

July 2023



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LIFE MAGAZINE EDITOR

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Articles for the August edition are due by **Sunday 16th July**

Editorial Notes

As I write this it is hot! Are we complaining? Well the plants in the ground need some rain, (the plants in the pots we have to water). But we will get some rain and all will be well. Meanwhile we will continue trusting in God to provide for our needs, which He will. It's amazing but in these dry conditions the mowed grass ceases to require mowing but the 'wilding' areas of our churchyards seem to keep flourishing.

This July edition of 'Life' is particularly focused on this subject. The front cover shows all four of our Benefice Churches with their 'wild areas' in the foreground. I'm sure you are aware which church is which. I'm sure that those of you with good eyesight will spot the orchid in one of them.

Sue Ripley's article on page 19 gives us an insight to our past Churchyard events and one more to come. Compton Dundon's pages (8&9) are filled with pictures of their 'wilded' areas, I hope you can see them ok, if not, do go on the church website if you are able. Where on the 'latest news' you can find this and past Life Magazines in full colour!

It is at Walton's churchyard 'Fun Day, (pages 6&7) where on the back cover you can see me 'Hooking a duck', and I can be seen at the Afternoon Teas in the Mission Church, the remaining photo shows four of the attendees of the Street Parish open churchyard event.

Lasty, all churches should have one! What you may ask, see page 23.

Finally, a mention about C.D open gardens (page 11) where you will be able to see the entrants to the 'Decorative Flower Container competition' with a Coronation theme.

Roger.

Rector's Letter

Dear Friends,

“By God’s grace, I will seek to set aside time for prayer, worship and spiritual reading..” (Rhythms of Grace).

A few years ago, I remember going along to my GP surgery for a ‘well woman’ check. I wasn’t sure what to expect or how I’d ‘do’. Thankfully, all seemed to be in order other than my physical exercise level which registered as ‘moderately inactive’. At the time, I was a theological student spending many hours sitting and studying and with this new piece of information, I was keen to redress the balance in order that I didn’t become an unhealthy couch potato and so introduced more physical exercise into my daily routine.

Every year, for those of us who drive cars, we take our cars in for an MOT to check they are still roadworthy and to identify any issues that need attending to, and like myself, many of us will have a health check-up too, to see if we have any physical problems which need attention.

But what about our spiritual health? How often do we stop and review how we are doing as a follower of Jesus?

Here are a few questions to ponder:

Are we expecting to be changed and transformed to become more like Jesus? Are we open to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? Can we set aside time for prayer, worship and spiritual reading? Are we a gracious presence in the world, serving others and working for justice in human relationships? Can we share our faith sensitively with others supporting God’s mission both locally and globally?

Bishop's Letter

What a joy!

'In response to God's immense love for us we seek to be God's people living and telling the story of Jesus.' In conversations with people from around the diocese about our vision in recent months, we have talked of all the different ways that we can serve the communities in which we are based - how we can enable the life of the whole of the people of God.

One of the community connections that many of our churches nurture is with their local school, in particular with our church schools where day in, day out teachers and their support staff reflect God's love and teachings with the pupils in their care. As rewarding as that role is, it is a tough one. The long summer holiday may be in sight but anyone who knows a teacher or member of school staff will tell you how much that is needed as well as how much work is done during that 'break'. They truly need our support and love and prayers. We should also give thanks for those working in our schools during the summer, cleaning, building, or preparing for the new academic year. Not all of us are blessed with the gifts to teach, but many of us have other gifts that can help our school communities. For some it is the gift of storytelling, sharing the teachings of Jesus as an Open the Book volunteer, others serve as chaplains. Some will simply live out their Christian faith by volunteering in classrooms or in the playground or by praying regularly for the school community. All of these roles are valuable to our schools, and rewarding for those who fulfil them.

What our schools and Academy Trusts need in particular are governors and trustees. There are many opportunities, especially for foundation governors and trustees who have a distinct responsibility for championing the Christian character of our schools. That may sound daunting, but that responsibility isn't held alone as there is support locally and from our excellent diocesan education team. And if you do take on that role, what a

Walton Matters

I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over call the earth. Psalm 57. V's 9-11. N.I.V.

We had a lovely day at our churchyard fun day even though there wasn't as many people as last year. The churchyard looked lovely thanks to Andy and Matt and there was plenty to do inside and out. As always a huge thanks go to the usual team who make, help and buy but also a big thank you to Suzie, Sue, Sue and Diane who came over from Street to work on the stalls. (Confusing so many Susan's) Many thanks, it was a joy to have you. It was also good to see people from the benefice popping over. We all thank you for your support.



We are having a quiet July as we cancelled our garage sale so that we could support the WI at their fundraising event due the same day. It gives us a chance to draw breath and relax.

Sunday 20th August we have booked the village hall to host a cream tea. This is a community event and not a fundraiser as we would love to do more with the village hall committee, the Parish council and the pre-school and school. The plan is to ask people from the different groups to bring some scones and we can all get to know each other better and have fun.

Saturday 23rd September we are hosting a barn dance. This was requested by someone at the Mission church that we might all meet up and enjoy ourselves. Thank you to Andy and Rough round the edges for facilitating this. More details to follow next month.

Flower rota.



1st July. Jane Doyle.
15th July. Liz Selway.
29th July. Brenda Stradling

All things botanical in Compton Dundon

As good stewards of God's creation and as part of Somerset's 'Wilder Churches' initiative we have chosen a few areas in the churchyard to allow the grass and wildflowers to flourish.

Thank you to the Eco Church team for initiating this project.



This month (June) a group of us met to evaluate the progress of these wilder areas and we were pleased to see a variety of wildflowers, including orchids and foxgloves. Bees were clearly enjoying the colourful flowers, as were several varieties of butterflies.





Our Open Gardens event takes place in Compton Dundon on Sunday, July 9th (details on the poster on page 11) Everyone is invited to come and enjoy some beautiful gardens around the village, with refreshments en route.

On Wednesday, July 12th from 4 pm we are planning a 'big cut,' and rather than haymaking we are raking up the cut grass into habitat piles. As well as garden tools, you may like to bring a picnic. Village cider and lemonade will be on offer!

Finally, over the last two months we have been selling a range of plants outside the church door, raising money towards church funds. Thank you to everyone who has donated or bought plants (or lovingly tended and watered them.) Pat.

Benefice ladies Curry Evening

At the end of May, eighteen ladies from the four churches across the Benefice enjoyed a lovely social evening at 'The Castlebrook Inn' in Compton Dundon.

For our Curry Evening there was a choice of 5 different curries, together with naan bread, poppadoms, dips and chutney. The delicious food was served buffet style so that we could choose from all that was on offer. Most of us even managed a dessert!

After the meal we were treated to a very interesting talk from Angela about her job as Aggie's Pastoral Worker at RNAS Yeovilton, having previously been a family worker at a church in Sandhurst. 'Aggie's' was founded in 1876, named after a pioneering naval Christian worker, Agnes Weston.

Angela encounters a wide range of situations in her day to day ministry with navy personnel and their families, but how encouraging that when she has offered to pray with them no one to date has ever declined. She is also involved with organising family events and working with children in schools.

Angela gave us food for thought by talking about all of us doing God's work every day, even though this may not be in paid employment.

Following Angela's description of her role, she answered questions on aspects of her work.

Thank you so much for a fascinating insight into your job Angela.

All in all a most enjoyable evening and one thing we all agreed on – let's do this again!

Pat



OPEN GARDENS - COMPTON DUNDON

Come and enjoy the beautiful gardens of
Compton Dundon on

Sunday, July 9th – from 1pm to 6pm



Tickets available at the village hall,
church and open gardens

Price: £5 per person, under 16s free

Parking: at the village hall and church,
and various locations around the village

Tea and cakes for sale, books and plant
stalls



Afternoon Tea and Cake with 'Time'

On a very hot afternoon in June we had our Afternoon Tea and Cake at The Mission Church.

Edd Reeve gave a very informative talk on 'Time', ably assisted by his wife, Angela.

At our July meeting there will be a craft activity to join in with.

Feel free to bring along a family member, a friend or acquaintance. As usual the afternoon is open to all.

Pam Harmsworth Delyth Wride, and The Team.

Afternoon Teas

Thursday 20th July

2-30pm

Mission Church

Street

There will be a craft activity

Welcome to Everyone

Farewell to Diana & Welcome to Rachel

As many of you will have already heard, Reverend Diana Greenfield, our pioneer minister, will be leaving us in the next few months to take a new post in North Wales. Diana has been a valued servant of the gospel in both Street and Glastonbury for a number of years and she will be sorely missed by many. We will find ways to say thank you and farewell but, in the meantime, those who follow Diana on Facebook will see she is already learning Welsh.

As one chapter closes, another opens as we welcome our new curate, Rachel Pengelly to the benefice following her ordination in Wells Cathedral on 25th June. She will be out and about at various services and events over the coming weeks and please do give her a warm SWCD Churches welcome. There will be a more 'formal' opportunity to say hello at our benefice service in mid-July, see elsewhere in the magazine for details.

Ana Lawrence

Benefice Service and Picnic

On Sunday 16th July we will be holding a benefice service in St Andrew's Compton Dundon at 11am (please note change in time). During this communion service, we will be welcoming Rachel to our benefice and meeting together for a picnic afterwards. Even if this is not your usual place and time of worship, please make every effort to come along. Parking at St Andrew's is very limited and so car share if possible and use the village hall car park, leaving the spaces outside the church for those with more limited mobility. Let's be good neighbours to the people of Compton Dundon by parking considerately. Thanks.

With a joint service on the third Sunday this month, our regular pattern of services looks a bit different in July. Please check the schedule of services elsewhere in the magazine or on our church website. Ana Lawrence

Advanced Notice of the Pudding Party

In what is rapidly becoming an SWCD Churches tradition, Kevin and I will again be hosting the Rectory pudding party this August. For those of you who haven't been before, you would be most welcome. The idea is simple, bring a pudding and or something to drink (home made or shop bought is fine) and dig in, share and enjoy. Watch this space for more details.

Ana Lawrence

Diocesan Financial Challenges

Our Diocesan Bishop recently wrote to each parish setting out details of the significant financial challenges the diocese currently faces. In common with many parishes including ours, historic deficits have depleted reserves and urgent action is now required to balance the books.

If you would like to read the letter and see details of the financial picture, please ask your church warden or treasurer for a copy. I am often asked why, as our parishes face their own financial challenges, the diocese cannot help more and I hope this information will begin to answer that question.

Ana Lawrence

Warm Space next steps

During last winter, we hosted a 'warm space' (we heat, you eat) in the Mission Church each Saturday. We know this was well received by many, and the team leading this ministry have been reflecting together on what we should do next. As a result, plans are emerging for a regular space to offer friendship, warmth and a simple meal to all those who would value this from our community.

As a church whose vision includes a heart to 'love our communities', we are excited about what might emerge from this and please get in touch if you would like to know more or would like to get involved.

Ana Lawrence

Community Information Meeting St Andrew's Church, Compton Dundon Sunday, 23rd July at 4 pm.

Following our initial Open Day to share proposals for 'reordering' the interior layout of the church, we would now like to provide a more detailed update. We have embraced the encouragement from the Diocesan Advisory Committee to be bold in our thinking and with this in mind we have refined and developed the plans since the initial drafts.

We therefore would love to invite you to come and view these exciting ideas that we hope will enhance worship and community use in the future.

Our Rector, Ana, will be available, as will the architect Mark Taylor. Your thoughts and questions will be most welcome.

Refreshments will be served.

Steve King, St Andrew's Church, Compton Dundon.

My Faith Journey

My journey in getting to know God and having a friend in Jesus, I guess, began when I was baptised as a baby. Of course, I was too young to remember this event.

I do, however, remember at the age of 4, before I started school, my mother and I would go to the vestry in our church every Friday morning to clean the Communion silver. I enjoyed helping but feared I got more polish on my fingers than on the silver! I loved going to church on Sundays. I wasn't very keen on having to go out with the other children to Sunday School during the service. I felt it wasn't fair that I couldn't stay to observe what was taking place. As I got a bit older, I was allowed to stay for the whole service, going up to the Communion rail and having a blessing. I joined the Brownies and was a regular attendee until moving home with my parents.

Age 11 to 15 was a busy time in my church life as I joined the choir and belonged to the children's Bible Study group.

After the age of 15 I'm sorry to say I grew away from church. My weekends were busy with horse activities. I continued to pray each day and felt God's presence. He never gave up on me.

6 years ago, I came back to church. It's where I met my husband, Edd. I felt it was God's plan for me to be welcomed back into the fold. I feel that the Mission Church is where I belong, ready to continue on my faith journey

Angela Reeve (Mission Church)

Caring for God's Acre

As you will see from this month's cover all four churches have been managing their church 'yards' in a wildlife friendly way.

In last month's magazine I referred to 3 Churchyard events; two of these have now happened. Churchyards are about many things, appropriately managed they can provide a haven for wild plants, flowers and creatures. Graves connect us to the past, our own families or other people's; they tell their own story. Both these aspects were reflected in the event at Street Parish Church. Some took a tour of the churchyard to look at the existing wild areas, plants were examined and ideas for further work discussed. Another person embarked on detective work to find two graves referred to on a sign near the gate linking them to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They were not easy to find as they are not standard CWGC headstones. With the help of some of those present the graves were identified and a transcript of the original inscriptions found.

Walton held a Family Fun day. The Eco Church group provided a quiz encouraging participants to look more carefully at the plants and other wildlife on the site. Sitting at an outside stall I saw blackbirds, jackdaws, swallows, chaffinches and heard goldfinches, blackcaps and chiffchaffs singing; a young jackdaw landed briefly on my hand. Some of us inspected the un-mown areas and identified a number of the wild flowers growing there.

At both events participants were encouraged to record their own wildlife sightings, they do not have to be unusual, it is just as important to record 'everyday' species. Please do record what you see in our churchyards, you can find information on how to do this on the Caring for God's Acre website: <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/about-recording/>

A reminder that Compton Dundon's Churchyard will be part of the village's Open Gardens on Sunday 9th July 1 – 6pm.

Sue Ripley (Street Parish) for Eco Church Group

CHARITABLE GIVING 2023

Following nominations received from church members in each of our parishes, our PCC's have now met to agree which organisations we will be supporting this year. We will be featuring our supported charities during the course of the year and please watch out for details in 'Life,' on our website and in our services.

In the meantime, we have two pieces of news to share.

Firstly, each of our PCC's agreed that, as a benefice, we should support the Diocese of Bath and Wells Zambia link this year and specifically the link parish of Mfuwe, in Eastern Province with whom Street have already had a long-term partnership. As part of this support we would love to organise a benefice trip to Zambia, possibly in June 2024, with a chance to meet with our brothers and sisters in the church there and get involved in their life and ministry. Mfuwe parish is also at the centre of one of Africa's finest game parks and so there may well be opportunities to go on safari as well! Ana and I have visited Zambia on a number of occasions, including leading several groups to visit local communities, and we would love the opportunity to take a group from SWCD churches. If this is something that you would be interested in, as a first step, could you register that initial interest with either Ana & I so we can judge whether a trip would be viable.

Meanwhile, we are in regular contact with the parish priest at Mfuwe, Father Samson Mwanza, and I wanted to share an extract from his latest WhatsApp message:

Greetings to you and the entire parish. We are continuing praying for you and we trust that you are remembering us in your prayers,

Secondly, in order that we can give each of the charities that we will be supporting in 2023 as much profile as possible we are also looking for 'champions' for each charity in each of our parishes. The role would involve being the first point of contact with our supported charity, sharing information either via 'Life' or on designated Sundays etc. If this is something that you would be interested in getting involved in, please also get in touch.

Despite the financial challenges that we as a church and society are facing, it is good that we continue to offer financial and prayer support to others both locally and around the world where there is need,

Kevin Lawrence

on behalf of the benefice charitable giving group

INVITATION to my 65th Birthday celebration

This is an advance request for you to keep Friday 15th December free. (Hopefully you will have completed your Christmas shopping by then!)

To celebrate my 65th Birthday, I have hired a John Martin Coach to collect us from the Mission church on Friday 15th December morning to take us to Exmouth for an afternoon river Exe Estuary cruise and cream tea on the Stuart Line boat (EX8 1FE). -- We will stop at a garden centre for you to eat your sandwiches.

In October I will be asking for names, and if you want a seat on the coach a donation of £10 to secure the seat. For those who want to go direct to Exmouth we board at 1.45 for a 2pm sailing for a 2½ hour cruise.

Please if you know me, come and help me celebrate this Birthday as Gods family here. Jane Tompsett

WATCH – wearing your new outfit?

It has been a mystery to me for years. Jesus promised us new life. 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old things have passed away.' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' (Galatians 5:22).

But – and it's a big BUT – I don't see too much of this in my day-to-day life as a follower of Christ. Am I fooling myself? Are these just nice-sounding words? Does it really matter? Yes, I think it does matter very much. Because if it's just empty words, then what we say we believe is just so much hot air, and we are a bunch of hypocrites. We deserve to be justifiably condemned, to be pitied perhaps for fooling ourselves. How can we resolve this? Is there a way of making sense of it, of making it real and credible?

I am only now coming to see that I may have been looking at it all these years with 'pie-eyed' vision! I've put all the responsibility on God – failing to see how it depends on me to put into practice what God has provided. He has given me the tools and the power but I need to get plugged in and get to work on it. In John's Gospel Chapter 1 verse 12, we read 'To those who believe He gives the power to become children of God.' Notice those words 'power to become'. To me this implies it's not automatic. We have to do something. God gives us the power – His Holy Spirit – when we are born again, putting our faith in Christ and becoming His disciples – we need to make use of that power by asking each day to be filled with the Holy Spirit: which our Heavenly Father longs for us to have, just as we long to give our children (and grandchildren!) good gifts.

Then we must consciously study and think about how we can apply it in our everyday life and relationships. Unless we do that, our 'new life' will remain just words: words which we profess to believe but actually our lives show that it is just a sham.

Jesus' strongest and most withering criticism was reserved for those who claimed to be religious and closest to God. There's no room for kidding ourselves here. Let's face it: we are probably the ones seen by others as the most religious people around today. Do they see us as distinctively different, overflowing with love, joy, peace, humility and self-control? Are we 'salt' and 'light' in our families, our schools, our places of work, our neighbourhoods? I for one need to do a lot of soul-searching here. I need to do a lot of catch-up homework so that I can be sure I am 'walking the talk' and not letting Team Jesus down.

Hopefully the result will be that we can all play together as one with the help of the Holy Spirit and begin scoring goals for God. The possibilities are boundless if we listen to our coach and follow His instructions.

Bernard Sinclair

Washing up Bowl

For about a year now we have had a very small 'pond' in the Mission Church grounds, under the lime tree. It's actually a repurposed washing up bowl, a suggestion from an Eco Church group member.

As soon as the bowl was put there the jackdaws found it and splashed about so much that the bowl had to be filled every day. Pigeons also found the water source and have visited regularly.

Recently I looked out and a blackbird was having a bath. A squirrel sometimes visits for a drink.

Late one evening four blackbirds arrived for a drink, followed by some bluetits and several goldfinches. I wonder what other creatures have made use of the water source.

Pam Harmsworth

Pray for those you Resent

'... LOVE YOUR ENEMIES. LET THEM BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU ... RESPOND WITH ... PRAYER FOR THAT PERSON.'
LUKE 6:27-28 TM

Is there someone you really resent? Maybe they are in your life to teach you something! Melody Beattie writes: 'Years ago I felt I was meant to work at the Stillwater Gazette, but when a job opened up they hired Abigail. I'd always been taught to pray for those you resent, so I prayed for her. Sometimes 3-4 times a day – that is how much I disliked her!

Eventually I landed a job at the Gazette, but not the one I wanted. Abigail had that – plus all the best assignments! So I kept praying, “God bless Abigail!”; it is all I knew to do. Then after watching her I realised she was quick, efficient, a good interviewer, so I began to push myself, thinking, “If she can do it, so can I!” Abigail was actually inspiring me! Eventually I stopped resenting her and we became friends.

Soon afterwards I got an offer from a publisher to write a book and when it became a New York Times best-seller, I was glad I hadn't gotten Abigail's job or I'd never have had the time to write my book!

God says, '... Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you ... respond with ... prayer for that person.' Certain people are in your life to show you what you are capable of. The ones you perceive as your 'thorn' actually teach you things you need to learn. So stop resenting them, start praying for them and watch what happens!

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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