

SEPTEMBER 2026

60P



SWCD-CHURCHES.ORG.UK



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Articles for the October edition are due by Sunday 13th Sept

How are you liking all this sunshine? Are you praying hard for rain? The sunflower on the front cover looks happy, as do all the other flowers and plants that are lucky enough to be watered by a can, (hosepipe ban).

The sun is a feature of this month's magazine. A couple of weeks ago, Trinity Handbells took the opportunity of viewing the Solar Eclipse out the front of the Mission church, with eye protection from special glasses, giving us an hour of wonderous entertainment until the clouds appeared. The pictures are on the page before the centre pages.

On page 21 Ana gives a brief account of the Pudding party and the photograph from this is featured on the back cover, as is Pollys photo of the Youth and Bible hubs attendees outside the Mission church.

On page 17, Bev Perry the Parish church Tower captain writes about the funeral of Bob Lampert. Those who knew him will miss him dearly, as I will. Throughout his life he did a great deal for the church, not only as a ringer of the bells, but his skills as a Painter and Decorator to name but one, were often used in the church, as were other jobs he did voluntary. God bless you Bob.

There is a late addition to this magazine on page 3 from the Bishop. Roger.

Rector's Letter

"Make me a channel of your peace, where there is hatred, let me bring your love" (taken from prayer of St Francis of Assisi)

Dear Friends,

One of the themes that punctuated my training for ordained ministry was a focus on 'the other', 'the stranger', 'the different', as we were urged to reflect theologically on how Jesus saw these groups of people.

In the gospels Jesus has much to say about and to those who appear to be on the outside, regarded as different. He also has challenging words for those who might single out such people. Jesus was often criticised for spending his time with the 'wrong' sort of people, whilst the parable of the Good Samaritan turns beliefs about 'us' and 'them' upside down.

Into this context it was disturbing to read of a recent incident at a political rally involving a (former) member of staff at our local secondary school singling out pupils for criticism based on their skin colour. It had much social media coverage and you may be familiar with the story. Sadly, I fear this isn't an isolated incident and we are in danger of seeing the increasing 'normalisation' of such hate speech.

It was encouraging to see the widespread condemnation, both locally and nationally, of the incident I have described and the robust response by the school. As Christians we should be people who, like Jesus, welcome all, regardless of skin colour, age, race, background or country of origin into our church family. It's a joy to see this happening in our churches.

But should we also be bolder in calling out, lovingly but firmly, those who single out 'the other', however that might be done?

Finally, for those of you who read newspapers or view social media posts that stereotype the 'other'. Be they migrants, benefit claimants or whoever, can I encourage you to reflect theologically about what views those headlines or posts might be seeking to normalise. Reading through this lens may surprise, challenge and even shock you.

Let's be bringers of God's love into a world with too much hatred and division.

With my love and prayers, Ana

I am deeply saddened to share the news that our much-loved colleague, Ana Lawrence, having been unwell for some time, has just received a terminal cancer diagnosis and is not expected to be with us for much longer.

Ana is not up to visitors, but her husband Kevin and her family are by her side. Should you wish to send a message or card to Ana, please do so via the Mission Church in Street.

What I ask above all is that we all pray for Ana and her family at they face this extraordinarily difficult time.

+Michael

CAMEO

How did this group come about?

Well, during the Covid epidemic when we were unable to get together, a group from St Andrew's chatted to each other on a weekly zoom call. It wasn't the same as being together but at least we could chat, see each other and support one another. As we came out of this isolation and restrictions gradually lessened zoom calls were no longer a necessity. We were once again able to meet face to face.

People living alone had felt very lonely but were now anxious and worried about mixing again. The 'zoom group' met in a garden after finding out about Community Setup Grants – a government initiative to bring communities together once again. With the support of The Village Hall Committee and St Andrew's Church and obtaining the grant we set about planning a group open to all.

CAMEO was born!

Come And Meet Each Other

Since 2022 we have grown and now have more than 50 people coming to join us for coffee, cake and a chat. We meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month at our village hall. Our group is run by volunteers who sign up on the rota to bake or setup and serve.

Cameo is a not-for-profit group – there is no membership fee, people attending are asked to donate towards the cost of the refreshments. Any surplus money is donated to nominated charities and disaster funds.

By the end of 2026 we will have donated more than £2,000 supporting:

St Margaret's Hospice, The Children's Society, The Salvation Army food bank, Crisis, The Yew Tree, Winston's Wish, Tear Fund, Earthquake disaster, Ukraine, Air Ambulance, Heads Up - dementia.

Everyone is welcome at Cameo, please drop in and enjoy good company, proper coffee, delicious cake and chat.

Julie Gordon St Andrew's

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SWCD Book Group

The Book Group meets six times a year. We are a small friendly group, welcoming newcomers to join us at any or all of our sessions. We read a range of books, of different types, some very short, others a little longer such as The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver which we will be discussing on Tuesday October 6th at 11 am at the Mission Church. Discussions are wide ranging and lively with a range of opinions and reactions. We are gathering ideas of what to read in 2027. If you have any suggestions, please let me know. The book we are reading and date of our next meeting is usually advertised in Lifeline.

Susan Ripley, Street Parish

My Faith Journey

I was born into a stable and loving family. Mum and Dad plus two older brothers and a sister. At the end of my first year at secondary school, things became very different. My mum became very ill, following lots of hospital stays for mum, within a short time she passed away at home. This rocked my world, especially as almost at the same time my sister and brother left home and married their partners. It was now just me and dad. I had lots of time unsupervised where I could do whatever I liked. I took advantage of that and was quite a rebellious teenager.

Dad met Anita, and when I was 16, he married her. I was a problem for his new relationship. I had lots of girlfriends and to escape the uneasiness of homelife I married early, at just 19. At 21, with no faith, I was just living. A few years later my marriage became unsustainable and ended. My life was falling apart even more.

I had met another woman and although it was an erratic relationship, I had a daughter with her. When I was in my mid-thirties, still doing well in my profession as a computer engineer, my home life was a mess. Without going into too much detail, in 1984 at work I had a breakdown and was unable to function. Shortly after this, I attempted to take my own life by overdose. I was that distraught. I tried to keep going, my job especially, but I kept slipping back into severe depression. I was in battle with both my circumstances and myself. I had no backup plan, nothing to keep my life balance. I was without hope. I began to plot my escape from what I believed was a hopeless situation. I had a few options in my head and was just waiting for the right time.

I was just existing, still working but to no end. I hated my life and myself. At Christmas 1994, I was living in a bedsit in a shared house. All the other housemates had gone 'home' for the Christmas break; I was alone and miserable.

I knew some Christians. Just before that Christmas period I had written a letter to one of them. I saw such a change in them, and it seemed to me that they glowed, and have a light within them. How wonderful it was for them, but not for me.

Somehow, I got through that Christmas. I was using alcohol to anaesthetise myself over that week and into the new year. My plan was to keep drinking. New Year Eve, the party was in full swing. Something was wrong; my plan wasn't working. I had to leave, was this end for me and put an end to my torment? I left the party. To my surprise I got back to my bedsit and unusually I slept without my alcoholic sedative.

Next morning was New Years Day, a Sunday, I found myself in a church. I had been in that building before, if only to vote as it had been a polling station. I read the information board outside and saw there was service at 10am. Just a little I found myself walking in. There was a guy at the door, he reminded me of Bluto, from the Popeye comics. I didn't know what I was doing. Bluto approached me, gave me a very firm handshake and a bearhug! "It's good to see you" he said.

While still on 'autopilot' someone placed a pile of stuff in my hands, a Bible, a hymn book, a service sheet and a news sheet. I had no idea what for. I sat down at the back, with no clue of what

was going on. The service began with instructions to stand up, sit down, repeat after me... What was I doing here? I had nowhere else to go so I endured it. I don't recall anything that was said or anything from the hymns or readings, nothing! One thing that I did absorb was the church 'motto' which was emblazoned across the front of the church. It read 'To walk in the light of Jesus and share it with others'.

The light of Jesus? Could this be a real thing? Is that what I could see in the people I knew to be Christians?

One man came up to me at the end of the service and dragged me, in a gentle way, to the front of the church and introduced me to the vicar. I was by then confused, probably a dribbling and

tearful idiot. The vicar said to me, "I hope that you find the answers to your problems in Jesus" My reply was truthful but brutal, "I don't think so, mate." The only other thing that I recall was a notice given of service in a 'sister' church later that day where there was some adult full immersion baptisms.

Sometime before all this, I had been invited to my friend's baptism but was unable or unwilling to go it. I was curious as to how this worked.

That evening, at the other church I was welcomed by a few faces I had seen earlier. The service was more relaxed and I quite enjoyed it. Watching the baptisms was amazing, and I pictured my friend when they had been baptised.

Back in the bedsit, I needed to do something, but what? For the first time in my life I called out, irreverently. "God, if you are real, show me, because if you are not, I have no reason to live." I cannot say, let alone prove it and I don't know if I slept and dreamt it or whether it was a vision, but it was real and vivid to me. Jesus came to me, I saw him, and I was filled with a peace that I cannot describe. This was a new beginning for me, a new start.

*In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope, without light
Till from heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes*

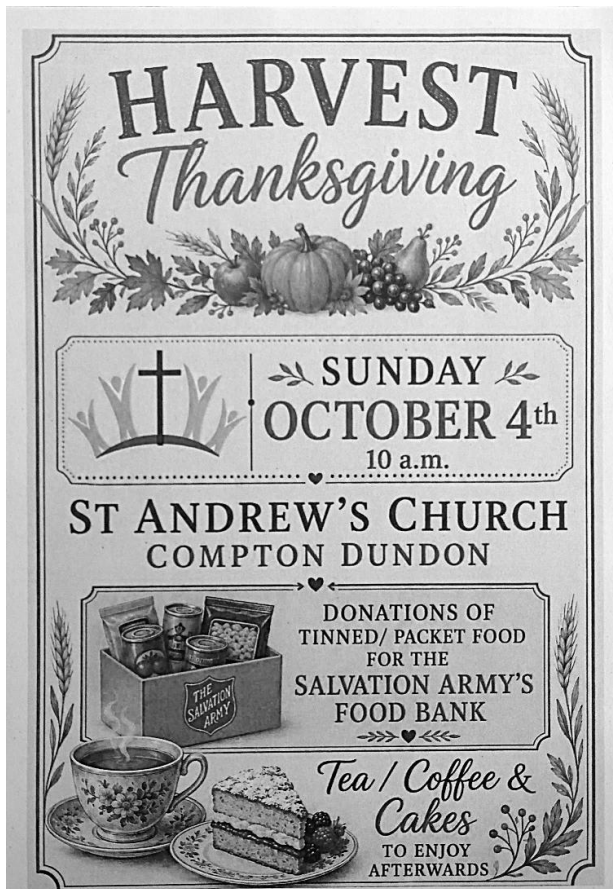
Words from the song; King of Kings by Brooke Ligertwood

The next day, I got hold of a bible, I couldn't put it down; such was my hunger to know Jesus. At 'my church' I felt so loved and I was treated like a full member of the church family. I talked to anyone and everyone about Jesus, who had come to me and loved me. People within the church told me I was an evangelist. I didn't know what that was.

The church was supportive and gave me opportunities to speak in the church about my 'Road to Damascus' conversion. Within just a few months I knew that I was 'called' to serve the church in some way. Soon, I applied to train with Church Army. This happened and Chris and I, now married, moved to Sheffield where I trained full time as an evangelist. I was commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2001.

This is a very brief part of my faith journey, if anyone would like to hear more, I am always happy to share more of what Jesus has done for me. Andy Falconbridge. (Mission Church).

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New Wine

A number of us from across all our churches went to New Wine at the Bath and West showground this summer.

14,000 Christians, including thousands of children and young people, from around the country, gathering together to worship, learn and enjoy each other's company, and all on our doorstep!

The showground was transformed into a giant campsite for the Festival, but for those of us who are lucky enough to be local we also have the option to travel in by the day or evening, if you prefer the comfort of your own bed!

A few testimonies from the week:

We visited on 2 evenings and 1 day this year. I always feel at home at New Wine, God's love is all around and people are friendly. As always, worshipping in the Big Top was full of joy! Relaxing after hours with hot chocolate and taking in the fun atmosphere of table top games and nighttime fairground was really enjoyable! Julie Day, Mission Church

I particularly valued the teaching and worship at the early morning Chapel Communion where hundreds gathered for a simple service in a tent. Two words from a sermon there about the raising of Lazarus have especially stuck with me, 'but Lord,' said by Martha while thinking of all the practical reasons why Jesus shouldn't do what he does, but Jesus does it anyway. Kevin Lawrence, Mission Church.

For me one of the sublime moments this year was during the evening celebration in the Big Top. When the band stopped playing mid song, I was surrounded by thousands of people

singing, yet we were praising the Lord with one heart and one voice. Pat King, Compton Dundon

Next year's New Wine runs from 28th July to 2nd August 2027 and bookings are already open. We would love to see a group from across our churches and across the generations there next year and if you want to know more please contact the Church office.

Kevin Lawrence, Mission Church

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Parish Giving Scheme

If you are a regular giver to our church but find it a bit of a pain to remember to regularly review your giving each year, then can I recommend the Parish Giving Scheme.

The scheme allows you to automatically increase your giving each year in line with inflation, whilst giving you an 'opt out' in advance each year, if that is not possible for whatever reason. This might be particularly helpful if you are on a state pension which increases by at least the amount of inflation each year. If you are also a taxpayer, gift aid is automatically collected and paid to the church, making the job of our Treasurers easier.

Sign up is simple and you can find more details via our church website, <https://swcd-churches.org.uk/> and go to the 'give to us' option.

Kevin Lawrence

Alpha

I am thrilled that we will be running another Alpha Course starting on Tuesday evening, 29th September in the Mission Church, Street.

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 leave your name with Sonia in the benefice office.

If you would like more information to share with family and friends you can find this on our website or Facebook or please contact the Church office. Ana Lawrence

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Congratulations



To Jenny and David Collins on the birth of their first Grandchild.

Their daughter Phoebe recently gave birth to a boy, (No name as yet), and we congratulate the proud parents, Phoebe Collins and Caleb Hill. Roger.



HARVEST

Thanksgiving



SUNDAY
OCTOBER 4th
10 a.m.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
COMPTON DUNDON



DONATIONS OF
TINNED/ PACKET FOOD
FOR THE
SALVATION ARMY'S
FOOD BANK



Tea / Coffee &
Cakes
TO ENJOY
AFTERWARDS

Robert George Lampert 'Bob'

The tenor bell at Street parish church was tolled for 5 minutes prior to the funeral service of Bob Lampert on 19th August 2026. Bob was born in Compton Dundon on 9th January 1930 but his family later moved to Butleigh where he attended the village school. His parents were not regular church goers but Bob and his four siblings were sent to Sunday school. When Bob was 14 years old, he learned to ring the church bells. Bob did his National Service in North Africa he married Brenda in 1953 and became tower captain at Holy Trinity, Street. They had a daughter, Sarah, who was one of the many students that Bob taught to ring.

Mobility problems prevented Bob from accessing the tower in later years, He retired as tower captain in 2011 but retained a lively interest in our activities. In 2025 Bob was elected as an emeritus member of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers, after completing 71 years of membership. After the funeral service a quarter peal of 1260 changes of Grandsire Triples was rung at the parish church in 50 minutes by the following as a thanksgiving for Bob's life:

Treble Beverley Perry

2nd Margaret J Bignell

3rd Lawrence C Bignell

4th William L Hall

5th John R Dunford

6th Leslie E Perry

7th Penelope I Hooper (Conductor)

Tenor John R Schmidt

It was fitting that Bob had taught the conductor to ring. Bev Perry.

Bishop's Letter

Called to care for God's earth

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' (Genesis 1:26).

These words come from the account of creation found in Genesis Chapter 1. I'm often asked about this text. Is it true? How do I square its words with my understanding of science? Do I believe this is how the world was made?

I don't think Genesis 1 is a literal account, a description offered in the style of a David Attenborough documentary. Rather I suggest that this account is so stuffed with truth that it's hard for us to deal with. Truth that's not about factual deception but that's about meaning, purpose and value. Genesis 1 asks 'How do we understand the world?' and 'How should we live in it?'

Take for example the words 'have dominion' to be found in Genesis 1:26 given above. These words, an interpretation of the Hebrew word *radah*, have been understood very differently.

Some would say that 'have dominion', *radah*, has been understood as harsh domination, treading down, and using raw force; a justification for treating the non-human world as an expendable resource for human consumption that has led to our destruction of so much of the natural world around us.

Others suggest that the true meaning of *radah* is service and care. This sees 'have dominion' as a call not to crush, but to

protect, nurture, and provide justice. This view sees humankind invited to act as deputies for God, called to cultivate the earth responsibly while preserving its health and flourishing.

Arguments about the interpretation of a Hebrew word may seem specialist. But how we read one of the most important passages of the Bible can shape our whole world view. Service and care or domination and destruction? These differing ideas lie at the very heart of the arguments we have about how humankind should

treat our earthly home that God has gifted us. What steps will we take, however small, to protect it?

Michael
Beasley, Bishop
of Bath and
Wells



New Film, 'David' in cinemas now

A new animated film, telling the story of David is due for release in cinemas in the UK from 21st August.

Whether you want to go along yourself or take your children / grandchildren / wider family, it's a great opportunity to share one of the great Bible stories in a 'high budget' retelling. A few details below.

Following its global success, the film has grossed nearly \$88 million worldwide, making it Angel Studios' biggest-ever opening. Now audiences on this side of the pond will finally have the chance to experience this breathtaking animated retelling of one of the Bible's most beloved stories.

Featuring the iconic voice of Phil Wickham, alongside Lauren Daigle, Asim Chaudhry, and Brandon Engman, DAVID follows the remarkable journey of the young shepherd whose faith and courage lead him to become king.

Kevin Lawrence

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Urgent Please

Are you someone qualified in electrical repairs or know someone who is? Can you spare 2 hours a month to help keep electrical goods out of landfill? Street Repair Cafe would love you to join our friendly team. For more details,

please email streetrepaircafe@gmail.com

Kay Savage (Mission Church).

Pudding Party

On a sunny Sunday summers afternoon, we gathered as family from across the benefice in the Rectory garden for the pudding party.

Seeking shade and being entertained by live music from 'Bumpy Road' we enjoyed puddings, cool drinks and good company.

As the church family it's great to 'do life' together as well as doing Sunday worship together and thank you so much to all of you who came and made the afternoon such a joyful occasion.

Please see the photo to get a flavour of the event.

Ana Lawrence



swcd-churches.org.uk

Connections@theMission
Thursday 17th September
2-30pm till 4pm
Mission Church Street

Come Along for a CRAFT AFTERNOON
with Jenny Collins
(Street)



There will be
a cuppa and cake



Celebrate@6

We continue our 'God@work' theme at our September Celebrate@6, when we are delighted to welcome Hopestream, the local Christian worship band, who will be sharing what God@work means to them and leading us in sung worship.

Celebrate@6 is our monthly evening service on the 3rd Sunday of each month from 6pm in the Mission Church. An informal service of worship, teaching and ministry, it is open to all across our benefice and indeed all local Christians and churches.

Even if you've never been before why not give it a go?

Ana Lawrence

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Baptisms

It's been exciting to talk to a number of people who are exploring being baptised, either as a young person or an adult, in the next few months.

In the Anglican church we not only baptise infants as a symbol of their entry into the Christian family, but we also count it a privilege to baptise those who are older and want to make that public commitment to Christ for themselves.

Watch this space for details of upcoming baptisms and if that's something that you would like to explore further for yourself (however old you are!) please contact the church office.

Ana Lawrence

MacMillan Coffee Morning Sept 24th. 10.30 - 12.00.

The kit has arrived and we are planning this charity event for this special cause. If you can, pop over to Walton Church for coffee, delicious cake and maybe a few table top games. Help us in our support and have some fun at the same time

The Village Fun Day

We have enjoyed a wonderful summer although we need some rain, but we hope it doesn't come on the day of the Village Fun Day. This is such a good day and helps towards keeping our hall and playing field in good condition. There will be lots to do and see through the day ending with a firework display. The Church will be there throughout the day so do come along to see us and enjoy music, car boots side stalls, Cirque De Silk along with other things. There is parking on site at £3 but try to walk if possible.

Harvest at Walton

Our Harvest weekend starts with supper in the village hall at 7.00. There will be music and good company while you enjoy your supper. Tickets are available from Andy Savage 07563372107 and Sandra Gristock 07435567903 or 01458 741363.

Operation Christmas Child.

As soon as our Harvests are over, we will be filling shoe boxes that will be sent anywhere in the world, to bring joy and love to many children who might receive nothing else. Help us tell them that Jesus loves them by filling a box, donating a little to help us fill boxes or donating £5 which will cover delivery. Boxes and leaflets will be available in all our churches.

Sandra Gristock. Walton Church.

Season of Creation

There were several topics I could have written about this month; they all lead to the conclusion that we, as Christians, should think about what we are doing to creation. Recent media reports have been full of stories of wildfires, flooding and earthquakes all pointing to a need, like the wise bridesmaids, to be prepared (*Matthew 25:1-13*). Many of these events point to a climate catastrophe.

New Wine Eco Zone

The Eco Zone stall at New Wine displayed a different statement each day with the options of answering: Agree, Disagree, or Not Sure by dropping a token in a jar. On the day I attended the statement was: 'My individual actions can make a difference to climate change'. At the time I visited the stall more people had answered 'Agree'.

The statements on other days were:

- The Bible doesn't say anything about climate change.
- Creation care is a distraction from the gospel.
- Calling for Government action on climate change is more important than personal actions.
- Loving your neighbour must include climate action, do you agree?
- If Jesus was here today, he would be talking about caring for creation

How would you respond to each of these statements? Why not ask others how they would respond.

Individual Responsibility

There are popular stories and sayings supporting the view that individual, even insignificant acts, are important: the man who

planted trees, the boy who threw stranded starfish back into the sea, 'take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves'. As a church we are making changes, each change in itself may be small but they all add up. One thing that helps us is completing the Church of England's Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) each year. This could just be seen as a piece of boring paperwork but it enables us to see our annual energy consumption and compare it with previous years helping us to be more energy conscious for both ecological and financial reasons.

Season of Creation 2026

This year's symbol is a church surrounded by water. The call is for transformation - that Christians would be immersed in the living water flowing from the throne of God - stepping in deeper and deeper, inspired by the Spirit of God, working together for the renewal of Creation. Every act of care for creation becomes part of a global stream of hope. (*Church of England website*)

So what change will you make in your life to better care for the world and its inhabitants? If you don't know the effects of your everyday activities visit the climatestewards.org website to calculate your personal carbon footprint and get ideas on how to reduce it. Alternatively read 'How bad are bananas? the carbon footprint of everything' by Mike Berners-Lee (copies available to borrow from the library) and see what changes you could make. Let me know what you discover.

Susan Ripley (Street Parish)
SWCD Eco Church Group



Benefice Women's Breakfast

Date – Saturday 10th October 2026

Time – 9.30am

Place – The Parish Church, Street

This is an invitation to all the Women in the Benefice to come along to the breakfast, plus any friends or family you would like to bring along with you.

We have a lovely time together as we enjoy a buffet style breakfast that usually consists of fruit, yoghurt, cereal, bread rolls, meats, cheeses and croissants. There will also be tea, coffee and fruit juice. We chat together over our breakfast and then listen to a short thought for the day or a testimony. Pat has kindly offered to share 'A thought for the Day' with us at this next breakfast.

We look forward to seeing as many of you that can come along and join us. Please let us know beforehand of any special dietary issues or allergies so that we can cater for you. Please contact either Pat King (St Andrew's Church, Compton Dundon) on 07891 260471, Sandra Gristock (Holy Trinity Church, Walton) on 07435 567903 or Linda Clark (Mission Church) on 07964 094964 with regard to this or with any other queries.

There is no need to book a place, just turn up.

There is a suggested voluntary donation of £3.00.

Pat King, Sandra Gristock and Linda Clark

Messy Church

Over the last few years, we have run 'Messy Church' regularly in Holy Trinity Walton and we've written the below for the Walton village News this summer. However, there may well be people in your families and networks who you would like to invite to a Messy Church, but who are unsure of exactly what goes on at a typical Messy Church. We hope this explanation will help you tell them more and encourage them to come along.

You may have seen adverts for 'Messy Church' in Holy Trinity and wondered what that was all about.

'Messy Church' runs in thousands of churches across the country. Don't be mis-led by the name into thinking it's a traditional service, far from it! Designed for primary school aged children and their families, it combines games, songs, stories, craft and food, often focussing on major Christian festivals. Our next 'Messy Church' will have a harvest theme.

The good news is that it's absolutely free and open to all, even if you wouldn't say you're a 'church-going family.' Why not look out for the next Messy Church and give it a go?

Ana Lawrence

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Youth Hub and Bible Hub

Planning is underway to launch the new and improved Youth and Bible Hubs. There will be lots of fun, great food, and, most importantly, time to build relationships. At Bible Hub on Monday 7th September, we will start our journey through the book of Matthew, with fun and games at Youth Hub on alternate weeks. Please invite your young people to come along. They will receive a warm welcome.

Helpers needed: if anyone would be able to cook a meal for us, please let Polly know. Thank you!

Polly Axford-Checkley - Mission Church.

God's Economics for Tough Times

‘... DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW ...’

Matthew 6:34 NKJV

Fear makes us react emotionally, doing all the wrong things. We abandon the principles of Scripture and grab for all we can get, withholding and hoarding in case things get worse. Don't surrender to the fears rampant in our increasingly godless culture. Instead, faithfully follow God's economics for tough times.

When Israel did this they enjoyed mega harvests. But when they withheld and hoarded what God provided, He said, "You are under a curse – the whole nation of you ..." (Malachi 3:9 NIV). Whether they experienced abundance or lack, depended on their attitude and actions towards God's economics. His principles required they "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse ..." not a partial tithe (v.10). If they'd 'Honour the Lord with ... the firstfruits of all [their] crops' their barns would 'overflow' and their vats 'brim over' (Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV).

Jesus taught that if you "give it will be given to you ..." in an abundance determined by the "... measure you use ..." when giving (see Luke 6:38 NIV). You, not the economy, determine the measure of your harvest by the measure of the seed you sow. The Bible says, '... He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6 NKJV).

The way it works in God's economy is, those who '...withhold unduly ... come to poverty,' while those who '... give freely ... gain even more ...' God promises, 'A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed') Proverbs 11:24-25 NIV). Try it. God's principles work in any economy!

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



