

OCTOBER 2026

60P



SWCD-CHURCHES.ORG.UK



Roger Harmsworth

rogerwilliam@talktalk.net

01458 445291

Articles for the November edition are due by Sunday 18th October

This last month, I'm sure you will agree, has been dreadful. The Bishop's announcement was bad enough, but on the day of collating the Sept Mag the worst news followed. Ana's death hit us all. Please continue with your prayers for Kevin and the family. On page 12 I have included 2 pictures from the funeral, one shows Richard Houlden helping me park the many cars, and the second (with Kevin's approval) of the flowers. We packed in about 35 cars, and the Mission Church and grounds behind were bursting with 244 mourners. Bishop Michael ably led the service. Also on page 12, Sandra receives some poppies, (short report on page 15, and a Mission Church service set up as reported by Maisie Day: 'The service was about glory, which had been planned by Ana. Within the service we identified worldly things that represent glory, such as pop stars at concerts and football players winning a match. We then thought about God's glory, and how great and almost incomprehensible it is, The service was also filled with lots of worship, allowing us to give all the glory to God.'

Susie Robertson sent me the 2 photos taken at Compton Dundon's recent cream tea, and the report is on page 13. Bishop Micheal joined the walk with the 'Pilgrimage 800(for St Francis), when they called in at the Parish Church recently, and posed for the other photo on the back cover. Roger.

Congratulations To Will and Charlene Bernard (Mission church) on the arrival of Teddy, a brother for Max and Tilly.

Please pray for:

The return of a lost Locket containing a wedding ring. If found, please contact the Church Office. Thank you. Roger.

Remembering Ana

Blessed are those who mourn,

For they are comforted”” Mathew 3: 4

Dear Church members and staff

Our thoughts and prayers are with the whole church family at this incredibly difficult time following the sad loss of your much-loved vicar.

A vicar is so much more than a leader of the church - they become a source of comfort, guidance, friendship and strength to so many. Their presence touches countless lives, often in ways they may never realise.

May you find comfort in the many wonderful memories you shared, in the support of one another and in the knowledge that the legacy they leave behind will continue through the people and community they served so faithfully.

With heartfelt sympathy and prayers for you all during this time of great sadness.

May God Bless you all.

Andy and Lydia and the team at Edge Acro Gym

=====

Ana

When Ana arrived in the Benefice all four churches had recently been awarded Bronze Eco Church status. She supported and encouraged the work towards, first Silver awards (achieved in 2024), and now the work towards Gold. Her organisational skills were apparent in this as in other aspects of church matters. Ana encouraged many people into roles and groups into existence including the Book Group. She was adept at handing over responsibility once groups were well established to free her time to support new initiatives. Her presence, support and skills will be much missed.

Susan Ripley, SWCD Book Group and Eco Church Group

Walton remembers Ana

Happy memories of the times you worshipped with us.

Such amazing strength, faith and dedication.

Lots of love. Thank you.

May God bless you all.

You made such an impact in the time spent here with us.

Such kindness and helpful guidance.

Sadly, missed so much.

Last service at Walton. Immaculate in white 'Habit'. So distracting. Who did your ironing!!

So much hello and guidance. Thank you.

A wonderful teacher and dear friend.



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus



Bishop Fiona (Taunton)

Bishop's Letter

Every story honoured

In August I had the immense privilege of meeting Lynette Richards-Lorde who came to Flourish House with her daughter Chrissy Richards-Levi and Susann Savidge, Chair of Somerset

African Caribbean Network. Hearing Lynette's story of faith, courage, and public service was a joyful and humbling experience. She came to Taunton, aged just 19, in 1959 in answer to an invitation from the British government to come to the UK to work in the NHS. Initially training as a nurse at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, Lynette then became a midwife and, during a distinguished career in hospitals across the UK, became the UK's first Black divisional nursing officer for midwifery. And it all started right here in Somerset!

You can read more about Lynette's story on the diocesan website but, for me, the most moving part about meeting Lynette was seeing how extraordinarily humble she is, and what a great impact she has had on the lives not just of the mothers she helped during pregnancy and delivery, but on British society as a whole.

October is Black History Month. It's easy to think it's solely about learning more of the history of Black people across the world, and that's an important part of it. But more than that, it's about acknowledging and celebrating the history of those of Global Majority Heritage who have played, and continue to play, an integral part in British society and churches for centuries. Black History Month teaches us all more about our collective story.

Rt Revd Tim Wambunya, Bishop of Wolverhampton, invites us all, however we mark Black History Month, to allow our celebrations to, "help us become more truly intercultural communities, where every story is honoured, every gift welcomed, and every person cherished in Christ."

We'd love to hear about your plans to do just that, wherever you are across our diocese. Fiona Gibson, Bishop of Taunton

My Faith Journey

FAITH AND FOSTERING

In February 2027 it will be 20 years since we began fostering. Dave and I both grew up in Christian homes where hospitality and having an 'open home' were normal and so from early on in our marriage we too opened our home to different people needing support and help.

So when Dave suggested that we might foster it was not an alien idea and we began to explore the idea of having another child in our home 24/7 for a specific length of time. Dave was always confident it was a good idea as I hadn't gone back to work and our youngest daughter was now 10. I, on the other hand had a certain amount of trepidation having 4 children already and not too sure what it would entail. But we began the process of training and interviews, with me all the time bringing my anxious thoughts to the Lord. I wanted assurance from the Lord this was the path we should be taking as a family.

I had a reply! I had a picture that at the end of my life when I met Jesus, he was disappointed that I had not chosen this adventure with Him all because I hated paperwork and all the training needed. At the time I was reading Numbers 13 about the 10 complaining spies who only saw giants when they explored the Promised Land. Was I going to be like them or like Joshua and Caleb who trusted God?

So in February 2007 we were approved as foster carers and in July 2007 a 4 week old baby boy came to live with us. For the next 14 months he became part of our family as adoptive parents were sought to provide him with a long-term home. In the August

of 2008 I had another word from the Lord. As the adoption process was taking a long time we decided to offer to adopt him and one of his siblings from this family of, at the time 7 children. My 'word' was that we would have 4 children from this family. We were turned down, as interviews had begun with another couple and it was deemed too much for us. Had I imagined this word? What was that about? But though this young man did not come to live with us permanently we did over the next few years have 3 more children from this same family live with us and who remain in our lives today! We have had input into 4 children from this family. God does things in ways we can't imagine or expect, and His timings never seem to be ours, but He promises to never leave us or forsake us through it all.

Steph Hall (Mission Church).

XX

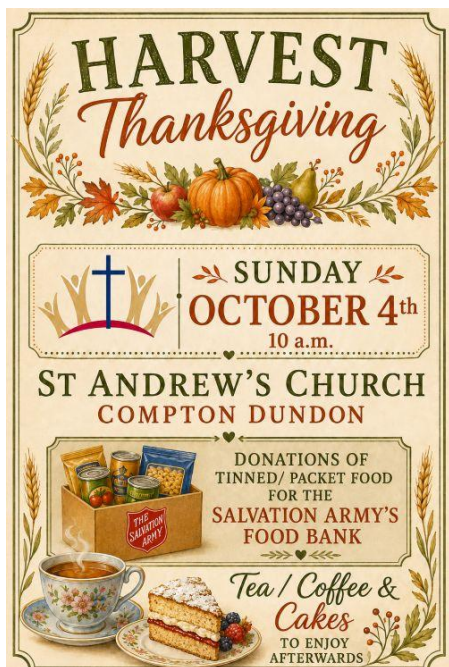
Operation Christmas Child.

Shoe boxes are now available in all our Churches along with a leaflet with help and guidance for filling a box. Please don't worry if completing a box is too daunting. We will need £5 per box to help with transportation but also, please pray. Pray for the right child to receive the right box for them, for the churches and community leaders whose responsibility it will be to ensure safe keeping especially in the hard-to-reach countries and groups, and pray for the unimaginable excitement and hope to children in need all around the world.

Our collection week is 9th November so we have a month to shop, pray and pack.

Thank you so much and bless you for being a blessing to others.

Sandra Gristock.(Walton).



Harvest at Walton

Our weekend starts with supper in the village Hall.

Friday 2nd October at 7pm

Tickets and more information are available from

Andy Savage 07563372107

Sandra Gristock 07435567903

Sunday 4th October

Holy Trinity Church Walton

9-15am

Holy Communion

Please bring donations for the

Street Food Bank

NO PERISHABLE ITEMS

Harvest

Holy Trinity Church STREET

Sunday 4th October

11am

Holy Communion

Please bring donations
for the

Street Food Bank

NO PERISHABLE ITEMS

Harvest

STREET Mission Church

Sunday 4th October

First Sunday plus

Breakfast@9-45am

Please bring donations for
the

Street Food Bank

NO PERISHABLE ITEMS



ST ANDREW'S CREAM TEA

Well over fifty people enjoyed a Cream Tea held by St Andrew's on a lovely, sunny afternoon in early September, which was held to raise money for a local memory loss and dementia charity, Heads Up, Somerset. Kathy Chiffers very generously donated a beautiful quilt she had made, which was raffled and won by Cheryl Luckock. This raised over £110, which along with donations from the CAMEO coffee morning earlier in the week and the money so willingly donated for the cream teas, raised £476 for the charity.

Heads Up Somerset, based near Wells, supports people suffering from dementia, memory loss and other mental health issues by providing Memories Workshops and activities which enable individuals to spend time with others in an engaging, safe and nurturing environment. The many benefits include improved physical and emotional well-being, companionship and the provision of vital support and respite for Carers. More information can be found on the charity's website: www.headsupsomerset.org.uk

Thank you to all those who came along to run and support this happy event. Susie Robertson (Compton Dundon).

=====

Celebrating Harvest at the Mission Church

On Sunday 4th October our Benefice is celebrating Harvest

Can we suggest to the Mission Church congregation that this is an ideal time to support our local community by adding to the Food Bank run by the Salvation Army.

A donation box will be provided. Thanks, Julie and Tim

Honouring Our Communities

A new exhibition opening in Street to mark Black History Month will shine a light on a local story of refuge, resilience and welcome here in Somerset.

Roots, Routes & Resilience, at Shoemakers Museum, Street explores the links between Emperor Haile Selassie I, his former home Fairfield House in Bath, and Somerset. It forms part of wider celebrations organised by Fairfield House to mark the 90th anniversary of his arrival in Somerset.

Forced into exile after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie came to Britain with his family seeking safety and support. They were welcomed in Bath and made their home at Fairfield House.

The exhibition in Street is inspired by the 2026 Black History Month theme, 'Honouring Our Communities', and celebrates the people, places and shared experiences that shape who we are. Created in collaboration with Fairfield House, Shoemakers Museum and Somerset African Caribbean Network, it invites visitors to look again at Somerset's past and to discover, honour and share the Black histories that are part of our shared story.

Susann Savidge, Chair of Somerset African Caribbean Network, said, "Early on in my role at the former Somerset Race Equality Council, I noticed that each year I would receive emails promoting Black History Month events happening all over the country. It got me wondering why that had never happened in Somerset.

"So, it is a real joy to see Somerset now celebrating Black History Month more fully. It feels very special to see Somerset

communities coming together to celebrate, learn from and take pride in our Black histories.”

When Emperor Haile Selassie visited Street, 4,000 local people came to welcome him. His decision to later gift Fairfield House as a home for the elders of the Black community helped create a place where Black history, culture and community continue to be honoured. As Roots, Routes & Resilience shows, these stories are not elsewhere, they are here, rooted in Somerset, and they deserve to be known.

<https://shoemakersmuseum.org.uk/event/roots-routes-and-resilience/>

[Fairfield House events](#)

=====

Poppies a-plenty

A (pleasantly) surprised church warden was presented with 1,100 knitted and crocheted poppies for her poppy cascade project (with more on the way!).

A big thank you to Street Methodist church's Knit and Natter group, Street Indoor Market group and Walton Friends.

Well done for all our poppy makers.

Many thanks, Philip and Jackie

=====

Pilgrimage and the rural church

A spiritual journey connecting faith, place and people

This year's Rural Forum will be held at Bagley Baptist Church, near Wedmore, on Monday 9 November. This is a free event, includes lunch and is open to all.

We are delighted to welcome our keynote speaker Revd Sally Welch - author of Pilgrim Journeys and Making a Pilgrimage - who will share with us ways in which churches can explore pilgrimage.

There will also be a series of workshops aiming to equip churches in all aspects of pilgrimage for all ages.

To book your place - [please register via the online form linked here](#). Registration closes on Friday 30 October to ensure everyone can be catered for on the day.

Kind regards Sophie Moore Resources and Programme Support
Diocese of Bath and Wells 01749 685 116 bathandwells.org.uk

=====

Village fun day.

A team from church ran a car boot sale for our refurbishment fund, but most of all, we were a presence at this wonderful day. We were able to talk to so many folk in such relaxed surroundings and activities. Thank you to the Parish council and the Village Hall committee for all their hard work, and to our team for giving up their day.

Harvest Festival.

We will be celebrating our harvest this year starting with our supper on Friday 2nd October at Walton village hall. Tickets are now available from Andy Savage on 07563372107 and Sandra Gristock on 07435567903 at £12.50. Rough around the Edges will be playing for us. Bring your own drinks. Our harvest service will be at 9.15 on Sunday 4th October and all our gifts will be donated to the foodbank.
Sandra Gristock. Walton.



Connections@theMission

Thursday 15th October

2-30pm

Mission Church Street

Come along and hear Jane Tompsett
talking about sparrows

"...look at the birds of the air..." Matthew 6: 26

Followed by tea, coffee, cake, biscuits and chatter



Food from a Christian Perspective

The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

This month our churches will be celebrating Harvest Festival, a thanksgiving for the success of the growing season and the safe gathering of crops. Nutritious food and drink are essential to our wellbeing yet how much thought do we give to it as part of our discipleship journey. Food is connected to creation care, justice, poverty, health, hospitality and worship. As Christians do we give it sufficient thought?

A recent event considered what might be done to encourage Christians to think more about their beliefs and practices in relation to food, and how they can pray and act in more Godly ways so as to care for creation and fellow humans.

The results of a survey of regular churchgoers was presented, some of the responses are given below.

Asked about their preferences when purchasing food and drink, respondents expressed the following priorities:

- A healthy and nutritious diet (76%) and Minimising food waste (74%).
- Free range eggs (63%), Locally produced food (62%), Avoiding processed food and/or food additives (52%).
- Fairtrade food and drink (40%), Meat from free range or organic sources (33%), Organic food and drink (24%).
- Imported items from the world's poorest countries (11%).

Asked about factors in deciding what food to buy and eat, the following were identified as 'extremely' or 'very' important

- Supporting British / local farmers (64%)
- Improving animal welfare (59%)
- Fairer incomes for people in the poorest countries (57%)

- Protecting wildlife and the environment (e.g. eating organic and/or seasonal food) (53%)
- Addressing climate change (e.g. reducing meat consumption and/or food miles) (45%)

These results show that they thought about what they bought and ate. In contrast asked about what they saw as barriers to associating food and drink consumption with Christian belief over a third indicated that they had rarely or never considered how their faith related to food. Some pointed to theology and teaching; practical barriers were less of an issue. Some thought that as individuals we cannot solve environmental and social problems by what we consume.

Do we think about where our food comes from; is it produced ethically? How do we enable people on low incomes to source healthy food? How do we support growers especially in impoverished communities? Eating together strengthens our Church community. One of the questions in the Eco Church survey asks about our policy on food/meals served in our churches, the possible answers listed are based on the LOAF principles which I wrote about in Life in October 2025 (available on the SWCD website). As a brief reminder they are:

L - Locally produced: Buy, grow, prepare, consume local food

O – Organic: Buy organic when you can

A - Animal Friendly: if you are not vegetarian or vegan eat meat or fish that is humanely reared and culled

F - Fairly traded: Look for the Fairtrade mark especially on food grown abroad

As we celebrate Harvest Festival in our churches we should think and pray about our own actions and beliefs in relation to food.

Susan Ripley, SWCD Eco Church Group, Street Parish

Faith

‘DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU ...’

James 4:8 NAS

John Bisagno says, ‘Faith is at the heart of life. You go to a doctor whose name you cannot pronounce, he gives you a prescription you cannot read, you take it to a pharmacist you do not know, he gives you medication you do not understand and you take it.’ That is faith!

But what about the atheist! When something good happens, who does he give thanks to? When something bad happens, who does he run to? If you wait until you can explain God, you will never turn to Him. F B Mayer said, ‘Unbelief puts our circumstances between us and God. But faith puts God between us and our circumstances.’ Who would not like to have the Creator of the universe helping them!

‘But I was not raised in church. None of my friends or family are particularly religious. How do I find faith?’ D L Moody said, ‘I prayed for faith and thought that some day it would come down and strike me like lightning, but faith did not seem to come. Then one day I read the tenth chapter of Romans, ‘Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.’ I closed my Bible and prayed for faith. Then I opened my Bible and began to study and faith has been growing ever since.’

‘But I do not know how to pray,’ you say. Just kneel and say, ‘Jesus, I accept You as my personal Saviour and the Lord of my life.’ Then begin reading His Word and talking to Him each day. Go ahead, do it now – it is a step you will never regret!

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



