

God calls... everyone, everywhere

From 6 February, everyone is invited to join in with for a week of exploring the many and varied ways in which God calls us during our lives.

The week will kick off with an online service with Bishop Ruth at 3pm on Sunday, 6 February and from Monday to Friday in the following week we will be sharing videos from local people talking about how God calls them wherever they are.

The week will close on the Saturday with on-line gatherings for people to come together to celebrate, share and reflect on what they have learnt.

Julia Hill, discipleship team leader, explains, "God has given each and



every one of us our own personal gifts. Sometimes it can feel as though God only calls 'special people' but God calls us both in our everyday lives and sometimes to particular roles.

"We hope that by sharing the stories of how people have recognised their gifts and responded to God's call to use them, it will help others reflect on

what their gifts are and how God might be calling them. And that might be as simple as telephoning a friend in need, or praying for a neighbour."

"If we look in the Bible we can see God calls a huge variety of people and you need to only look at the disciples to see that they didn't always get it right. In God's eyes, everyone is worthy of being called."

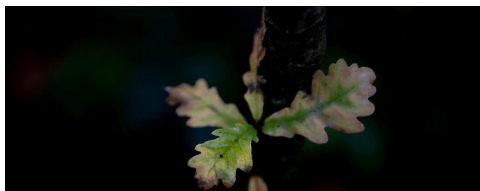
Join us in February to hear the stories from a whole range of people and perhaps be inspired yourself. To find out more about the 'God calls... everyone, everywhere' week visit: www.bathandwells.org.uk/god-calls-everyone-everywhere ■

News in brief

Preparing to welcome Afghan refugees

Many areas across the diocese of Bath and Wells are preparing to receive Afghan refugees. It's not yet known how many families will be coming, but in areas such as Bath and Weston-super-Mare, organisations are already making preparations. [Bath Welcomes Refugees](#) have put out a call out for non-perishable foods, toiletries, and cleaning products and set up three collection points.

Organisations across the diocese will also be looking for volunteers to help and support those families in need. Check your local organisations for more information. Or keep an eye on our social media channels where we will share details as we receive them. ■



Plant a tree in partnership

In November global leaders come together in Glasgow at COP26 to talk climate change. In Bath and Wells we are asking people to come together with farmers in their local area to plant trees.

Farmer and our Rural Affairs Adviser, Rob Walrond, who is in talks with organisations who may supply the trees, says, "It's a great way Christians can make a practical difference in their communities. The fruits of these partnerships will benefit us all." [Visit our website](#) to find out more. ■

Modern Anti-Slavery Day

An estimated 40.3 million people in the world today are trapped in some form of modern slavery, including thousands of people in the UK.

[Anti-Slavery Day 2021](#) on the 18 October is a day to raise awareness of the need to eradicate all forms of slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. This year, Sunday the 17 October the Church of England national online service led by Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones Bishop of Tonbridge will be on the topic of modern slavery. 17 October will also be an opportunity for churches to focus their services and prayers on modern slavery to help raise awareness of the issue. ■

Made for a purpose

By Trevor Willmott, Assistant Bishop for the Diocese of Bath and Wells

Whenever I listen to one of Jesus' searching questions I find myself thinking "What would I do in these circumstances?"

If I were casting my nets, and Jesus said "follow me", would I do it? I imagine many of us would be hoping that we never have to find out.

It's often assumed that being called is just about the religious life to a particular ministry, lay or ordained. Of course, it is about that for some of us, and thank God for that, but in the New Testament, vocation or calling has a much wider understanding.

St Paul talks to the Corinthians about this when he writes "Now

there are varieties of gifts but the same spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

Every one of us is called to use the gift or gifts we've been given to help build up the body of Christ. That "building up" can never be confined to Sundays. Building up is about using the whole of life, including Monday to Saturday. The very act of working or being at home, school, work, leisure is vocational. Our daily behaviour becomes a sacrament and an offering.

The realisation that we are being

called comes in many different ways. For some, it's like a sudden flash of light as came to St. Paul on the Damascus road. But for others, it's just not that clear. I have listened to people who described their sense of calling as a feeling of discomfort. "Like having a toothache", their "yes" a moving towards a sense of peace and clarity.

Whether you know what God is calling you to do or a still searching, remember, God has made you for a purpose. And God will work that out, but in God's own time, not yours.

With my prayers and blessing
Bishop Trevor

Where I'm meant to be

Tracey Staples, Church Administrator, Exmoor explains why she feels her role is her ministry.

Why do you feel your role is your ministry?

I feel it is where I am meant to be. It is where God has called me – it may not be what I set out to do, but it is where I am and it feels right. The knowledge and skills that I have gained on the way seem to be what people need at the moment.

What makes it feel like your calling?

I was a ballet teacher but a drunk driver put paid to that by crashing into me so I retrained as a primary school teacher and started helping out in my church office when I wasn't working. After having some medical issues I moved back to mum and dad's and started



Tracey Staples, Church Administrator, Exmoor

helping dad – who trained for ordination as I was training to be a teacher - with a bit of admin. It just seems I've always been pulled back to church administration.

Did you always consider it your ministry?

No, I became aware of it over time. As I felt I kept being called

back, it came to feel it was my ministry. I took on more admin responsibilities when my dad became ill and when he died I was asked to take on the admin of eight parishes. I am now full time and look after 18 parishes in Exmoor deanery.

Do you see other people living out their ministry when perhaps they don't?

Absolutely, I see it in people from the organist to the person who is good at listening. We need to get over the fact that ministry is for everyone and remember we are all the body of Christ.

Read the full interview at www.bathandwells.org.uk/my-ministry-tracey

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