

MAY 2026

60P



LIFE



SWCD-CHURCHES.ORG.UK



MAGAZINE EDITOR LIFE

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Articles for the June edition are due by **Sunday 17th May**

There are lots of Easter articles and pictures to be found in this May edition of Life. On page 25 you will find a repeated article from April Life about the consultation day about the planned changes in Walton Church, (just a reminder). This is an exciting time for Walton, we pray that all their plans and hopes are fulfilled for the Glory of God.

The scenes of the Crosses on Lollover were contributed by one fit photographer and myself (I was saving my breath)! And decided to capture a different angle on the event.

The front cover shows all the walkers at the Easter walk at Avalon Marshes, and you will find a report on page 23 alongside a short report on the Sea Shanties Concert at Walton for which you will find some pictures on page 16 with some of the Seder Meal in Walton church, followed on page 17 by a report.

Page 13 has a selection of pictures, all of which have a theme of music. The one at the top, of instruments at the Parish church shows part of the layout for the Parish church in readiness for the 'Unplugged concert' which is held in the church annually by Strode College. The other one of instruments was also taken at the Parish church in Street after a concert of Medieval & Folk music, which was one of several concerts in the area and organised by a private booking. The others on the same page were all taken at the Mission church, and shows 3 members of Trinity Handbells and the church music group. Roger.

Curates letter.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13

Friends,

How can it be May already?! As we step into the month of May, we are reminded of the abundance of God’s creation. Each bloom, each vibrant colour we see in spring reflects the beauty and intricacy of God’s handiwork. It reminds us of how wonderfully crafted the world is and encourages us to take time to appreciate the small blessings around us. When we pause to admire creation, we connect deeper with our Creator. There have been some beautiful sunsets lately reminding us that nobody can paint like God can.

We are still in the midst of Easter and we have Ascension day and Pentecost approaching. It is a time of great change for the disciples. They go from hiding together behind locked doors to being sent out through the power of the Holy Spirit. The winter of their lives, the darkest moments are transformed by God’s love.

That call to be sent out to tell the good news of Jesus is for all of us too. We do not need to be afraid to share our faith with others, God is with us. In the spirit of May, we find a renewed sense of hope and bright confidence. Spring often brings more sunlight, laughter, and joy. As Christians, we are called to be vessels of hope in a world that can sometimes feel dark and heavy. We have the promise of God’s presence and His unwavering faithfulness to help us through our hard times. It’s essential to nurture that hope and share it with others. Through God’s Word,

we can find the encouragement we need to face life's challenges while inspiring others to do the same.

With Peace and Blessings Sr. Rachel

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My Final Service at SWCD Churches

This May comes as a time of great change for me and my family as we step out in faith, to a new Parish in South Petherton with all that entails. I am equally sad and excited to be moving on, but I was never here to stay long term. My final service will be the Benefice service at Compton Dundon on Trinity Sunday May 31st. It will be wonderful to see as many of you as possible to say my goodbyes and offer my heartfelt thanks to you all.

My thanks go to my Clergy Colleagues Ana and David for their love and patience with a rather frightened new curate that arrived around three years ago. Their kindness has allowed me to flourish and grow even when I did not get it right. I thank Ana for allowing me to make mistakes and mentoring me into the confident priest I am today. Ana, I could not have asked for a better teacher, mentor, colleague and friend. David, thanks for making me laugh.

A huge thanks also go to the wardens who encouraged me when I stood up on my own to lead or preach for the first time or when my nerves got the better of me and I had a vestry cry! I was reminded that 'it doesn't matter if you fumble the words, you are amongst love.' That has stayed with me during my journey with you and if, God willing, I am able to train someone in the future, I will say the same to them.

Although I do not have all the answers, God has been so faithful to me and my family during my time with you. I could not have asked for a better Parish to learn in and have better people to love and serve. I will miss you all, but I know that I have your prayers as you will have mine.

With love and deepest thanks. Sr. Rachel.

Experience Easter

In the run-up to Easter, a few weeks ago, we hosted 'Experience Easter' in two of our local Primary Schools, Elmhurst Junior and Walton Primary. This special interactive Easter journey is aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils (ages 7 – 11) and their teachers and teaching assistants.

It was really good to welcome Elmhurst into the Parish Church for 3 days and then Walton into Walton Church over 2 days the following week. Before the children and their teachers arrived, we spent time praying together, committing the session and all those who would come to God – this was a key part of our planning as we were not seeking to do this in our own strength but to be empowered by God.

During each session, the children would 'travel' around five different 'stations':



Future Hopes – telling the story of Palm Sunday;

Servant King – re-enacting the foot washing of the disciples, except we did handwashing, which was much easier, but nonetheless profound and meaningful for the children.



'Remember me – was the next station as we told the story of the Last Supper, each child was invited to share in this with a piece of bread and a grape;



Alone – reflecting on the times when we are alone and thinking of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane – the children were invited to decorate a pebble as a symbol of hope and finally

'The Cross' – looking at a variety of different crosses, from large wooden and silver crosses, to small holding crosses, stained glass crosses and others. The children only had a short time at each 'station' before moving onto the next.



At the end of the session, the whole group gathered around the final 'station'– Resurrection where we reflected and discussed times in our lives where we have been surprised, how we felt and what happened. This was the way in for thinking about the women at the tomb and how surprised they were when they met the angel on

Easter Morning.

Each station was designed simply to reflect each of the themes and was led by different church members.

It's a privilege to be able to share in this way with children and you don't need to have any qualifications to do this, just a willing heart, humility and openness.

We are looking forward to next years' Experience Easter and if you wish to be part of this or involved in some way, please speak to Ana.

This is just one of the many ways that we have to share good news with children and young people in our communities. We are seeing considerable growth in this area and would really value more people to come alongside our teams to be part of this ministry. You don't have to be young, a qualified teacher or a cool youth worker to do this. All that's needed is a servant heart and a willingness to be faithful.

Ana Lawrence

Good Friday on Lollover Hill

On Good Friday Rachel led our morning worship in St Andrew's, Compton Dundon.

A quiet, reflective service including the well-known hymns 'There is a green hill far away' and 'When I survey the wondrous cross.' It was lovely to be joined by friends from the Benefice, who kindly assisted in transporting the crosses.

Trish read a psalm of David, opening with the words 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' thus foreshadowing the words of Jesus on the cross.

Two poignant poems were shared by Susie and Pauline, 'The everlasting mercy' and 'The Shadow of the Cross.'

Following the service we assembled in the car park, along with others who joined us, to carry the three crosses to the summit of Lollover Hill. This is a walk of faith and witness, following in the footsteps of Jesus. Fortunately, this year the rain held off, although it was windy when placing the crosses in the ground. 'Three silhouettes against the West' in words from the 'Shadow of the Cross' poem.

Rachel then led us in word and prayer as we stood together united at the foot of the three wooden crosses, reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice for us, 'the everlasting mercy' from the second poem. The fellowship continued as we enjoyed coffee and hot cross buns back in the village.

Pat King, Compton Dundon



Eco Church - Land and Nature

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Psalm 24:1-2 (NIV)

This is the third article introducing the sections of the Eco Church survey using A Rocha material.

Land and Nature is about nurturing spaces for people and nature through practical actions to care for God's earth. In the face of accelerating climate change and species loss we need to take action to protect and care for nature. We all have a part to play in how church land is looked after. Caring for land reinforces the whole mission of the church, by protecting nature and serving the community: increasing access to nature for human wellbeing; action for land-based climate resilience; and pointing people toward our Creator God. Churches can contribute to the UK's target of having 30% of the land protected for nature by 2030 in how we manage our own land and/or work in partnerships with others.

Land and Nature Themes

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living things on Earth and how they fit together in the web of life. God created an abundant Earth, teeming with life, and creation itself responds to its Creator. Biodiversity is essential to our survival – providing food crops, microbes for good soil health and fertility, cleaning air and water, and countless other benefits including a positive connection between nature and mental wellbeing. The 2023 State of Nature Report shows that wildlife in the UK continues to decline. Whatever the area of land outside a church it can be

managed to improve biodiversity, as a space for nature and people, however small, it can become a habitat for wildlife. A Rocha's Target 25 highlights vulnerable species across the UK and suggests ways to help them.

Monitoring and citizen science - Citizen science projects offer a way to learn more about our wonderful wildlife whilst helping to protect it. Recording species and sharing those records is the first step towards being able to protect them. Schemes such as Churches Count on Nature provide an opportunity to do this.

People - This theme relates to encouraging and enabling people to access and enjoy nature. This includes managing the spaces around our churches to be places where people can access and enjoy, nurture and protect God's beautiful Earth, as well as providing opportunities for church members to get outside and spend time enjoying events and activities in nature, for example through children's/youth groups outside, outdoor worship, local walks or conservation volunteering.

Simple ways to get involved

If you have a lawn embrace No Mow May – stop mowing it (or part of it) in May. It helps even more if you don't mow until even later in the year.

Take part in Churches Count on Nature week 6 - 14 June by visiting your local churchyard and reporting what wildlife you see including plants. Details of how to report your findings will be displayed on church noticeboards. We are planning an event at Street Parish Church: Sunday June 7th after the service, details next month.

Susan Ripley (Street Parish) SWCD Eco Church Group

Celebrate@6

We continue our series looking at God@work at our monthly Celebrate@6 service on the 3rd Sunday at 6:00pm.

In May we will be meeting at Holy Trinity Walton to share our testimonies on how God has been at work in our lives, whether in our working world, our families or our community, whether we have 'big stories' or small encouragements.

Then in June, in the Mission Church, we are privileged to welcome Revd Dr Dave Bookless to be our speaker. Dave is the Head of Theology at the international Christian charity A Rocha and a regular speaker internationally at events and conferences. We are very much looking forward to him coming and sharing with us in what is a considerable 'coup' for SWCD Churches!

As well as a time of teaching, Celebrate@6 is a time for worship and ministry, an opportunity, perhaps particularly for those who serve their own churches, to come and be refreshed and spiritually fed. It is open to all across the benefice and indeed all local churches and please encourage others you know to come along.

If you cannot make Celebrate@6 in June but would like to hear Dave speak he will also be the guest speaker at Deanery Synod meeting on Wednesday 24 June, 7pm in Shapwick Parish Church.

Ana Lawrence

Wheels for Mfuwe

As detailed in April 'Life' the benefice has continued their commitment to ongoing support for our partner parish in Mfuwe, Eastern Zambia. You may have heard, in our recent Sunday intercessions, about the floods affecting the congregations there and this situation only serves to bring into sharp relief some of the complexities and difficulties of ministering in Mfuwe.

The parish covers a large rural area, with scattered congregations which it is difficult to reach because of poor roads. The parish had asked for our support in purchasing an off road, sturdy, motorbike to allow Fr Philip Mwanza, the priest, to travel between congregations and we have recently sent, with donations from all three parishes, sufficient money for this to be purchased.

In the future, we have agreed our support will go towards the construction of a second house in Mfuwe. The first house, completed last year, was built for the priest (unlike in the UK, Zambian Dioceses do not provide housing for their priests), and the second house will be used to provide a rental income for the parish. This is a long-term project which is likely to take several years to complete, and we will keep you up to date with progress.

Kevin Lawrence

Mission Church Refurbishment

The Mission Church is now over 35 years old and, to be honest, it's beginning to show its age. The building is heavily used, both on Sundays and throughout the week and a group has been commissioned by the Parochial Church Council to look at what we need to do to both refurbish the building and, where necessary, update our facilities to meet the current and future needs of our worshipping congregations and community users.

Please watch this space for further details.

Kevin Lawrence

Farewell to Sister Rachel

As most of you will now know we are set to bid farewell to our curate Sister Rachel Pengelly after nearly three years with us in a training role.

Rachel has written elsewhere in this edition about her time here, but I wanted to record my grateful thanks on behalf of us all for all the ministry, love and joy she has brought to the benefice during her time here.

Her final service with us will be on Sunday May 31st when we are holding a joint benefice service at St Andrews, Compton Dundon. This is where we will be able to say our formal farewells and thanks both at the service and a shared lunch afterwards. Look out for details of how we will mark her departure more tangibly in the coming weeks. Of course, there will be other 'lasts' and farewells for Rachel and her family over the coming weeks and please continue to pray for them as they prepare to leave and for their new life and ministry in South Petherton.

Rachel's licensing service will be on the 23rd of June at 7pm in St Peter and St Paul's Church, South Petherton. I hope many of us will be able to go and support her at this service and again more details will follow in due course. At this stage, please put the date in your diaries and consider car sharing with others who want to go as I understand that parking around the Church of South Petherton is limited. We did look at hiring a coach but unfortunately the costs were prohibitive!

Ana Lawrence



MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES





The Seder Meal at Walton



Fun and Food at the Sea Shanties Concert in Walton Village Hall



Celebrating Jesus' Passover

On the 2nd of April at 7pm, 54 of us met at Walton Church to celebrate Jesus' Passover.

The Passover meal was wonderful and thoughtfully led by David Hatrey.

The ceremonial items on the Seder plate told the story: The parsley dipped in salty water representing life sometimes lived in tears. This was followed by the Moror, bitter herbs which reminds us of how bitter life had been. Following that was Charoseth, a welcome sweetness which represented the hope we have in God. All this was eaten with Matzah, the unleavened bread.

We later enjoyed a variety of different casseroles and puddings to end our meal.

To conclude Sister Rachel led Communion at which we served one another the Bread and Wine.

With many thanks to all that helped in any way on this special occasion. But the biggest 'thank you' must go to David who organised everything perfectly. Carol Brewer (Walton)

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Tearfund Thanks

In 2025 Street parish continued their support for Tearfund, the international Christian development charity, as part of their tithed giving. The money has recently been sent, to continue to support a project in northern Nigeria to offer hope, clean water and livelihoods to some of the poorest people in the world.

Tearfund have sent a note of thanks to the congregation for their ongoing support. In due course we will receive a project report for the work in Nigeria and, if anybody would like to see this when it arrives, please contact me. Kevin Lawrence

My Faith Journey

I'm so grateful that The Mission Church has been part of my faith journey over the years. With my husband Ben, I led worship on the third Sunday 'Worship and The Word' for a couple of years before Covid, and we were involved with Sunday evening *Refresh*. The *Bright Lights* Parties hosted by Mission were always a highlight too. I've always loved churches working together.

I will never forget the kindness of the Mission Church when they hosted weekly healing prayer meetings for our family. I was 32, married to Paul Checkley, 34, we had two little boys - Seth and Asa. Paul helped with worship and speaking at too, and in February 2015 we discovered Paul had a brain tumour. Christians in Street, and surrounding, gathered at the Mission Church to pray for healing each Monday. They were faith filled meetings where we encouraged each other from scriptures, worshiped God for His goodness and prayed.

Paul's health declined and he died in the September, painfully leaving his two boys and me. For a very brief time I thought those prayers were a waste of time, but God drew close to us, and I found these words from Revelation 5:8 ... the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy ...". There they are! Every one of our prayers are incense to God in heaven. No prayer is wasted, even when we don't understand God's purposes in our lives.

After that time I went back to work as a maths teacher, now as a widow and single mum, feeling exhausted and like a rabbit in headlights. I had great support from family and friends, and we were held in prayer - thank you to everyone who prayed for our family at that time - we needed it! The story of Ruth in the Bible was a great inspiration to me - she was a young widow, and she chose to honour God, and her life impacted generations.

Over the years there have been many times when I've looked fine and was always able to smile around people because I love being with others, but I've some very low moments too. My life has changed in so many ways and its been hard to accept, but I have known God's goodness and faithfulness too.

In all my confusion, I was asking God what He was calling me to - youth work? - worship leading? God answered my prayer and He didn't call me to anything where I needed to 'do'. God gave me a clear calling to **abide in Him**. It hit me in the heart and changed the way I was putting pressure on myself to serve God well. Jesus just wants *us*! He wants us to spend time just seeking Jesus. I read the gospel of John as a starting point, and I got to know Jesus in a new way, and God was putting me back together, in Him.

I want to encourage anyone going through depression, or loss of any kind, please seek prayer support and bring your needs to Jesus. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, and in all things, even our darkest times, God works for the good of those who love him.

I haven't had time to talk about our worship band Hopestream Worship - we serve local churches to encourage others to look to Jesus, especially through suffering. Please look us up and listen to our music.

Polly Axford-Checkley.

Mission Shaped Living

From mid-April until mid-June our Sunday morning preaching series will be based on how we are witnesses for Jesus in our everyday lives. For many of us the very thought of sharing our faith can make us panic or feel inadequate but being missional Christians is not about preaching or delivering an eloquent testimony, it is simply about being obedient in our calling as a believer to share our faith within the context of our everyday lives.

Based on the course by John McGinley, 'Mission Shaped Living' covers the following themes: being sent, confidence, courage, compassion, connecting, continuing and conversion. I hope you are ready to join the journey as we travel together to share our faith naturally and with greater confidence. Ana Lawrence

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Exploring faith group, studies in Mark's Gospel

Our Tuesday night 'Exploring faith' group have been wrestling with some of the big questions they wanted to ask about Christianity. From the middle of April, the group have decided to embark on a study of Mark's Gospel and would welcome anyone else who would like to join them on a Tuesday evening in the Mission Church Kitchen.

Like our 'Exploring faith' group, all of our house groups are open to new members at any time and you can find full details of the groups, when and where they meet and who to contact on our website or please contact me or the church office. Ana Lawrence

Thy Kingdom Come half day of prayer.

Whether you can spare 5 minutes or longer your presence and prayers are requested as we mark the national prayer initiative, Thy Kingdom Come, with a half day of prayer across the benefice

The Parish Church in Street will be open between **12 – 6pm on Saturday 23rd May** where you are welcome to join us as we pray specifically for 5 people (or more!) to meet with Christ and start on their faith journeys as well as bringing other prayers. There will be a wide range of resources available to help us in our praying, from craft to silence, prayer trees to discussion areas.

Prayer is so important. God is always listening. In our quiet moments, during chaos, even in joy, God is eager to hear our requests. He invites us to bring our burdens, dreams and fears to Him. When we earnestly pray for others. as with this Thy Kingdom Come initiative. we are not only sharing our thoughts and wishes; but we are participating in a transformative act that can alter ours and other people's lives and circumstances.

So do join us

1 John 5:14 'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will He hears us'.

Matthew 21:22 'And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive if you have faith'...

Julie Sinclair (Mission Church)

Cream tea.

We will be hosting a cream tea on Saturday 9th May at 3.00 pm. This will be a relaxed, informal time to meet old friends and new so please come along to support us. We would love to see you however you prefer your scones. There will be other cake available as well. £5 per head for church funds.

Sandra Gristock. Holy Trinity, Walton.

Messy Church goes Wild. Walton churchyard.

Tuesday 19th May. 3.30 -5.00

Hopefully the weather will be kind to us, as we plan to be outside for this event. Do pass on this invite to Primary and Junior children's families as we have lots of fun filled activities whether we are inside or outside.

Messy church team. Holy Trinity. Walton.

Garage sale. June 27th.

Advanced notice of this popular event so you have time to decide what to sell on your table. You can book a table from your own driveway or from in or around Church. Maps will be available from the church as well as light lunches, delicious cake and plenty of tea and coffee.

Let us know if you are interested by contacting Andy on 07563372107/ 12stringandy@gmail.com or Sandra on 07435567903/ mrssgristock@gmail.com

Sandra Gristock. Holy Trinity. Walton.

Easter SWCD Walk

Praise the Lord for beautiful sunshine, a great group of 23 folk from across the parishes, who enjoyed a leisurely stroll around the Sweet Track on the Avalon marshes. We heard and saw numerous birds including the booming bittern! We ambled back to the café where some had lunch, others a snack and the rest coffee, or ice cream!

Watch this space for another fellowship walk.

Jackie & Richard Houlden (Mission)

It was so good to join the good number of walkers from the benefice, on this short but enjoyable walk following the reconstructed 'Sweet Track' circular walk, leading back to the main track where we encountered the last of the runners who were doing the 7.5 mile Shapwick 'Bunny Hop' run. We were indeed lucky with the weather, and the food at the visitor centre café was excellent. Thank you Richard and Jackie for organising the walk. Roger. (Parish Church/ Compton Dundon).

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Sea Shanties concert

On a Saturday evening crowds gathered in Walton Village Hall for an evening of sea shanties. We had great fun clapping and singing along to the excellent band and the fish goujons and chips supper helped to keep us powered up. Walton church would like to thank all who came along and a special thank you goes to the band and the hard working cooks, slaving away in the kitchen.

With the money raised, the new roof for Walton church is a step nearer. Hilda Grint, Holy Trinity Walton.

Chrism Eucharist

Every year during Holy Week there is a special service of 'Chrism' to include the blessing of oils, Communion and the recommitment to ordained and lay ministry.

Led by the Bishops and the Cathedral team, this years' service was once again a very uplifting time of worship as we gathered in Wells Cathedral. Accompanied by our local worship band, Hope stream for some of the sung worship and the organ for the more traditional hymns, I always look forward to this service with much anticipation. It was good to hear Bishop Fiona, the Bishop of Taunton preach one of her first sermons to a packed Cathedral, reminding us that our call at its heart is simply to be faithful.

The congregation was largely made up of clergy and lay ministers from across the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The call to recommit ourselves to our various ministries during the service was both moving and affirming.

This year, I had the privilege of anointing people with oil as a tangible symbol of all that we are called to in our ministries.

The bishops bless the oils: the oil of healing, the oil of anointing and the oil of baptism which I bring back to our parishes to be used in the varied forms of pastoral ministry we undertake during the year.

Ana Lawrence

Holy Trinity

Walton Community

Consultation Day

On Saturday 2nd May we are opening the church from 10.00am to 3.00pm so that the residents of Walton, and any other interested people can come along to look at, discuss and ask questions about the initial plans we have for the restoration and reordering of your church. Along with the repairs that need to be made to the roof, and many other parts of the building, we are planning to create an open, warm space, that can be used not only as a church, but also an asset for the village. Running alongside and working with the Village Hall to provide the facilities that the ever-increasing population of the village will need in the future.

Our church architect will be in attendance along with members of the planning team to answer any question that you might have about what we are planning. There will also be the opportunity to fill in a short questionnaire and to leave any comments about what we are planning.

There will be light refreshments available during the day.

Andy Savage, Holy Trinity, Walton

You are Invited to
Connections@theMission
Thursday 21st May
2-30pm
Mission Church, Street
Steph Hall (Mission Church)
Will be telling us about
Fostering and Christian Faith
There will be refreshments Pam.

Let us pray

Heavenly Father, help us to experience your nearness.

Fill us with an otherworldly joy.

Give us deeper insight into who You are

And what direction we should take next to do your will.

Flood our anxious souls with your peace

And help us understand how much we are loved

And seen by You In Jesus' Name Amen

Contributed by Julie Sinclair, Churchwarden, Street

I heard about one of the earliest scientists to get involved in climate change research. When he began, the researcher said, he'd believed that if we could just get the science right, all the challenges could be resolved. The best information would enable humankind to find the right technologies and take the right actions to bring climate change under control. Twenty-five years on, the scientist said, he'd realised he'd got it all wrong. What we need to sort out, he said, is the human heart. We know what to do to address the climate emergency. Our challenge is that we're all too liable to place the actions we need to take into the 'too difficult' box, or just deny there's a problem altogether.

Yet whether we like it or not, the climate emergency is a reality that is advancing upon us. It's seen in rising sea levels and increased freak weather. Talk to our brothers and sisters in Zambia and they'll tell you that the climate emergency is upon them now in increased droughts and floods. Last year the National Emergency Briefing on the Climate and Nature Crisis saw leading experts brief an audience of over 1,200 politicians and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media. The Briefing outlined the implications of climate breakdown for health, food systems, national security and the economy. If you've not seen it please can I encourage you to find out where you can watch it.

I invite us all to think too about the next steps we can take to address an issue we'd probably rather ignore. The Church of England has set the bold target of becoming Carbon Net Zero by 2030. Our churches can make a difference in local communities towards achieving this ambitious goal. I urge you to fill out your church's Carbon Footprint return, sign up to achieve an A Rocha Eco Church Award, make whatever difference you can where you are. Such actions are a sign of us turning around – metanoia as the New Testament puts it – away from denial of what's wrong towards putting things right. Our actions can be signs of the change in heart that all of us need to make. **Bishop Michael.**

Thinking about cutting corners?

‘... SET AN EXAMPLE ... IN LIFE ...’ 1 Timothy 4:12 NIV

Writer Kathryn Lay learned about honesty when she was on holiday in Texas. She and her husband were having lunch at a little restaurant when a lady walked in, handed her a dollar bill and said, ‘I’m sorry, but I short-changed you earlier.’ Recognising her as a sales assistant from a store she’d been in earlier Lay asked, ‘How’d you know I was here?’ Amazed, she learned that the woman had gone from store to store looking for her. Lay also tells about another man who returned a TV to the store and got his money back. Later, after realising the amount had also been credited to his Visa he did nothing. Lay writes: ‘Does God want us to be just a little honest ... or only in certain situations ... or only when someone’s looking? How much dishonesty is too much? Sometimes I’m the only person who knows whether I’m being honest or not. Do I keep the extra change, cheat on my expenses, ignore the double credit on my statement? Do I tell my daughter a white lie is still a lie, but later tell the police officer my accelerator stuck? When did honesty become an endangered species? Somewhere out there is a man who’s proud of the £700 he cheated a department store of. He probably laughs about it with everyone, including his daughter. And somewhere in Texas there’s a truly honest woman, whose story I rejoice in sharing with my daughter.’

Dostoyevsky said, ‘When we lie we lose respect for ourselves and for others. And when we’ve no respect for anyone we end up yielding to our impulses and indulging in the lowest forms of pleasure.’

So ‘... Be an example ... in the way you live ...’ (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT).

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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