

Caring for those in care

With a background in supporting older people it is no surprise, with the challenges of 2020, that Steph Packham has felt called back to support them. Following a chat with the Revd Selina Garner in the summer, at which she shared her feelings, she was encouraged to undertake the diocesan Exploring Chaplaincy course and was appointed as Chaplain to the Elderly for St John's Church, Wellington.

Steph, who has worked as an activity co-ordinator for the elderly and as the national lead for activities at Bupa Care Homes says, "The healthcare available in care homes is amazing and



A volunteer hands Rev Selina Garner an Angel of Hope she has knitted.

activity provision is very much on the agenda, but I have felt for some time that spirituality in care homes could be developed. Whilst everyone in a Care Home plays their part in the spiritual health of the residents, having a Chaplain dedicated to this, working alongside a team of pastoral

companions, could make such a difference."

Current restrictions mean Steph can't visit them yet, but she was able to involve all six of the area's care homes in the Wellington Team's 'Angels of Hope' community project. She says, "It was a great way to introduce myself to them and all have been so keen to be involved. Steph and a team of church, school, community and Duke of Edinburgh volunteers have made over 600 angel gift bags for every care home resident.

Steph hopes she will inspire others to become Chaplains to the Elderly across Somerset. For more information email chaplaincy@bathwells.anglican.org.

News in brief

Listen in

We've launched a new podcast which features conversations exploring the places where God already is, and the church may not yet be! There will be conversation about what it means to be pioneering, and how God is leading us all in new and exciting directions.

Our first podcast features Tina Hodgett, who is Evangelism and Pioneer Team Leader in Bath and Wells, in conversation with Rachel Spence a Pioneer in Whiteway, Bath.

Find The Diocese of Bath and Wells podcast on your favourite podcast platform and listen in ■



Could you be a Hidden Voices volunteer?

Hidden Voices Somerset (HVS) is a local response to Modern Slavery and all forms of exploitation. They are looking for a range of volunteers to help victims of modern slavery and exploitation in Somerset. If you would like to find out more about the project or volunteer, email the Hidden Voices Co-ordinator: sian.owen@bathwells.anglican.org ■

Get ready to pray

Have you signed up to this month's online 'Archdeaconry Days', which will explore ways of praying, wherever and whoever we are? You can receive the resources through your inbox or your post box.

Register at: www.bathandwells.org.uk/ad-days-2021 ■

Let's 'Talk Jesus'

If your new year's resolution is to be more confident in sharing your faith, sign up for our online Talking Jesus course. It's a great way to help you to learn how to become a natural faith sharer.

Find out more at: www.bathandwells.org.uk/talking-jesus ■



One more step...

A new year message from Bishop Peter

January takes its name from the Roman god, Janus, who is usually depicted as having two faces, looking both to the future and the past. At the start of a New Year it is good to do the same. 2020 will sadly be remembered as the year disrupted by COVID-19. Cracks in our care for each other have been revealed and it has had a disproportionate effect on those already vulnerable or deprived. It showed us that those who are most essential to our needs, those who clean and serve and care, are often those valued least in our economy. However, we also saw extraordinary acts of kindness and compassion, as churches and communities worked

together to provide comfort, support, and practical care.

So, what of 2021? The temptation may be to forget what we have learnt, to paper over the cracks, ignore what has been uncomfortable and to seek comfort in the familiar. I hope we don't. 2020 opened our eyes to the harm caused when people are excluded on the basis of race, ability, gender, sexual orientation or wealth. Jesus calls us to a better way. Jesus broke the bounds of exclusion, refusing to accept the social norms and speaking to Samaritans, women, Gentiles, tax collectors and sinners. He teaches that the first shall be last and the last first. He reconciles humanity to God through his death



and resurrection.

As we look forward to 2021, we need to think again what it means to follow Christ and to build our lives and communities based on mutual love, respect and service. 'For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.' May we all know the Lord's leading and guiding as we step out into a New Year.

With my warmest greetings,

+ Peter Bathand Wells

God calls everyone

Rob Norman, Lay Dean for Portishead Deanery and Everyday Faith Coordinator shares his passion for lay ministry. Hear how you can get involved too...

What inspired your passion?

It comes from my belief that God created all of us, lay people and clergy alike, to be equal, and that we all have a part to play in God's world. Lay people live out their faith in many ways, by showing what it means to be Christian wherever they meet people - through their kindness and care for other people.

Has 2020 seen any changes to lay ministry?

People have been taking on leading roles in offering online services as well being out in the community, being part of the army of people supporting people during Covid. Online worship needs different



Rob Norman, Everyday Faith Co-ordinator

skills and gifts from the usual ones in church and it's been great to see lay people involved in this way.

How do you feel about this year's Archdeaconry Day activity being online?

Excited! Some people will be glad

not to have to brave the January weather and can watch the videos we've created at home or, if they prefer, join in offline using the booklet. I have found the stories of prayer I have heard inspiring and I can't wait to share them.

What would you say to someone thinking about taking on a lay role with their church?

Have the courage to think about how God might be calling you and perhaps talk to people who know you well about it. Then perhaps chat to one of our Chaplains for Discerning Calling, who can help you explore further.

Email jill.perrett@bathwells.anglican.org for their details.

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