
Week ending 1 February 2025

Connect

The bulletin for clergy, lay leaders and all who are the Church in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Churches across Bath and Wells are marking Lent in lots of different ways

Growing Good for Lent 2025

The Growing Good Toolkit is a free resource produced by the Church Urban Fund that equips churches answer Jesus' call to love our neighbour by making a difference in our communities. Each session is stand alone, ready to use and can be lay led. Suitable to use in all contexts, the Toolkit encourages us to deepen our discipleship, grow our churches and transform our communities.

More information about the Toolkit and sign up [is available on the Church Urban Fund website](#) or please contact: claire.horton@bathwells.anglican.org

The Revd Eleanor King, Rector Quantock Villages Benefice, shares her story of using the Growing Good Toolkit in Somerset



Lent Cross Challenge 2025

This Lent The Go Team are encouraging churches, schools, families and individuals to join the Lent Cross Challenge. The challenge is a simple daily focus in the 40 days leading up to Easter aimed at keeping the cross at the heart of Lent.

The challenge is to spot, find, discover, make, bake or create a cross each day during Lent. A [Lent Cross Challenge 2025 guide](#), produced by the Go Team, has some great ideas about where you might find a cross or how to make one, as well as offering a short Bible reading that points towards the cross.

[Find out more about the challenge](#) and how you can share your pictures.



LIVING HOPE



Living Hope

The Church of England's Lent theme for 2025 is [Living Hope](#). Resources for churches will include:

- Booklets for adults, children and families
- Logos and design guidelines so you can use the theme in your designs.
- Downloadable resources including activity sheets for children, social media graphics, flyer, poster and PowerPoint templates which are available on [AChurchNearYou.com](#).
- Lent reflections content outline to help you plan services and small group content.

A Webinar: explaining more about the Living Hope Resources for Lent and Easter
Wednesday 5 February,
3pm - 4pm. [Find out more and register.](#)

Prayers for Africa

[Ripple Effect](#) is asking church communities to pray for families in rural Africa living on the frontline of the climate crisis this Lent.

Last year, the six countries where Ripple Effect works experienced erratic weather events. Many were affected by heavy rainfall, Ethiopia and Zambia also faced drought.

[Resources](#) to set up a prayer station or host a Lent lunch are available to download, including a video of Sustainability Manager Meshark Sikiku, speaking about the challenges.

You are also invited to [join a virtual prayer meeting](#) on Wednesday 5 March, 9.15-10am. Please get in touch with ann.hatton@rippleeffect.org if you would like any further information



Bishop Michael: Safeguarding update

Bishop Michael shares his thoughts on safeguarding in Bath and Wells and the wider church. You can read [Bishop Michael's update in full on the diocesan website.](#)

Join the welcome service for Bishop Ruth



We are looking forward to welcoming Bishop Ruth back to the diocese next week, following her secondment to Coventry Diocese. She will be back at her desk from Monday, 3 February but there will also be a welcome service on Sunday 2 February at the 3pm Candlemas Eucharist at Wells Cathedral, which is open to all.



Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme is the mechanism that has enabled places of worship to apply for a VAT refund or grant for monies spent upon fabric repairs, professional fees, and purchases.

We have been told that the Scheme will run for another year, from March 25 to March 26 but will be capped. The cap is £25,000 per listed place of worship and £23 million for the entire country. This compares to £29 million last year. This means that large projects or churches that are undergoing phased repairs that are more than £125,000, will not achieve full VAT refund and will therefore be required to pay the shortfall.

The continuation of the scheme is as a direct result of local MP involvement. Letters forwarded to the government from parishes and church members came to around 3,000 individual petitions. Thank you to everyone that wrote a letter, contacted their MP, and showed interest.

Actions

- Keep the pressure on with letters
- Check your budgets for planned expenditure to check that the £25,000 figure is managed to ensure that the churches that we care for are operating a tax efficient spending regime
- Those churches that are planning, or are underway, on high value projects, look for savings within the project that are not essential and to cut back the scheme to enable the VAT to be managed by the scheme and not your church resource.



Racial Justice Sunday 9 February 2025

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday (RJS) which was established in response to the murder of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence in southeast London in April 1993.

This year's theme, 'Coat of Many Colours', is designed to help us reflect on the increasing diversity that exists in the churches in Britain and Ireland. It offers an opportunity for all Christians to join together in:

- Reflecting on the importance of racial justice
- Thanksgiving for human diversity
- Prayer for an end to misunderstanding, racism and injustice
- Action that truly makes a difference
- Fundraising for national and local racial justice initiatives

[Resources for churches are available to download.](#)

School Leaders and Parish Partners conference

The 2025 School Leaders and Parish Partners Conference, is about Creating Welcoming Communities. Whether you are connected to a church or non-church school, you can come to the 2025 conference, together with your headteacher, to explore how as communities we might bring about real long-lasting change in relation to racial justice.

The day will include interactive key notes from three exciting speakers Revd Anjali Kanagaratnam, Emily Norman and Elizabeth Olulari. The afternoon will provide an opportunity to join a workshop and reflect with your school leader. Bishop Michael will also be joining us each day. Below Stephen Webber Headteacher of All Saints CofE Primary School, Clevedon shares his experience of joining the conference.

You can find more information and booking details on the Bath and Wells website:

[Booking for 20 March 2025](#)

[Booking for 21 March 2025](#)



A new Young Leaders Learning Hub

A second Young Leaders Learning Hub is to start in the Taunton area on 24 February. Run in partnership with [Movement](#), the Hub will meet monthly on Monday nights, 7-9pm at St Luke's Hub Cafe in Cotford St Luke.

The Hub is open to 15-25 year olds serving in their church or community, who would like to develop leadership skills and how they live out their faith as they serve others. The Bath Hub continues monthly on Wednesday evenings at All Saints Church, Weston.

Please do share with young people/young adults you know who may be interested. More details and dates of sessions at both Hubs can be found on [the Movement website](#).



Lent and Easter Ideas Chats

Tuesday 25 February 2025 19:30-20:30

Wednesday 26 February 2025 10:30 -11:30

Hosted by the Go Team on Zoom, the ideas chats are about all things Easter and Lent. The team will be launching the Lent Cross Challenge for churches, schools and families at home; and showcasing some of the best resources available for churches to use with children, young people and families of all ages, plus there will be a surprise special guest or two!

[Book now to join the online conversation](#)



Energy Footprint Tool is now open

The EFT, a carbon footprint calculator from the national Church, reopened on 6 January. Last year, 60% of our churches filled it in, providing valuable data for understanding our emissions. It's quick and easy—all you need are your 2024 energy bills! Completing it can lead to benefits like free energy audits, grant funding, and a personalised carbon footprint certificate. Sign in to [Parish Returns](#) and fill in the EFT, head to our [website](#) for a tutorial, or contact [Dan Wills, Bath and Wells Net Zero Enabler](#).

Environmental Network Meeting

Monday 19 February Wells 10.30

For members of our church communities, external organisations, and anyone passionate about the environment. This is a space to share ideas, explore technical solutions, discuss funding opportunities, and build networks so we can work together to take care of God's earth. Whether you're already taking action or looking for inspiration, come along and be part of the conversation. [Register online](#)



Celebrating lay ministry in Bath and Wells

Will you be joining us this year at Wells Cathedral on 14 June to celebrate and give thanks for all that lay people give to the life of the church and to their community, as we come together to acknowledge the ways we witness God moving and working among us. [Find out more about the celebration](#), how you can join in and register to come along.

This month we say farewell to the Revd Jill Perrett who many of you will know through the Celebration of Lay Ministry. Jill has served in the diocese for over five years and has made a significant contribution in support of Lay Ministry Training both within the diocese and as part of national networks. Her hard work in setting up this year's celebration means plans are already well underway at Wells Cathedral for Saturday 14 June.



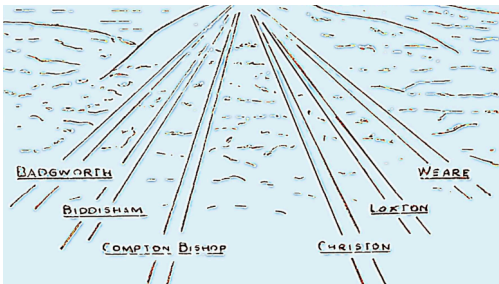
Appointing a new Archbishop of Canterbury

Stephen Knott, The Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments, has written to members of General Synod to confirm expected timings for the process of nominating the next Archbishop of Canterbury. You can [read the letter in full on the Church of England website](#). There is also information on the timeline and sequence of events concerning the appointment and CNC process on a [dedicated page on the Church of England website](#)

In Brief

- Clergy are invited to attend a clergy well-being day to be held at Flourish House, Wells on Thursday 13 March. Places are limited, so [please register via the online form](#) prior to 6 March. [Further details can be found here on our website](#).
- Sarum College is seeking a theological educator with a heart for forming future leaders in ordained and lay ministries. The position is Tutor in Contextual Learning. The deadline for applications is 12noon Monday 24 February 2025. Full details, including how to arrange an informal conversation, [are available on the college website](#).
- [Wells Cathedral Grand Organ Appeal](#) has reached £1m. The Friends' Grand Organ Appeal aims to raise at least £2m for the refurbishment and renovation of the Cathedral's Organ. The project will see the Organ dismantled, rebuilt and augmented.

If you have news to share, tag us on your social media channel or [email the Communications team](#).



Crook Peak United Parish Celebrates 40 Years

A month of exciting events have been planned to celebrate 40 Years of Crook Peak United Parish.



Supporting those in need in our communities

Flooding in Ilminster, following last week's storms damaged many people's properties and left other residents unable to reach their homes. In response the Minster, Ilminster,

In 1985 a single parish was formed to unite the 6 churches of Badgworth, Biddisham, Christon, Compton Bishop, Loxton and Weare to become Crook Peak Parish. 4 decades on they are celebrating 40 years together with events including history talks, concerts, tower tours, a quiz and a teddy bear parachute jump. All events are free, with donations going to support six charities, including Water Aid, Christians Against Poverty, and Cheddar Foodbank.

The celebrations will culminate on Sunday 2 March, with a Communion service led by Bishop Michael. [Find out more in the special edition of Contact](#), the Crook Peak Parish Community Magazine.

reached out offering those in need a warm welcome and a dry, safe place to gather until the water receded.

The Minster has an online [Parish Emergency Fund](#) to help local residents bounce back after incidents such as the latest floods.

Members of the church community worked alongside other volunteers in the Minster Rooms to support a number of individuals who had to be evacuated from their homes.



Holocaust Commemoration

The Revd Tom Yacomeni, Rector Weston All Saints Church, and the Revd Fran Youngs, Associate Minister, Grace Church, Bath, were among a group of speakers who attended a special event held in Bath to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day.

HMD 2025 was particularly significant this year as it marked 80 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and 30 years since the genocide in Bosnia.

The event in Bath was organised by the Bath and North East Somerset Faith Foundation. Local religious and political leaders were invited to the Weston Free Church to reflect on the Holocaust and what lessons we can all learn – collectively – for the future.

Those speaking at the event were invited to share what they are doing to bring people



Celebrating 20 years of service

A special church service was held in Peasedown St John to celebrate 20 years of service for Revd Matthew Street.

Matthew, along with his wife Jane, moved to Peasedown two decades ago to take up the post of 'rector' or 'priest-in-charge' at St John's Church.

As well as St John's in Peasedown, he is also the vicar of St Julian's in Wellow, St James' in Foxcote and St Julian's in Shoscombe.

At the service parishioners, local residents and civic leaders gathered together to give thanks for Matthew and Jane's 20 years of devotion to the community.

Nigel Vening is one of the church wardens at St John's Church in Peasedown. He said, "We're incredibly grateful for Matthew and Jane's 20 years of support, encouragement, leadership



Environmental fashion show

Revd Gill Sakikini, Pioneer Priest for the Arts in Shepton Mallet, is to take to the catwalk this month as part of a wearable art fashion show during the town's [Snowdrop Festival](#). The fashion show, which takes place at St Paul's Church of England Junior School, has a strong emphasis on upcycling, recycling and using natural materials. The theme is nature or snowdrops and follows the theme of the Festival which for 2025 is 'Treasures of Nature'.

The theme Gill has chosen is the winter tree landscape. She has upcycled a clergy dress. Using bleach as a painting tool, Gill has etched the shape of a tree across the front, with roots and branches extending across the fabric. The outfit is completed with black leggings featuring root-like designs and a headpiece made of twigs.

together, to combat division and discrimination and to promote peace in our local communities.

and friendship. We couldn't let this milestone pass without saying a special thank you and coming together, in prayer, to mark their years of service."

Gill says, "This links into much of the work I undertake through Flock, an eco-arts initiative that last year led a festival focused on environmental responsibility in Shepton Mallet."

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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