

April 2025



60p

Life



swcd-churches.org.uk



MAGAZINE EDITOR LIFE

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Articles for the May edition are due by **Sunday 13th April**

Welcome to the Easter edition of Life magazine, there has been a lot going on since I wrote the March Editorial and there is a lot happening in the Benefice in the coming months for you to read about.

The front cover contains pictures from all the Benefice, the background Hot Cross Buns were on offer some years back at Walton Church, the decorated cross photographed by Pam some years back also. The single cross with the Iris in the foreground of the Parish Church Easter Garden is more recent, and the three crosses on Lulover hill in Compton Dundon is a yearly event.

Imogen and her team, can be seen on the picture on the back, Imogen is on the left of the girls. They are in Ecadour for two months, helping to build a Church building and running an Easter children's group.

Please continue praying for Imogen and the other young folk currently with the Christian Charity 'Latin Link' in South America. If you want to refresh your memory as to details of Imogen's trip to S.America, you could look in the December 2024 'Life', which you will find on the church website which is always on the bottom of the front cover.

The bottom pictures are of the work on the Priest's house in Mfuwe which our charitable giving has funded.

Father Philip is on the right of the small photo, and the engineer is in the centre. See page 27 for the article.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter. Roger.

Rectors Letter

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Dear Friends,

I was recently shown some old Walton parish newsletters dating back to the mid 1960's – many of us love this kind of local history and nostalgia. Flicking through the pages, one thing that really struck me was the start of the rector's letter with the words 'My dear people' which reflects a particular age and culture of the day. I'm not sure how you'd respond if I had begun this letter with those same words? A bit patronising to modern ears maybe?

Yet, whilst I use the word 'friends' to start this letter, you are also all dear to me, the sentiment remains the same.

As we approach the Easter season, we can anticipate the risen and resurrected Jesus meeting and encountering 'his people' on a number of occasions. These were Jesus' friends who he had spent many hours with during his ministry, they were close friends, and they had gone through much together.

It's no wonder that the women, his friends who knew him well, on reaching the tomb were able to proclaim that Jesus was indeed risen. Their world was turned upside down, from death to life. Hallelujah, Christ is risen!

During the Easter season, we celebrate the risen Christ at our Easter Day services and continue to celebrate in the weeks beyond. But let's also remember the weeks that precede that glorious Easter morning, Holy week and the days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and death. Do journey with us in those days, in

prayer, in word, in sacrament as we remember Jesus our friend and our Saviour.

My dear friends, I look forward to continuing to travel the Lenten and Easter journey with you.

With my love & prayers, Ana

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Youth Socials at Mission Church

Over the past few months, the young people of the church have been meeting in the mission church kitchen for an evening of pizza eating and to play some indoor games. Jenga seems to be a favourite! It is a chance for young people and teenagers (year 6 upwards) to have fun and have their own space in the church. It's a chance for us older folk to get to know some new young people and to help them feel part of the church.

The plan is to meet monthly. Look out on lifeline for dates. The next meet up is due on April 16th 6-7pm We might even venture outside when the evenings draw out and the weather improves. Thinking of the next steps we are considering purchasing some games equipment for the group so if anyone has a table tennis table they are wanting to move on....

And there's always opportunity for anyone who wants to get involved with helping out on one of these evenings. For more information contact Tim Hindle (mission church)

tim_hindle62@hotmail.com or 07976 615844 Tim Hindle.

Annual Parish Church Meetings (APCM)

During April we will be holding our APCM's in each of our churches. These are open to all on the electoral roll of the parish. We come together to hear reports on all that has been going on in the church over the last year, to elect our church wardens and members of the PCC, to pray together and to look forward to the year to come.

This is much more than a business meeting, although it is also one of those; it's an opportunity for the church family to celebrate together, thanking God and each other for all that has been done and praying together for what God will do in the coming year. Your presence at an APCM would also be a real encouragement to others, and so please try and make this a priority in your diaries.

Please also be prayerfully considering whether you, or someone you know, could stand for election as a church warden or a member of the PCC? Nomination forms will be available on our website and in our churches.

The meetings are as follows, each at 7pm:

Walton, in Holy Trinity, Monday 7 April

Compton Dundon, in St Andrews, Tuesday 8 April

Street, in the Parish Church, Thursday 10 April

As part of our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint we are not, as a matter of course, printing copies of the reports, agendas and accounts that will be presented at the meeting and available beforehand. These can be downloaded from our church website, or, if you prefer, contact the church office and they will print you a copy.

Ana Lawrence.

Bishop's letter

'God is good... all the time!'

When I was a priest in Nottingham, I remember thinking that as a parish we seemed to reflect more of the story of the crucifixion of Christ rather than His resurrection. Ours was a parish which had many personal stories of loss and suffering, of challenge and trial, and sometimes this made it difficult to lift our faces to the horizon to see the triumph and glory beyond the grave.

As we approach Easter, I want to encourage us to take time to 'walk the way of the cross', to notice God's grace as we do so, even in the painful moments as well as keeping our eyes fixed on the coming glory.

As I write this, I am catching glimpses of the kingfisher on its perch outside my study window. Always a delight! It sits on the branch across the moat in stillness, watching for the sign of a fish before it suddenly dives and then crests the water with its prize. A splash of colour rarely seen by many. It fills me with hope and joy, two gifts which I think Easter inspires.

Walking through Lent we are continually called to become conscious of our mortality and are reminded of the price Jesus paid on our behalf. Giving himself in death that we might have life. And we have that life because his death was not the end but the beginning of a new chapter, of life in all its fullness.

So, whatever the circumstances of your life this Easter, allow yourself to fully recognise and experience the challenges but never lose the prospect of the glory to come! 'God is good... all the time!'

Bishop Ruth

TEARFUND

Cuts to the UK Aid budget, how should we respond?

Tearfund, the Christian overseas mission agency, which Street have been supporting as a mission partner for a number of years, has encouraged us to act in response to the recently announced cuts in UK Overseas Aid. Their article is posted below.

Cutting aid costs lives

The UK Government's decision to cut aid spending down to 0.3% of Gross National Income (GNI) - a cut of around £5.5 billion - is a devastating blow to the communities Tearfund serves.

This will directly affect people living in poverty around the world. Families will go hungry. Children won't be able to go to school. Conflict will continue to ruin lives.

You can speak up and tell the UK Government this is unacceptable.

Will you let your MP know that you care about your global neighbours?

You can act now. Email or write to your MP to speak up for people living in poverty.

The impact for people in poverty

- There will soon be far fewer resources for our humanitarian responses to disasters and emergencies around the world.
- Years of progress and peacebuilding in areas of historic conflict are under threat of being reversed.
- Communities who are still rebuilding after natural disasters will be more vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis in the future.

As Christians, we're called to come alongside people who are suffering and stand with them against injustice.

A balanced approach to peace

UK aid strengthens global health and security, making the world a safer place. Cutting overseas aid for communities experiencing instability will only exacerbate global insecurity.

'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.' 1 Timothy 2:1

How you can pray

- Pray for all the people living in poverty who will be impacted by these aid cuts. Pray that communities will find miraculous resources to continue addressing poverty, building climate resilience, and preparing for disasters, amongst many other things.
- Pray for the UK Government and leaders around the world as they make incredibly difficult decisions in an ever-shifting context. We ask that they will be inspired by the example of Jesus to lead with integrity and justice.
- Pray for the global church, that we will step up to meet the needs of our global neighbours. In a time of great uncertainty, may we respond with generosity and the steadfast compassion of God.

Kevin Lawrence. Tearfund 'Champion' Street



The Next Men's Breakfast is Saturday April 26th

All **men** from the benefice are invited to a Saturday morning breakfast at the Mission church on April 26th 8.45am -10am. An opportunity to come and start the day by joining with others for food and relaxed company.

Please do let us know that you wish to come so that we can arrange for the catering. There may be a suggested donation to cover the cost of breakfast (£3). To sign up or for more information contact Tim Hindle (mission church)

tim_hindle62@hotmail.com or 07976 615844

Eco Church – the way forward

As already reported all four churches in our Benefice achieved a Silver Eco Church Award at the end of last year. The following is based on the report about the way forward accepted at PCC meetings in March 2025.

The Eco Church group met in January and agreed that we are prepared to work towards achieving a Gold Award. We recognise that this will require further effort and that it is likely to take some time. Our plan would be to concentrate on a limited number of areas at a time. Some would continue to be addressed at a Benefice level; each parish would work on other areas such as Buildings and Energy, and, Land and Nature, individually depending on the local situation.

The new Eco Church survey differs in various ways from the previous one, particularly in the way in which each section begins with a commitment, these are: -

Worship and Teaching

Our church recognises and teaches that creation care and action to address the climate and nature crises are integral to Christian faith, life and worship and has made a visible commitment to A Rocha UK's Eco Church award scheme.

Buildings and energy

Our church has recognised the climate and nature crises and fundamental justice these represent. We have committed to reducing our carbon footprint year on year in line with the Church of England's commitment to net zero.

Land and Nature

Our church recognises the significant contribution churches can make to the U.K.'s target of 30% of land protected for nature by 2030. We have established a plan to manage our land for nature to help us to do this in the most impactful way.

Community and Global Engagement

Our church recognises the impact of the Climate And nature crises and has a plan to take action locally.

Lifestyle

Our church has a strategy or plan to promote ethical and environmentally aware consumption by Individuals and households.

More information about the specific requirements under each heading can be found in the Eco Church section on the A Rocha website <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>

Following on from acceptance of this report the Eco Church group will be meeting soon to develop Action Plans to assist individual parishes and the Benefice with fulfilling these commitments. If you would like to know more, have specific ideas or would like to be part of the group please get in touch through the Benefice office or Rachel Pengelly or speak to another member of the group: Trish Cox (Compton Dundon), Sandra Gristock, Andy Savage (Walton), Suzie Williams or myself (Street).

Susan Ripley (Street) SWCD Eco Church Group

Gather 25

At the end of February, members of the church family joined 'Gather 25', 25 hours of online prayer and testimony, hosted at various centres right around the globe. WE asked some who took part for their feedback....

Wow! I was particularly struck by the sharing of a UK Government statistic on Gen Z in the London area – showing that interest in spirituality amongst young people is up from 28% in 2022 to 55% now. That is truly staggering! What an opportunity and a wake-up call to the church!

Responding is not an option; it should be a passion. Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28 applies to all Christians.
Bernard Sinclair (Mission Church)

There were tears when we heard testimonies from the persecuted church. They really do live out Paul's words "to lose ones life for Christ is to gain".

There was admiration when we heard from a woman in Rwanda who survived an attack that killed her sister, only to find the perpetrator was housed next to hers when he was released from prison. Her faith led her to not only forgive him but to befriend him and take him to Church.

There was wonder to hear of the tens of thousands of young people coming to faith and to see halls and venues packed in a time when we are told Church isn't relevant and is dying.

God is so good and what an encouragement this gathering was to us all world-wide. Sandra Gristock (Walton)

If you want to view any of the sessions, you can find them by searching for 'Gather 25' on YouTube.

Don't forget the opportunities to join others in prayer across the benefices each week as well as the forthcoming 'Thy Kingdom Come,' prayer initiative, which we will be taking part in during May.

Kevin Lawrence

Diocesan celebration of lay ministries

You are invited to the annual diocesan Celebration of Lay Ministries event this year, taking place at Wells Cathedral on Saturday 14th June, from 2pm until 4pm.

The Celebration is an opportunity for both lay and ordained to come together with the Bishop to be valued, affirmed and thanked for the gifts and ministries we offer.

This year our theme is 'Varieties of gifts'. At the event there will be:

- A Celebration Service
 - where we will hear from different people speaking about their gifts and ministries
- A Marketplace of stalls
 - Where we can see and explore the variety of ministries that are on offer
- A time to meet old friends and to make new ones!
 - And again there will be cake...

To book your place and for more information, please click on this link: [Celebration of Lay Ministries - Bath and Wells Diocese](#).

Please note: As seats become filled quickly, we advise early booking.

If you have any queries, please contact Charmain Gilmour at the Diocesan office

at: charmain.gilmour@bathwells.anglican.org

Kevin Lawrence

Heating the parish Church – some good news

A team including members of our Eco Church group, churchwarden and caretaker had been reviewing how we heat the parish church in Street. With the expert (and free) help of the Diocesan buildings team we have looked at how and when we heat the church, including a period when we switched the heating off completely to assess the impact on the temperature.

We appreciate that, for worshippers, this left the building colder than you were used to. Thank you for your forbearance, and so we hope the outcome we are able to report below made this worthwhile!

As a result of this exercise, we have managed to reduce our total heating bill for the Parish Church by nearly £1,000 in the last quarter. Whilst this was in the winter and so savings will not be as large for the rest of the year this does represent a considerable cost reduction as well as substantially reducing our carbon footprint.

Work is ongoing to check what temperature we should heat the building to and how much in advance the heating needs to be switched on to make the building warm for services etc and we will keep you posted on developments. Kevin Lawrence (for Street PCC)

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Charitable Partners in 2025

At our PCC meetings in March, we discussed the charities and organisations which we are proposing to support as part of our charitable giving in 2025.

Each of the supported organisations now has a 'champion' from amongst the church family, whose role is to keep as updated with news from our supported charities including prayer requests for intercessions on Sunday and updates in this magazine and elsewhere. If you want to know more about any of the charities below the first point of call is probably that champion.

WALTON

Homes for Good. Champion Hilda Grint

<https://homeforgood.org.uk/banes> A Christian charity, with a local base, which aims to help children to find adoption families ANNIE MAKONI / ONE HOPE CHURCH. Champion Sonia Beaty

Working with street kids in Harare, Zimbabwe.

PARISH OF MFUWE, ZAMBIA. Champion Kevin Lawrence
Diocesan link.

STREET

TEARFUND. Champion Kevin Lawrence

<https://www.tearfund.org/>

International Christian development charity

Latin Link. Champion Tim Hindle

<https://latinlink.org/>. A Christian mission agency working in South America (a member of the Mission Church is serving with them in 2025)

PARISH OF MFUWE, ZAMBIA. Champion Kevin Lawrence

Diocesan link.

COMPTON DUNDON

Children's hospice South West. Champion Sister Rachel

Pengelly

<https://www.chsw.org.uk/>. Caring for children in the south west with life limiting illnesses.

YMCA Street Foyer. Champion TBC

<https://ymca-bq.org/>. Supporting at risk young people locally

Bonny Down's Urban Abbey. Champion TBC

<https://www.bonnydownschurch.org/urbanabbey>. Developing a centre for community support in East London

PARISH OF MFUWE, ZAMBIA. Champion Kevin Lawrence

Diocesan link.

In addition we will continue our benefice wide support for Street foodbank by collecting non- perishable food items in each of our churches.

And, by way of update, after some delay caused as on Mfuwe waiting for the appointment of a new priest, work is now proceeding apace on the project to complete the priest's house, funded by our support. We hope to bring you further news of this work in due course. Kevin Lawrence

Better Together

It was a joy to worship with women from across the region in the Gateway Church, Yeovil at the 'Better Together' Conference in late February.

Read what some who attended the day had to say about the event and be encouraged.

'Better Together' was a wonderful, uplifting day. So powerful and moving to worship with several hundred others, led by the live band, and certain special song words have stayed with me as daily encouragement. Christy Wimber was an engaging and thought-provoking speaker, and I am now able to continue hearing her words in one of her books. I would say if you have never experienced this day, (as I hadn't), do be encouraged to come next year...I am already looking forward to it!

Pat King, Compton Dundon

A wonderful day for women to express their love of Christ and to be together in worship, unity and sisterhood.

Rachel Pengelly

A day to sit in the presence of God and worship in the company of other women. Inspiring, uplifting and challenging.

Gill Williams, Compton Dundon

A joyful reminder that we are nothing without unity in our friendships, our Church and our community. We can encourage each other as well as being uplifted ourselves. What a privilege to worship with hundreds of others and be reminded of God's word in a world that is in need of his light.

Sandra Gristock, Walton

Do look out for details of next year's conference and why not join us.

Ana Lawrence

Holy Trinity Walton

What an excellent quiz evening we had on Friday 28th February. We used every chair and table in the church, even using the credence table and the Bishop's chair. 15 teams answered a variety of questions set by Liz Brown and we had several teams fighting it out up to the very last round. We raised a fabulous £500 for funds and had lots of laughter in doing so. Thank you so much Liz and a big thank you to Gill, Jacky, Jane and Louise for the delicious cakes we all enjoyed. Can't wait for the next one.

Our first event for the refurbishment fund is a barn dance on the 12th April. This will be held at Walton village hall starting at 7.00pm. You don't have to be a dancer to enjoy the evening. Come along and listen to the lovely music of Rough Round the Edges and tap your feet to the beat. There will be a cash bar through the evening and hot dogs served in the interval. Tickets are £12 and available from Andy Savage on 07563372107 and Sandra Gristock on 07435567903 or 01458 741363.

On the 11th May at 3pm we are having a cream tea in Walton Church to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE day. This will be £6 per tea and we will be listening to some war time music as we enjoy our lovely scones, jam and cream. Gluten and lactose free will be available. It will be lovely to see you.

Sandra Gristock

New Wine in July/August

Once again New Wine will be happening at The Bath and West showground near Shepton Mallet July 30th – August 4th 2025. We had a wonderful time on the site last year which would be great to repeat.

New Wine is thoroughly recommended. It's a gathering of Christians from all over for a week of worship, teaching and events. There is a lot going on to join in with each day or you can equally just relax on site doing your own thing. There are normally two main worship sessions each day as well as various other events, seminars and teaching sessions. It is an amazing, special atmosphere joining in worship with 4000+ Christians in a tent!

If anyone is interested in camping as a group from our churches for the four nights please get in touch with Tim or Hannah Hindle (mission church) tim_hindle62@hotmail.com or 07976 615844. It's also possible to go to New Wine as a day visitor. Let us know if you would like to go but need help with transport. Tim Hindle

More from Ana

A number of us from SWCD Churches enjoyed the worship, teaching and fellowship last year and I really hope and pray that even more of us will be able to go this year, either camping for the whole Festival or by the day; either as a delegate or on a team. The earlier you book the cheaper the price and you can find full details of the event, which runs from 30 July – 4 August, here <https://www.new-wine.org/events/new-wine-festival-2025/>

When you book, particularly if you book to camp, please remember to record your membership of our churches so that we can all camp together. Please also let me know if you're going as it would be good to coordinate (and for GDPR purposes New Wine cannot tell me who is coming).

Look forward to seeing you there Ana Lawrence

NEW LOCAL MINISTRY FOR THE 18 – 30s

Introducing an open launch event for a new Interdenominational ministry to those aged 18 to 30

Hello, Incoming Ministries is launching a new cross-denominational community for young adults in Street & Glastonbury and the surrounding local area. We would love to invite you to the launch event on 19th April 2025, 6-9pm at Street Methodist Church.

The Incoming Street & Glastonbury team are based locally and have a vision to bring together 18-30s from across the area for times of worship, fellowship, prayer and testimony.

The launch event will give a taster of what the monthly gatherings will look like. There will be a free meal, live worship and a word of encouragement from our guest speaker, Bishop Michael Beasley.

This first gathering is for all ages; going forward gatherings will primarily be for local young adults in their 18-30s. We really hope you can attend.

Please feel free to contact us for more information at incomingministries@gmail.com or look at our website www.incomingministries.com/

All ages are welcome to the launch event. There will be a free meal, live worship and a word of encouragement from our guest speaker, Bishop Michael Beasley.

See www.incomingministries.com for more information.

Hope to see you there! Blessings,

Ben, Polly, Callum, Sue, Richard

Incoming Street and Glastonbury Team

Kevin Lawrence

Holy Trinity, Walton
Barn Dance



(In aid of the church restoration fund)

Walton Village Hall
Saturday 12th April 7.00pm
Tickets £12 inc. Hot Dog

Tickets available from Andy 07563 372107
Sandra 07435 567903

Cash Bar and Raffle



SWCD Churches – Street – Walton – Compton Dundon

Holy Trinity, Walton Barn Dance

This year's barn dance is the first of many fund-raising events specifically for the restoration and reordering of Holy Trinity, Walton. This will be held on Saturday 12th April, at Walton Village Hall. Music will be supplied by Rough Round Edges plus guest violinist Ana Lawrence, and the caller is Peter Bolton. The fun starts at 7.00pm and will include a Hot Dog. There will also be a cash bar and raffle.

Tickets are available from either Andy Savage 07563 372107 (Walton) or Sandra Gristock 07435 567903 (Walton).

Please come along and enjoy an evening of music, dance and great fun.

Your support is very much appreciated.

Andy Savage (Walton)

Easter Monday SWCD Churches walking group

Why not join us in blowing the cobwebs away on our Easter Monday Walk on 21st April?

Meet at the Mission Church, Street at 9:30 AM for a c2 hour walk, hopefully followed by coffee. Dogs are welcome and wellies / boots recommended. Open to all across the benefice, together with friends, family members and neighbours (plus pooches, of course!).

For more information, please contact Tim Hinde (Mission Church)

Kevin Lawrence

Congratulations

To Kevin Lawrence, on his election to the Bishops Council (the trustee body for the Diocese).

To Tabby Northcott Lowndes (Mission Church) and Pauline Atkins (St Andrews Compton Dundon) on recently celebrating significant birthdays.

Church Contacts List

Most of you will be aware that there are 2 lists of SWCD Church members (public and private). I will start the process of updating the lists in the near future but in the meantime if you have changed your contact details or your primary church since June 2023, please let me know.

New members who have completed a 'Welcome Card' will have been asked which list they wish to go on. If you are a new member and have not yet completed a card, please do so and hand in to your church warden.

Keep a look out in Lifeline for further information regarding the update.

Sonia Beaty, Benefice Administrator. Churchoffice8@gmail.com

My Faith and Motherhood

After a busy morning, Rachel Pengelly(curate) talked about her faith and motherhood at our afternoon Connections@theMission group, in March. Rachel showed us a few photographs. There was a lovely photo of herself as a young mother with a new baby. The talk included what the text books tell us about becoming a parent. For Rachel the experience of motherhood was not as the text books said. Rachel continued her talk telling us about those who have come alongside her and encouraged her during her life as a mother and also those who have helped her on her faith journey.

There were lots of questions from those gathered at the group. As Rachel shared her experiences others joined in and some shared their life experiences.

Eventually Rachel was able to turn the microphone off and we all continued in conversation while we had a cuppa and cake. A weary Rachel left us to join her family at home.

Pam Harmsworth (Mission Church Street)

Connections@theMission

Thursday 17th April

2-30pm till 4pm

**You are welcome to come along
and hear a**

'Maundy Thursday/Easter Reflection'

From our Rector

Ana Lawrence

Followed by a cuppa and cake

Hallowing Service



Everyone is welcome to Compton Dundon church on Thursday 3rd of April at 9:30, for a special service to welcome back the bells at the church. Hallowing (making holy / blessed) of the bells is an ancient service signifying their spiritual purpose of calling the faithful people to worship. The use of Bells dates back to antiquity and are first mentioned in Scripture as the small golden bells attached to the hem of the high priest's ephod (Exodus 28:33, 34, 35). The "bells of the horses" are mentioned by Zechariah (14:20) which were attached to the bridles or belts round the necks of horses trained for war, so as to accustom them to noise and tumult. Early Bells early summoned soldiers to arms as well as Christians to church.

We will be giving thanks to God. In word and song, all will be welcome to attend. Light refreshments will follow the service.
Rachel

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Easter 2025



We will be celebrating the Easter season both in our Holy week and Sunday services and you can find full details in the centre pages of this magazine. Please also pray for teams from across our churches who will be bringing the Easter story to our local schools through Easter Experience, Open the Book and Collective Worship.
Christ is risen; he is risen indeed! Ana Lawrence

UPDATE ON THE BELL APPEAL AT COMPTON DUNDON

April 2025 is a milestone in the life of St Andrew's Church and the *villages of Compton Dundon and Littleton*.

After several years of planning, fundraising and then building and restoration works, the bells will finally come back to the church this month. Fully restored and with a new steel frame waiting them, they will "rest" in the church from the 2nd of April for a few days until they are returned to the tower. There will be a special Hallowing Service on Thursday 3rd April at 9.30am (see Sister Rachel's article on the next page) when the bells will be blessed. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come and see the bells because, once back in the tower, it will be many, probably a hundred years or more, before they will see daylight again. And refreshments will be available.

Easter Sunday 2025 will be another joyous event. **On the 20th April St Andrew's bells will ring out across the village again!** Although the bells will not be ready to fully peal by then, the automatic chiming system will announce **Easter Sunday** and call people to church.

There will be a trial ringing of the full pealing bells on **Sunday 27th April in the afternoon**.

Later in the year, on the **8th June, The Bishop** will come to St Andrew's Church for a service of Dedication of the bells. This will be another village celebration, and more details will be given in next month's Herald.

Once again, the PCC and the Bell Committee would like to thank everyone for their tremendous support, generosity and encouragement throughout this project. Judy Skelding.

Bishop Ruth to become interim Bishop of Liverpool

Downing Street has recently announced that Bishop Ruth is to become the new suffragan Bishop of Wigan in the Diocese of Liverpool and to serve as the Interim Bishop of Liverpool. Unlike her secondment to Coventry, this will require her to lay down her role as Bishop of Taunton.

Bishop Ruth says, "I have been a bishop for almost 10 years now, serving principally in Bath and Wells, and responding in times of change here and, more recently, in Coventry. Now Archbishop Stephen has asked me to support Liverpool Diocese in their moment of need.

"I shall miss Somerset and the wonderful people and places here and, as I follow God's call for me, I will be praying for all of you, and for all that is to come."

Bishop Ruth's last service in the diocese will be the Chrism service at Wells Cathedral, on Tuesday, 15 April. More details about this service will be announced shortly.

Bishop Michael says, "It is only right that Bishop Ruth answers this call to the Diocese of Liverpool. I am sure you will agree that with her many gifts, Ruth will be a huge blessing to them at this time of healing and hope, before they take steps to determine what they need from the next Bishop of Liverpool.

"Unlike Bishop Ruth's recent move to Coventry, this departure to Liverpool will require her to lay down her role as Bishop of Taunton. I appreciate this could be unsettling news, especially as we have all just welcomed her back to Bath and Wells, but I want to assure you that we will be moving forward to appoint a new Bishop of Taunton with all possible speed. I am sure you will all join me in praying for Bishop Ruth as she prepares to take this next step in her ministry."

Bishop Ruth takes on the role of interim Bishop of Liverpool following the decision of Bishop John Perumbalath to step back from ministry earlier in January 2025. Bishop Ruth will be moving to Liverpool as soon as feasible and a welcome and installation service is planned in Liverpool later in March.

Diocesan Communications team

St Andrew's Charity Appeal

1.8 million and **3 million**. What do these figures represent?

1.8 million people - almost the entire population of Gaza - do not have enough to eat.

3 million people displaced across Gaza and Lebanon are in desperate need of humanitarian aid.

Conflict in the Middle East has devastated lives. Millions in Gaza, Lebanon and the wider region urgently need shelter, food and basic supplies.

With this in mind, we have recently had a focus on collecting for this troubled region of the world.

Donations from both our CAMEO coffee mornings and St Andrew's Church have totalled £235, which has been forwarded to the DEC (Disaster Emergency Committee) Middle East Appeal.

Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed.

Thank you, Pat

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Upcoming teaching in our churches

I hope you will be able to join us as during April we travel through the story of the first Easter in our Sunday sermons.

In May, we will focus our attention, once again on our benefice mission statement 'worship God, love our communities, grow in faith'. Each week, we will dig a little deeper into what these mean for the life and ministry of our churches.

Ana Lawrence

Mfuwe welcomes a new priest

Our partner parish in Zambia, Mfuwe, has recently announced the appointment of a new priest to lead the congregations, Father Philp Mwanza,

Fr. Philip wrote to us to introduce himself

I am very happy to introduce myself to you for the first time. I am Rev. Fr. Phillip Mwanza. I am married to Eleneti my wife and have six children , three girls and three boys.

This is my fifth Parish now since I joined the ministry. Before coming here, I was in Jumbe Parish. I've been in ministry for 14 years now.

I have written back to welcome into his new role and assure him of our prayers as he begins his new ministry. Kevin Lawrence

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Social media Workshop

You may remember that, as a result of a number of requests, we tried to set up a workshop to help church members to better use social media, particularly Facebook, to promote the work, mission and ministry of SWCD churches.

Unfortunately, we couldn't find a date at the time that worked for everyone and so we are going to try again to set something up. If you would be interested in attending, whether you consider yourself a social media guru or a total beginner, then please do get in touch with me and we'll try and find a date that works for as many as possible.

Drop me an e-mail, call me or if that's your thing, send me a DM!
Kevin Lawrence

He did it with you in mind

**'THEY MADE A CROWN OUT OF THORN BRANCHES AND
PLACED IT ON HIS HEAD.' Matthew 27:29 CEV**

The hymnist Isaac Watts wrote, 'See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?'

Jesus wore a crown of thorns so you could wear a crown of glory. Thorns in Scripture represent sin. In Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed, God said, 'The ground will be under a curse ... [it] will produce thorns' (Genesis 3:17-18 CEV). Later He told Israel that unless they purged the land of their enemies, 'they will be like ... thorns in your sides' (Numbers 33:55 NCV). Solomon cautioned: 'Corrupt people walk a thorny, treacherous road' (Proverbs 22:5 NLT). And Jesus warned: 'You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes' (Matthew 7:16 TLB).

A well-known author writes: 'The crown of thorns Jesus wore represented all our sins. As we were caught in the brambles of envy, anger, shame, discouragement, guilt, bitterness, and unforgiveness, so Jesus, who knew no sin, became "an atoning sacrifice for our sins"' (1 John 4:10 NIV). Not once did Christ use His supernatural powers for personal comfort. With just a word He could have transformed the hard earth into a soft bed ... hurled the spit of His accusers back into their faces ... and paralysed the hand of the soldier who braided the thorns. But He didn't. Instead, "He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to Christ's cross" (Colossians 2:14 NLT). And He did it with you in mind. Amazing!

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