast and there was also a hot choice of sausages and bread rolls.

There was good conversation with one another and getting to know each other better.

Sarah Ruddock shared a short thought with us as she read out an article entitled "A letter from God."

We had a lovely time together with really good feedback from those that came along, so we have planned the next breakfast for

Saturday, March 7th at 9.30 am. In Compton Dundon Village Hall

This time we will meet in the Meeting Room to the left of the main hall. We would so love to have more of our Women from across the benefice come along to enjoy this lovely time together and to be encouraged from our short thought/testimony shared at the breakfasts. We look forward to seeing you there.

For further information contact Linda on 07964 094964 or Pat on 07891 260471

There is no need to book a place, just turn up on the day. However, it would be helpful if you could let either Linda or Pat know in advance of any dietary issues or allergies, e.g. gluten free. Thank you

There is a suggested donation of £5.00.

Linda Clark (Mission Church) and Pat King (St Andrew's, Compton Dundon)



Easter Walk

Everyone is invited to enjoy fellowship as we walk together on **Easter Monday 6th April.**

We plan to meet at Avalon Marshes Centre, Shapwick Road, Westhay. BA6 9TT at 10.30am to commence a flat walk of just a couple of miles (about one hours walk), taking in the 'Sweet Track' on Shapwick Heath National Nature Reserve. Maybe wear water resistant shoes /boots as it can be a little wet underfoot.

Sadly, no dogs are allowed.

The café is open at 10am if you fancy a coffee or a hearty breakfast to set you up for walking! They also serve lunches if you work up an appetite after our walk! They are open until 5pm.

The car park is open at 9am and is free, with voluntary donations.

Do join us for a stroll and a natter. Jackie and Richard Houlden

=====



The Next Men's Breakfast



All men from the benefice are invited to a Saturday morning breakfast at the Mission church on.....

Saturday April 11th 8.45am -10am.

An opportunity to come and start the day by joining with others for food, chat and company.

Please do let us know that you wish to come so that we can arrange for the catering you don't want to miss out on your fried egg. There is a suggested donation to cover the cost of breakfast (£3). To sign up or for more information contact Edd on edwin44uk@gmail.com Edd Reeve.

Bristol Placement,

I have recently returned from Bristol after being away for nearly three weeks. I am happy to say that I survived!

I had a wonderful time, and it was an eye-opening experience. I think my main take aways are that. God lives and works in places that we are perhaps a bit frightened of. As a country girl, I avoid cities as much as possible! But God was moving in that place.

The intercessory prayers in the context of St. Pauls are quite different to rural somerset. They were praying for those people who were missing around the Harbourside, for God to intercede in knife crime, for the safety of those being tormented by drug dealers.

I have also learned that poverty does not care where you are from, who you pray to or what colour your skin is. At the food bank we served nearly one thousand people in the time that I was there. We served white British, Jamaican, Muslims, Indians, Romanians and Polish plus many more, who were trying to survive. The one thing that united them was their poverty. I will be talking at Connections in April. If you would like to hear more about my adventures, please come along. Sr Rachel.

=====

Operation Christmas Child.

Our shoeboxes were part of 42,900 that are bringing joy to children in Central Asia. Those who received them, in places where sharing the Gospel is restricted, received gift filled boxes of hope and love. To protect those who distribute the boxes and to keep them safe, we can't be told the specific country, but we can be sure the children who received them will be heartily blessed. Take a look at the Samaritans Purse website and see the joy on some of the Children's faces as they receive their gifts. Bless you all and please pray for the delighted children. Sandra Gristock. Holy Trinity Church. Walton.

Pet Blessing Service.

On the 8th of February, I had the joy of leading a pet blessing at Compton Dundon Church. We had four dogs and a Python in the Congregation. We sang “Who put the colours in the rainbow?” and “All things bright and beautiful” this hymn also the basis of our prayer time. We also had a memorial table for those pets no longer with us. A poignant reminder of the love that is freely given by our pets. We celebrated all animals in the world and Alex read a story version of Noah’s Ark. I introduced them all to Beans, my “Basset Hound.” Beans’ only talent in her life is evading capture when she does not wish to be caught. I talked of what happens when we run away from those who love us and when we run away from God. It was a joyful and fun service and many thanks to those who came. Sr. Rachel.

=====

Songs of the Sea

This social evening is being held in Walton Village Hall on Saturday 11th April, at 7.00pm. Tickets £12.00 per person and includes a light Fisherman’s Supper. Bring your own drinks, tea and coffee will be available.

The evening is led by Bumpy Roads, a group of local musicians who worship within the Diocese.

John Herbert – mandolin, banjo, flute and whistles.

Margaret Dobbs – keyboard, dulcimer.

Stephen Lynas – guitar.

Louise Savage - recorder, percussion.

Andy Savage - guitar, banjo, concertina.

Plus, special guest, Ana Lawrence – violin.

We hope that you will come along, sing your hearts out, and have an evening to remember.

Please support Holy Trinity, Walton to raise funds towards the restoration and reordering of the church. Please book in advance, tickets available from Sandra – 07435 567903 or Andy – 07563 372107

Payment by cash or card.

Andy Savage – Walton

Mission shaped living

Most of us have read or heard stories over the years of the work of missionaries, either in far-flung parts of the world, or here in the UK. As a benefice we support a number of missionary agencies and individual missionaries through our charitable giving and it's good to hear their stories and pray for them regularly.

But what about us, have we ever considered that we may also be missionaries in our daily life? In an increasingly secular country, many of us will be one of very few Christians where we spend most of our week outside church, be that at work, during leisure activities or at home. What might it look like to live our life in these places and spaces as 'mission shaped' people?

Our sermon series from mid-April, entitled 'Mission shaped living,' will help us to wrestle with these questions using an excellent course book of the same title written by the Revd John McGinley.

Thoughts of mission shape living may bring on feelings of fear or inadequacy for some, but be assured, God calls us to be who we are where we are, and we can trust him to equip us for what He calls us to.

I look forward to learning together with you

Ana Lawrence

Restoration and Reordering of Holy Trinity, Walton

On Friday 23rd January, a group from Holy Trinity, Walton visited All Saints, Isle Brewers and St. James, Preston Plucknett as both churches have been through the process of restoration and reordering in last few years. The visits were arranged so that we could find out what they had done, what their starting point was, and to hear what problems or difficulties they had encountered during the process. The greatest changes were made at All Saints as their church was unusable at the time. They had to have a new roof, floor, heating and lighting, and they also added a kitchen and two toilets at the back of the church. They added a mezzanine, above where the kitchen and toilets were situated. Their font was moved and is now situated in the Chancel.

Air source heat pumps provide warm air for heating. They have found the fans to be quite noisy and expensive to run. The floor in the Nave was originally a stone central aisle with wooden boards either side very similar to what we currently have at Holy Trinity and has now been replaced by wood flooring. The Chancel has retained the original tiles. They have a small area of the original stone flooring leading into the main church.

St. James, Preston Plucknett is a much larger church building and less work was undertaken. They again had a central stone or tile aisle with wooded boards either side, this was replaced by a stone floor with under floor heating backed up by wall mounted radiators for additional heat. They had an existing balcony which is quite small and only used occasionally. They added a new entrance hall which leads to an additional meeting space, toilets and kitchen. Their roof was not in need of repair at the time. We again learned of some of the problems and difficulties to look out for during our restoration and reordering program.

Andy Savage, Walton

John Greed's last service.

It was such a joy to be with the Cornerstone Benefice as they celebrated the end of John Greed's service at St Micheals and All Angels, Somerton with them during his 16 years of retirement since leaving Street and Walton. The church was full and John was surrounded with family members to add to the occasion. There were 10 of us from our benefice there to support them. We were especially blessed with John's daughter Sarah playing the flute and his Granddaughter Amy playing the keyboard and singing through the service. It lifted all our voices. John will be giving Phyll extra help as her health has deteriorated.

Sandra Gristock. Walton Holy Trinity Church.

=====

You are Invited to

Connections@theMission

Thursday 19th March

2-30pm

Mission Church Street

Jane Tompsett (SWCD Reader)

Will be talking about her work with

The Leprosy Mission

'Bringing hope to people affected by Leprosy'

There will be refreshments

Pam.

Let Your Light Shine

‘... LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN ...’ Matthew 5:16 NIV

A man is being tailgated by a woman who's in a hurry. He comes to an intersection and when the light turns amber he hits the brakes. The woman behind him goes ballistic. She honks her horn, yells profanities and gestures with her finger. As she's ranting and raving someone taps on her window. To her horror she looks up and sees a policeman. He invites her out of her car and takes her to the station where she's searched, fingerprinted and put in a cell. After a couple of hours she's released and the arresting officer gives her her personal effects and says, 'I'm very sorry for the mistake, ma'am. I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn and using ugly gestures and foul language. I noticed the 'What would Jesus do?' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow me to Sunday School window sign and the peace emblem on your trunk, so I naturally assumed you had stolen the car.' Obviously he was following a Christian who wasn't doing a very good job at following Christ.

The world gets turned off by people who have Christian bumper stickers on their cars, Christian books on their shelves, Christian stations on their radios and TVs, Christian jewellery around their necks, Christian videos for their kids, Christian magazines for their coffee tables, but who don't have the life of Jesus in their bones or the love of Jesus in their hearts. What's the answer? 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'

From the daily readings in 'The Word for Today'. This booklet of devotional readings is published every three months and is available free of charge through the generosity of supporters, from: UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF. Tel: 0845 60 40 401. Email: ucb@ucb.co.uk

UCB is short for United Christian Broadcasters, who also produce Christian radio and TV programmes available on DAB digital radio, TV and online. Details at ucbmedia.co.uk

