

Week ending 1 March 2025

Connect

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



Bishop Ruth to become interim Bishop of Liverpool

Downing Street has announced today 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.

[Read the announcement in full](#) A video message from the bishops is available below.



Ash Wednesday in Wells Market Square

Ash Wednesday offers an invitation to pause reflect and turn our hearts toward God. This year, Bishop Michael will once again be in Wells Market Square to offer the sign of the cross to those who are visiting the market. This took place for the first time last year and saw people of all ages and walks of life stop in the midst of their day to receive the simple sign of faith.

This Ash Wednesday, once again people will be invited to come forward to receive ashes, to pray or simply to witness a moment of faith. They will be offered the opportunity to receive the cross on their forehead, their hand or they will have the chance to take away a small card with a prayer on as a reminder of God's presence.



The Lent Cross Challenge

Will you be taking part in the Lent Cross Challenge?

Join others in the diocese from churches, schools and families, who will, in the 40 days leading up to Easter, be joining in the simple daily focus which is all about keeping the cross at the heart of Lent.

All you have to do is make a cross - see it, stick it, bend it, make it, shape it, bake it, draw it - then take a photo and share your design.

[Find out how you can get involved.](#)

Growing Good during Lent

Want to make a difference in your community, grow your church and deepen discipleship? Then the Growing Good Toolkit can help!

The Growing Good Toolkit is a free six session resource which helps churches answer Jesus' call to love our neighbour, by exploring the connection between social action, discipleship and church growth. The Toolkit can be used in both rural and urban contexts and at any time of the year. As there are six stand alone sessions available, ready to download and ready to use, why not consider the Toolkit for Lent? [Learn more about the Toolkit.](#)



Join the wave of change in rural Africa

This Lent, join Ripple Effect in praying for families living on the frontline of the climate crisis. The [Ripple Effect](#)



Climate Justice & Discipleship

Following Jesus, responding to the climate and ecological emergency, and renewing our faith and discipleship aren't rival



Living Hope - Resources for Lent

The Church of England's Lent theme for 2025 is Living Hope.

Living Hope offers the opportunity to deepen our hope in God and be part

team invite you to join their virtual prayer meeting on Wednesday 5 March, 9.15-10am. [Register online.](#) Or you can [download everything you need](#) to set up a prayer station in your church or host a Lent lunch.

projects. For Lent 2025, you can join others in the Diocese of London for an online Lent journey beginning on 11 March. [Register on Eventbrite.](#) Sessions will also be recorded.

of what God is doing to bring hope in the world.

[Find out more about the Living Hope.](#)



Conclusion of Makin Review four-step process

The National Safeguarding Team has announced the conclusion of the work to review all clergy under the authority or oversight of the Church of England who are criticised in the [Makin review](#), published in November. The review was commissioned to look at the Church's handling of the allegations of the horrendous abuse by the late John Smyth.

This has been a rigorous and independent process to look at whether those named present any immediate risk, and consider whether there is a case for disciplinary proceedings for clergy, under the Clergy Discipline Measure. This has been undertaken in line with the [process announced in December](#) with recommendations of an independent panel and reviewed by an independent barrister. [Read more.](#)

Safeguarding courses

Safeguarding Leadership

- Wed 2 and Wed 9 April online (zoom) morning 10:00 - 11:30 am
- Wed 2 and Wed 9 April online (zoom) evening 7:00 - 8:30 pm
- Wed 7 and Wed 14 May online (zoom) afternoon 1:00 - 2:30 pm
- Wed 7 and Wed 14 May online (zoom) evening 7:00 - 8:30 pm
- Thu 8 and Thu 15 May in-person at Flourish House 10:00am - 12:00 pm

Safeguarding Leadership for PTOs

A one-session tailored course for those with PTO, who have only occasional ministry in church.

- Wed 19 March online (zoom) 10:30am – 12pm and 1:00 - :30pm

Other courses

PSO Induction/Networking

- Wed 12 March in-person (Flourish House) 10:00am - 1:00pm

[More information about courses is available on the safeguarding training pages of the diocesan website.](#)



Clergy meet to talk church money matters

Over 70 clergy attended the first of this year's Church Money Matters gatherings at Flourish House, Wells on 26 February.

The session was designed to give clergy the opportunity to reflect on the fundraising challenge within our churches, draw on experience from across Bath and Wells, and together explore some of the ways in which their future sustainability can be secured.

[Find out more about the day, and the forthcoming Church Money Matters sessions](#) planned across Bath and Wells for others concerned with church finances, including treasurers and fundraisers.



Healing Forum



Save the date!

We will be holding a Healing Forum on Wednesday 30 April, 2:00 - 4:00pm on Zoom. This will be about encouraging a healthy culture and how we assist those caught up in domestic abuse. The speaker will be the Revd Lucy Davies.

[Register for a place on the April Healing Forum.](#)

Contact [Sue Whitehead](#) for further information about our healing events and how we can support you.

This year's Celebration of Lay Ministry takes place at Wells Cathedral on 14 June. Everyone is invited to join in giving thanks for all that lay people give to the life of the church and to their community. The Celebration of Lay Ministries is an opportunity to give thanks for their gifts and ministries, acknowledging the ways we witness God moving and working among us.

[Sign up now to join the celebration.](#)



New members for Bishop's Council

This week's Bishop's Council, which took place on Tuesday, 24 February, saw a number of new faces in the room. It was the first session for new Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), Elizabeth Renshaw-Ames, as well as 4 new members.

Members of council, both those new to council and those already serving, attended an induction session in the morning, where their role as charity trustees of the DBF was fully explored, before the council session in the afternoon.

The new members are: Mike Hodson, Kathryn Tucker, Kevin Lawrence, Rona Stuart-Bourne, Elizabeth Renshaw-Ames.

[Find out more about Bishop's Council](#)



Updated migration & asylum guidance

Migration and asylum guidance offers updated legal context, expanded practical advice and reflects recent legislative changes. Key changes include:

- More detailed guidance on baptism and conversion, emphasising discernment, long-term engagement, and pastoral care.
- Practical resources, including links to support organisations, best practices for clergy involvement, and safeguarding considerations.

[Read the document in full online](#)

Image: Ukrinform



Accommodation needed

Somerset Council has launched two schemes to provide accommodation for refugees who would otherwise face homelessness.

They are seeking landlords who can offer private arrangements for taking in a lodger or their Refugee Housing Team can help set up a formal lodging agreement.

Hosts are also needed. You can register as a potential host to be matched with a guest.

If you would like to know more please email resettlement@somerset.gov.uk or visit the [CHARIS website](#)



Join the Wilder Churches event with Bishop Michael

Wilder Churches is a partnership initiative between the diocese and Somerset Wildlife Trust. It has been encouraging communities across Somerset to take action for nature in their local churchyard since 2021.

This year, new communities are encouraged to get involved and help transform their local churchyard into a haven for wildlife. Those interested in learning more are invited to join a special online workshop on Thursday 20 March 7:00 - 8:30pm, with Bishop Michael.

Everyone is welcome – for more information, or to book your place, visit:
www.somersetwildlife.org/wilder-churches



Have you heard the new Environment podcast yet?

The first episode of Low Carbon, Higher Power is out now! Hosted by Dan Wills, Bath and Wells' Net Zero Enabler, the podcast explores climate challenges, solutions, and what Net Zero really means for churches. Special guest Bishop Michael shares insights on sustainability, his personal war on draughts, and how we can all play a role in caring for creation.

Listen now on the [Bath & Wells website](#), [Buzzsprout](#), [YouTube](#), or your favorite podcast platform.

And don't miss our next episode, coming out on March 14th, where we chat with Matt Fulford, Sustainability Expert and Director of Inspired Efficiency, about practical steps for energy efficiency and the future of Net Zero in churches.

Thy Kingdom Come 2025 - 29 May - 8 June

This year we will be celebrating the 10th year of Thy Kingdom Come! There will be all of the usual resources and videos as well as some special anniversary content. [Visit the website to keep up-to-date with all that's happening.](#)



In brief

- Special Webinar: Let's create together on Canva, Thursday 6 March, 11am - 12.30pm. A special interactive session to get familiar with the essential editing features of Canva. [Find out more and register on the Church of England website.](#)
- AChurchNearYou.com: How to use the platform as your church's free website, Wednesday 12 March, 6pm - 7.30pm. [Register now.](#)
- Families can celebrate Easter at Wells Cathedral with a treasure hunt, trail and creative crafts to make and take home. These activities are FREE with adult entry. There's no need to book – simply drop in on the day between 10:30 and 3:30. [Find out more.](#) Monday 7 April: Collect beads on Easter crosses treasure hunt and make a necklace or keyring. Wednesday 9 April: Discover the Easter story with a Cathedral map, then make an Easter garden. Friday 11 April: Follow the Easter story trail and make a card or decoration
- Somerset African Caribbean Network are hosting a talk by Lynette Evangeline Richards-Lorde who will share her journey of growing up in Guyana and then training as a nurse at Musgrove Park Hospital. Wednesday 19 March 1-3pm. [More information and booking is available from the A Place Called Home website.](#)

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



Celebrating Tractor Sunday

A church event celebrating the local farming community took place at The Bell Inn in Evercreech, as St Peter's Church held its first-ever Tractor Sunday. More than 40 people attended the service, which included a blessing of farming equipment, and included members of the family which owns a farm in the village.

The idea for the event emerged because St Peter's, being a rural parish, wanted to celebrate and give thanks for their farming community and the work they do. Michèle Hole is Churchwarden at St Peter's and helped organise the service in the local pub, "Tractor Sunday made sense because we are in a farming area—we still have one working farm in the village, and we've celebrated Rogation Sunday down on the farm with them for many years.

"Farming is a very lonely, hard thing to do. I think they find comfort in the partnership with the church. It's not about commercial gain—it's about recognising their work and showing that the church walks alongside them." [Find out more about the celebration.](#)

Snowdrop Extravaganza

The churchyard of Keinton Mandeville Church hosted a community event which brought people together for a day of nature, and conversation. The Snowdrop Extravaganza was the idea of Revd Jane Durham who had been inspired by the many snowdrops in the churchyard.

A snowdrop specialist was invited to give a talk, visitors were offered refreshments and lunch and, for a small donation, they could also buy a clump of snowdrops to plant in their own garden.

Debbie von Bergen, Treasurer of Keinton Mandeville PCC and a member of the Eco Church team, said, "We weren't just bringing people together—we were also encouraging them to engage with the churchyard and the work we're doing to improve natural habitats.

"We're a small village, and not everyone comes to church regularly. This was a chance for people to take part in a different way. Some who don't always feel comfortable at services came in, had a chat, and enjoyed the atmosphere." [Read more about the Snowdrop Extravaganza.](#)

Zambian priest visits diocese

From mid-February, Fr Collins Kampulu, the priest in Ndola North Parish, Central Diocese, Zambia, visited Bath and Wells to renew connections with link parishes, notably St Andrew's, Backwell.

Fr Collins had earlier been in Canterbury, attending the annual International Conference for seminarians and clergy, meeting colleagues from across the Anglican Communion.

During his time here, Fr Collins visited junior schools in Backwell, Flax Bourton and Taunton to refresh earlier links and discuss establishing new ones. These are important elements of Fr Collins work as he has led the project to build community schools in the grounds of two of his churches, St Andrew's and St Paul's. Much of the building work was carried out by the congregations, with substantial financial support from the Hands of Compassion charity, also based in Bath and Wells.

Fr Collins also took part in various children's activities, spoke to congregations, enjoyed community lunches and met diocesan staff.

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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