

AUGUST 2026



60P

LIFE

2

SWCD-CHURCHES.ORG.UK



Roger Harmsworth

rogerwilliam@talktalk.net

01458 445291

Articles for the September edition are due by Sunday 16th August

Congratulations to Ana and Kevin on their Ruby Wedding Anniversary which they celebrated on the 4th Sunday in July. At Compton Dundon Steve King shared a lovely fruit cake to mark the occasion, whilst at the Mission Church in Street, Jackie Houlden made 2 cakes in the shape of a four and a zero, and a photo of Ana and Kevin cutting this cake can be seen on the back cover.

The front cover shows a 'young lady' from Taylors Bell Foundry servicing the bells in the Parish Church recently.

The results of The Jamie Dodger Competition at Walton can be found on page 10, followed by a page of pictures on page 11.

There is a short article from Ana on page 15 about the Archdeacon's visitation, and the top picture on page 14 has the wardens (minus Tim) plus Ana in St Johns Church porch.

The church (recce less) walk is pictured in the centre.

Lower left, the congregation in the Mission church are building paper towers during a service. Lastly bottom right has a line up outside the Parish Church after a Millfield Confirmation Service, see page 23.

On page 5 there is an article about a Pilgrimage happening in September. If anyone would like to join the Pilgrim's on their walk, please E-Mail the local route planner Alan at – wemberhamhouse@gmail.com for a screenshot of the route plan. All are welcome to join the Pilgrims in the Parish Church for evening prayer at 4pm on Monday 7th September.

Finally, please pray for Sarah (nee Lampert), Phil and their boys on the death of Bob Lampert this week, there will be an article in the September magazine. God Bless you Bob, you will be missed, but remembered by many. Roger.

Rector's Letter

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" Matthew chapter 11 verse 28

Dear Friends,

I have shared with you above one of the verses from the 'Comfortable Words' to be found in the traditional (Book of Common Prayer) service of Holy Communion.

Many of us would take great comfort from this verse as Jesus is offering rest, refreshment and a sensed of renewed strength.

We are in a relentlessly busy world where the need to achieve, be successful and 'win' can sometimes become the main driver in life.

As individuals push themselves ever harder, some can begin to 'run on empty' and at worst get burned out.

Some of you reading this may be feeling over-busy and starting to 'run on empty' with little to give, for example, or you may just feel worn down with the worries and cares of this life. Whether family, work, finances, health, there are many things that can cause us to feel stressed, tired and weary. This isn't limited to those with high pressure jobs or demanding family responsibilities, I know it can equally apply to people who others might see as not busy at all.

Jesus acknowledges the problem and draws tired people to himself. Admitting we are weary and worn down is not a failure, but rather it's recognising our humanity.

This month, some of our ministries will pause as leaders take a break. Some of you will be on holiday maybe with family. Some of you might just have a different pattern as the routines of the week shift in the holiday season. Whichever of these applies to you, look at this change as an opportunity to once again draw close to Christ who bears our burdens and offers us a “gentle yoke.”

With my love and prayers, Ana

=====

Charity Giving at St Andrew's

At their recent St Andrew's PCC meeting, members decided on Christian Aid and Age UK as our two charities for the next year.

Christian Aid UK is a major international development and humanitarian charity that works with local partners in over 24 countries to eradicate extreme poverty, injustice and inequality. Founded in 1945 by British and Irish churches it provides emergency relief and supports long-term development projects focused on climate resilience, gender equality and peace building.

Age UK is the leading charity for older people in the UK and was formed in 2009 by merging Age Concern England and Help the Aged. It provides such services as advice on benefits, companionship and care, aiming to improve later life, combat loneliness and champion the rights of the elderly.

In addition, St Andrews will continue their support for our partner parish in Mfuwe, alongside the rest of the benefice

Susie Robertson. St Andrew's Compton Dundon.

Walton Garage sale

Thank you to all involved in this event. The weather was wonderful and it brought many people out to enjoy a walk around the village viewing the different table top sales and enjoying coffee, tea and cake in the church. Well done everyone.

Sandra Gristock. Walton church.

.....

Some Walton events for your diary

.....

Village fun day

Walton Village Hall and grounds

12th Sept.

We look forward, as always, to joining in this wonderful village day. We will have our usual car boot table alongside many others so do come and say hello as you stroll around.

Sandra Gristock. Walton church.

Harvest supper.

2nd October.

Our Harvest weekend is 3rd/4th October and we will be having our harvest supper on the 2nd October in the village hall. This is always a lovely evening with good food, entertainment and company. Tickets will be available from Andy Savage and myself, Sandra Gristock. Walton church.



Connections@theMission

We will be taking a Summer Break during August. We will meet again in September when we will have a Craft Afternoon.

Would you like to bring an activity or a talk along to a future meeting? An activity might last for most of the afternoon or a talk might last for about half an hour. Please let Margaret Long or Pam Harmsworth know if you would like to do this.

We have a 'tea, cake and chatter' time, when we get to share our experiences with each other, or continue talking about the subject for the afternoon. Pam Harmsworth (Mission Church)

A Pilgrimage.

We started planning a year ago to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the death of that Saint of peace Francis, who's greeting was " May the Lord give you peace" I write this after yet another week of unrest in the world.....

So we will walk for peace, from Alnmouth in Northumberland, on the 17th July via towns, cities and countryside and remote moorland, visiting holy places and places needing wholeness. The route takes in Durham, York, Sheffield , Leeds, Worcester, Oxford to name but a few and ends on the day before we remember and honour the passing of St Francis - the 3rd October

Why walk- to have those conversations that only happen side to side, take that message of peace into a hurting world, the peace that Jesus gives to individuals and communities, to rebuild the church and so many more individual reasons.

Anyone can join us, to walk a mile or more, as well as on our social media where we will be live streaming at times especially during our times of daily prayer. There are also a number of special services or pilgrimage days planned at places of worship, Worcester Cathedral is hosting a Pilgrimage Day, we have a Eucharist in the crypt of Lavington Church and Evensong at Wells Cathedral and many more. The Pilgrims will be coming to Street on Monday 7th September, aiming to arrive by 4pm. The Pilgrim 800 Team.

Hope for all Creation and Eco Church News

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. *Psalm 27.1*

You may have heard Dave Bookless of A Rocha speak at Celebrate@6 or at the Deanery Synod. His theme is reflected in his books (including Planetwise which the SWCD Book Group read several years ago) and in an exciting new publication from the Church of England approved at the General Synod meeting in York in July. *Hope for All Creation* sets out a Christian understanding of the environmental crises facing the world and invites people of faith to 'See, Reflect and Respond'.

Commending *Hope for All Creation*

Many people commended the document, some of what they said follows: The publication argues that care for creation is not an optional concern but a core part of Christian discipleship and mission. It presents environmental action as an expression of hope rooted in God's purposes for creation, highlighting the Church's role in responding to ecological crises alongside people of good will across society and around the world. Environmental challenges require both practical and spiritual responses.

Hope for All Creation is not just to be read but to be studied and discussed, to shape our corporate ethos, change our behaviour and lead to action. The top environmental problems are selfishness, apathy and greed, and to deal with those issues we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.

A youth member of Synod spoke from the experience of his farming family highlighting the concern many young adults feel about the future and the need for practical action. 'We are noticing wetter winters and warmer summers, he said. 'The unusual hot and dry climate we experienced last year resulted in a small yield of grass in the summer and limited silage storage over winter. I think *Hope for All Creation* reflects a lot of how I feel about our current climate crisis.' 'We cannot continue to tick empty boxes as a self-satisfaction to combat serious issues. We need hands-on action.'

An addition to the Church of England Calendar

Alongside the publication of *Hope for All Creation*, the Synod also approved a new annual Festival of Creation in Christ, to be celebrated in Church of England churches on the first Sunday of September. This new Festival offers an opportunity for Christians to give thanks for God's creation and redemption of the world, reflect on humanity's responsibility to care for the natural world and pray for its renewal.

Returning to Dave Bookless his message was challenging but hopeful. One chart that he used in his Deanery presentation appears in *Hope for All Creation*. shows that farmed animals are almost double the number of humans and that together they more than twenty times outnumber wild mammals.

He highlighted that this year's Glastonbury Deanery focus on **Treasure**: *Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth* should not be considered in isolation from the other 4 Marks of Mission, together they form the whole mission of the church. If you would like to know more speak to your Deanery Synod representative.

Finally a reminder that you have until 9th August to take part in the Big Butterfly Count, simply spend 15 minutes recording what butterflies you see. Further information including an identification chart is available on the Big Butterfly Count website.

Parts of this article are taken from a post on the Anglican News website www.anglicannews.org/

You can read the *Hope for All Creation* online or order a printed copy and find information about September webinars at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/environment-and-climate-change> or speak to me

Susan Ripley, Street Parish

SWCD Eco Church Group

Autumn sermon series

Our new Autumn preaching series will be based around the theme of 'worship'. Worship forms a key part of our mission statement and should be central to who we are as Christians. As we study worship, we will unpack what it means to be worshippers and to dispel the myth that worship is only singing songs and hymns on a Sunday morning!

To accompany the series, I am recommending a book that can be read alongside. Whilst the series itself is not based around the book, I think it will be a helpful companion. It's 'How great is our God – living a worship led life in a me driven world' by Chris Tomlin (who is a Christian singer song writer). The book is divided into short chapters that form 21 reflections.

Ana Lawrence

Celebrate@6

Our monthly informal service will be taking a break in August, so there will be no celebrate@6 on the third Sunday evening.

We will resume in September and look forward to welcoming back Hopestream (local Christian worship band) on Sunday 20th September at 6pm in the Mission Church. They will both lead the worship and lead us in God@work in their context. We have been previously very blessed by the ministry of Hopestream and I hope you will be able to join us.

Ana Lawrence

Pudding party reminder

You are warmly invited to come to the Rectory Garden on Sunday 9th August 3 – 5pm for a benefice pudding party. This is a social event and we will be welcoming friends from all of our churches. There will also be some live music during the afternoon. I hope you are able to join us. Please feel free to bring a pudding (shop bought or homemade) and / or something to drink as we share this time together.

If wet, we will use the Mission Church instead. Ana Lawrence

Walton Friends: Friday Club

On the 12th of June we celebrated our first birthday with a cream tea. Those who could not attend on the day had their cream tea delivered to them. A good time was had by all. Service with a smile!

We are a regular group of members who meet fortnightly on a Friday afternoon in Walton Church where we meet together for craft, chat and company.

At the end of June, we donated £122 for the church fund and £504.25 to the reordering and restoration fund. So, in total over 13 months that means the group has now raised £262.00 for the church fund and £1005.65 to the restoration and reordering fund. We also had a stall at Walton Bake Off where we raised a further £103.00. A big thank you to all our members!

Walton Friends

Pauline Hatrey (Walton)

Church 'Walk'/ Trek!

About a dozen folk left Jackie and Richard's home on Sunday 5th July for a ("no need to recce" – says Richard – "always fine!") stroll round Barton St. David.

They returned, sharing various experiences – seeing tigers, grasses shoulder height and insects that bite! We need a sermon on 'Thou shalt not lie'! Those who remained at Little Orchard felt it was all a wild exaggeration – the only bit we believed was 'the fantastic views'! It was a sunny, warm afternoon, and much deserved drinks and refreshments were served on their return.

Hannah and Tim's dog, Lunar never moaned once, nor did our oldest walker, Michael Long!

Ana implied we recce our next walk!

Jackie & Richard Houlden – Mission Church

The Jammy Biscuit and Cake Competition

Some months ago, it was decided to have a Jammy Biscuit competition in memory of Liz Selway – famed for her version. Having officially launched the Competition on 1 June we waited to see if we would get any entries or too many – in the end we had just the right number for the inaugural Show – entries from 24 individuals offering a total of 41 bakes across the five classes. On the Friday preceding the Show the team gathered to set up tables ready for an early start the next day.

Competitors began arriving from 9:00am with their entries to be staged ready for judging later in the morning. One competitor had a hiccough having brought the tin containing her Fruit Cake crumbs and not the tin with the Fruit Cake – luckily, she had time to go home and return with the proper cake before the deadline. Our Judges arrived on time – Val Stones, former Great British Bake-Off contestant and Judith Fewings, Liz Selway's daughter. Together they set about a meticulous judging process that took 2 hours - "no cake was left unturned", cut, and sampled.

After a quick lunch break it was time to let the public in. There was a steady flow through the afternoon providing an opportunity to view the entries, see who had been awarded a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place, have tea and cake (it's Walton – there is always cake), and perhaps make a purchase from the two handicraft stalls.

Prizegiving took place at 3:15pm with the 'Best in Show' being awarded to Glynis Plunkett and both the 'Points Award' and the 'Liz Selway Best Jammy Biscuit Award' going to Gill Pople.

My sincere thanks to 'The Show Team' for their help, support, encouragement and donations that made for a great show. The buzz in the Church that afternoon was truly amazing.

This event raised £400 for the Reordering & Restoration Fund

Jeff Brewer (Walton)

The Liz Selway Award

Best Jammy Biscuits 2026





Book review

‘A Mucky Business, Why Christians should get involved in politics’ by Tim Farron & others. Published by IVP

You won't be surprised to hear that this book, written by one of the most high-profile Christian MPs in Parliament, contains a persuasive argument for Christians to get involved in local or national politics or the issues that we are passionate about..

It's a slim volume, only 180 pages, and contains a number of really helpful case studies of Christians who have got their hands dirty in local councils or as MPs. After exploring, with refreshing honesty, some of the reasons Christians give for steering clear of the political arena, the book presents a number of arguments, based on experience and biblical study, as to why they should get involved.

Finally there are a few chapters exploring some of the practical options and things to be aware of if you do decide to take the plunge.

Whether you think that politics really is far too ‘mucky’ for Christians to be involved in or whether you're considering it for yourself, it is a great read and I'd highly recommend it.

Kevin Lawrence

Archdeacon's Visitation

Every year, our newly elected church wardens are ‘sworn in’ at the Archdeacon's Visitation which this year was in Glastonbury. As we had no archdeacon at the time, as Area Dean, I was given delegated permission by the Bishop to swear in the wardens from across the deanery and beyond in a packed church in St John's Glastonbury. Please keep our five wardens in your prayers: Elaine Howard (Parish Church), Tim Hindle and Julie Sinclair (Mission Church), Sandra Gristock (Walton), Pat King (Compton Dundon). Ana Lawrence

Bishop's Letter

Human flourishing for all

'Tell me about your school days' is a deeply illuminating question to ask. Our experience of school shapes us deeply our whole lives long. Schools mould our character and values. They develop our skills and expectations. They influence our relationships and our life chances.

Rooted in our understanding of the Bible, Christians have been involved in schooling for many centuries. In the nineteenth century, the Church of England's National Society set up thousands of schools all around our country, established principally for the benefit of the poor. It is largely out of this heritage that our Diocese of Bath and Wells continues to have a stake in so many of Somerset's schools today. We have 180 Church Schools, the majority of which are for primary aged children, with nine middle, upper or secondary schools and one specialist provision. Big and small, and found in all kinds of communities, our schools educate around 60% of Somerset's primary school children.

Our schools are Church Schools; they are not faith schools. We are open to everyone, of all faiths and none. Our schools are guided by our Christian ethos, manifested in their engagement with the Bible and worship, in prayer and Christian ethics. More recently, this is expressed most fully in the Church of England's Vision for Education. This understands our schools' mission to be 'deeply Christian, serving the Common Good'. Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. Our vision is of human flourishing for all.

As bishop, I am privileged to spend lots of time in our Church Schools. The most fun I have is being grilled by young people who pose me questions about ethics and doctrine, our Church's life and faith. I'm certainly kept on my toes! What I value most is seeing played out in our young people the four main elements of our Church's vision - wisdom, hope, community and dignity. These commitments are reflected in the stories told in this edition of Manna. I hope you'll enjoy reading them as they illustrate our vision for education in the schools of our diocese.

Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

XX

Mission Church Refurbishment

Believe it or not the Mission Church, which some in our communities still insist on calling ‘the old tin church’, is now over 35 years old.

Compared with our other churches it might still be a mere ‘baby’, but in that time it has been much loved and much used by many thousands of people. Frankly, as a result, it is beginning to show some signs of wear and tear.

The building was also built in a particular era and there are a few things that could do with updating and upgrading to reflect modern worship and community use. The space is also getting a bit small on Sundays with our increasing numbers of children and young people.

With all that in mind a small group, reporting to Street PCC, have been doing some work to consider how we might refurbish and improve the facilities that we have, and, at a recent PCC meeting, the Council gave them the go ahead to continue to develop those plans further. Part of that development will be sharing our thinking more widely with the church family and please watch this space for details.

Kevin Lawrence, Mission Church

Bishop's Letter

Human flourishing for all

'Tell me about your school days' is a deeply illuminating question to ask. Our experience of school shapes us deeply our whole lives long. Schools mould our character and values. They develop our skills and expectations. They influence our relationships and our life chances.

Rooted in our understanding of the Bible, Christians have been involved in schooling for many centuries. In the nineteenth century, the Church of England's National Society set up thousands of schools all around our country, established principally for the benefit of the poor. It is largely out of this heritage that our Diocese of Bath and Wells continues to have a stake in so many of Somerset's schools today. We have 180 Church Schools, the majority of which are for primary aged children, with nine middle, upper or secondary schools and one specialist provision. Big and small, and found in all kinds of communities, our schools educate around 60% of Somerset's primary school children.

Our schools are Church Schools; they are not faith schools. We are open to everyone, of all faiths and none. Our schools are guided by our Christian ethos, manifested in their engagement with the Bible and worship, in prayer and Christian ethics. More recently, this is expressed most fully in the Church of England's Vision for Education. This understands our schools' mission to be 'deeply Christian, serving the Common Good'. Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. Our vision is of human flourishing for all.

As bishop, I am privileged to spend lots of time in our Church Schools. The most fun I have is being grilled by young people who pose me questions about ethics and doctrine, our Church's life and faith. I'm certainly kept on my toes! What I value most is seeing played out in our young people the four main elements of our Church's vision - wisdom, hope, community and dignity. These commitments are reflected in the stories told in this edition of Manna. I hope you'll enjoy reading them as they illustrate our vision for education in the schools of our diocese.

Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

XX

Mission Church Refurbishment

Believe it or not the Mission Church, which some in our communities still insist on calling ‘the old tin church’, is now over 35 years old.

Compared with our other churches it might still be a mere ‘baby’, but in that time it has been much loved and much used by many thousands of people. Frankly, as a result, it is beginning to show some signs of wear and tear.

The building was also built in a particular era and there are a few things that could do with updating and upgrading to reflect modern worship and community use. The space is also getting a bit small on Sundays with our increasing numbers of children and young people.

With all that in mind a small group, reporting to Street PCC, have been doing some work to consider how we might refurbish and improve the facilities that we have, and, at a recent PCC meeting, the Council gave them the go ahead to continue to develop those plans further. Part of that development will be sharing our thinking more widely with the church family and please watch this space for details.

Kevin Lawrence, Mission Church

Say one for me

None of us can underestimate the power of prayer in our Christian lives. Starting on the first Thursday in September followed by monthly first Thursdays in St Andrew's, Compton Dundon, we will be meeting to pray and will specifically pray any prayers that have been requested from the prayer box 'say one for me' which will be available at CAMEO for people to pop requests in. The box will also be in St Andrews during Sunday services.

Be assured that any prayers will be treated confidentially and sensitively.

Ana Lawrence

Baptisms

We are planning to offer baptisms to any who are considering getting baptised both youth and adults. If you are thinking about baptism, please talk to Ana in the first instance.

Ana Lawrence

Benefice Service

Our next benefice service will be on Sunday 30th August at 10.30am in Holy Trinity, Walton. We gather together as brothers and sisters from across all our churches for a service which includes Holy Communion. Even if this isn't your usual place or time of worship, please do join us.

Ana Lawrence

Finance update

At our recent PCC meetings our Treasurers presented figures for the each of our parish's finances for the first few months of the year. Things remain challenging although we are, as always, grateful to God and to the church family for the generous support that we receive from so many.

As churches we are not exempt from rising costs and, as those costs increase, so must our income to keep pace. If you haven't yet taken time to review your giving for 2026 then please can I encourage you to do so, letting your Treasurer know, in confidence, of any changes that you make.

You can find details of our Treasurers on the inside covers of this magazine.

Kevin Lawrence

Could you use £40, for free?

I hope that has got your attention!

I am sure all of us, including all of our churches, could use a free gift of £40. That is the amount that Easyfundraising has donated to the church as the result of me using it for my online purchases this year so far, and at absolutely no cost to me.

Just by registering and agreeing to support the church, the retailers I use make a donation each time I shop. No risk, no hassle, no cost (and Ana will tell you that I'm not a particularly big spender!)

If you haven't already registered, can I encourage you to do so. If you need some help in setting yourselves up, please have a word with me.

How much free money could we raise if more did this?

Kevin Lawrence, Mission Church

My Faith Journey

I grew up in the early 60's and mid 70's in Birkenhead. I lived with my older brother and younger sister. We had quite a traumatic childhood, but we didn't understand at the time that it wasn't normal.

We moved about the country from the mid 70's onwards, eventually settling in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

One of my earliest memories was lying in bed, waiting for the car headlights to make patterns on the ceiling of my bedroom. I knew that my father would walk through the front door and the shouting and crying would begin. It was in one of those moments when I instinctively called out to Jesus and somehow knew he was with me. Life was hard but I knew I was not alone. I must have been at primary school at the time.

I remember school assemblies and the lovely old hymns. The language fascinated me. It felt like these beautiful words had something very special that seemed just out of my reach.

At around the age of ten, I took myself to church, much to the amusement of the rest of my family. I loved the bible stories and tried hard to pray but I was beginning to realise that I didn't fit in. My life and experiences were something that should not be talked about. These feelings caused me to feel "less than," rejected and not part of "nice society". Something I still struggle with today.

In adulthood, I made some very poor choices and caused my children to live in the same turmoil I was subject to as a child. But God has always pursued me and told me that He was there. If I gave my life and future to Him, He would bind up my broken heart, restore my life and never reject me.

I have had many failures, disappointments, bereavements and sorrows but I have also seen my life slowly and wonderfully transformed. I still struggle with PTSD but God has shown me that He is faithful, constant and so very, very good. Over the years that I started to walk with God I have held onto this precious poem. I see it as my life's testimony. Even in the darkness God is showing me His wonderful saving power and grace!

O Thou Who Dry'st The Mourner's Tear, by Thomas Moore

O Thou who dry'st the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee.
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimm'd and vanish'd too!
Oh, who would bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom
Our Peace-branch from above?
Then sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray:
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day! *Christine Brazier (Mission Church).*

PCC Update

In June, each of our three PCCs met and you are welcome to see the minutes of those meetings by asking your PCC secretary for a copy. You can find the details of each PCC secretary on the inside cover of this magazine.

As this was the first meeting since our Annual Parish Church Meeting, we elected our Treasurers and PCC Secretaries and Assistant wardens, as well as welcoming some new members to our church councils.

Each of our parishes have different matters to consider, but all looked at mission, finances and our buildings. For the latter we have a number of exciting projects running in each of our parishes and have also received the independent Quinquennial inspection for our churches at Walton, Saint Andrews and Street parish church which will require our ongoing attention to action their recommendations.

We received reports from our safeguarding team and our Deanery Synod representatives and also reviewed our 'conflict of interest' policy which is designed to protect individual PCC members who may have other interests which could conflict with decisions they are called upon to make at PCC.

There are a number of larger issues that the PCC are spending time grappling with including a revised policy on children and communion and discussions about next steps in church life. Again, if you want to read more about where we are in those conversations, please do get hold of a copy of the minutes.

Kevin Lawrence

Confirmation

It was a privilege to witness the Confirmation of four students from Millfield School in the Parish Church towards the end of June. We welcomed Bishop Michael who led a wonderful service for the Confirmands and their families. This was followed by tea and cake. I want to thank Rachel Pengelly, our former curate for preparing the students and for all those who assisted with the service on the day. Please see a photo elsewhere in the magazine taken outside the church following the service. Please pray for both these young people from Millfield as they continue in their Christian journeys and for others considering confirmation.

Ana Lawrence

Alpha

We are planning to run another Alpha course beginning at the end of September on Tuesday evenings in the Mission Church. Alpha is a friendly, safe and accessible way to learn and discover more of the Christian faith. The evening starts with a simple meal followed by a video presentation and then discussion. Those who have been to previous Alpha courses speak warmly of how it has answered many of their questions as well as giving them a space to engage with others and wrestle with issues of faith.

You don't have to be a Christian to attend an Alpha course as the course is designed primarily for those who are curious and who would like to hear more about the Christian faith.

Please pray about any friends, neighbours, family or work colleagues who may like to attend the Alpha course and feel free to invite them and accompany them. If you or someone you know would like to come, please speak to Ana or leave your name with Sonia in the benefice office.

Ana Lawrence

Focus on what is 'Above'

'SET YOUR MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON EARTHLY THINGS.' Colossians 3:2 NIV

Today we're big on the concept of instant gratification and acquiring more stuff. But 'earthly things' lose their appeal once the bill arrives and the interest on your credit cards starts piling up. When that happens, blessings can turn into curses and rob you of the joy of living. One pastor says: 'Materialism doesn't satisfy because it's tyrannical, and human beings were born to be free ... We find we don't own the house – the house owns us. We're married to a mortgage. We become slaves to gadgets and garments. After they're purchased, delivered and installed, we enjoy a fleeting sense of pleasure, but they still dominate, dictate and demand, "Press me, polish me, patch me, paint me, prune me, plaster me!" We spend our best years and the bulk of our money working for "things" until ... we've no time left to pursue life's really enjoyable vocations; visiting friends, having fun, and going to church ... no time to do good deeds, see places, or visit the people who give us the greatest inner joy.

Paul says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6 NIV). And to experience that contentment you need to count your blessings every day and thank the One who made them all possible.' Jon Walker writes: 'Assume there's an imaginary line dividing what you can see from what you can't see – the temporal from the eternal. Our objective in Jesus is to look upon the things "above", so we can understand that what we see and feel is not a full and accurate measurement of God's reality ... people are eternal beings, and decisions that seem insignificant now, when seen in the fullness of reality, are of eternal significance.'

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



Congratulations to Ana and Kevin on
their Ruby Wedding Anniversary