

Manna mailing – for Sep 2021

The search for a new bishop

Following the retirement of Bishop Peter in May, the diocese is now looking to the future and taking the necessary steps to appoint the next Bishop of Bath and Wells.

As part of the process of finding our new bishop, people across the diocese are being asked to share their views. Hundreds of people completed surveys expressing their hopes for the new bishop in the summer and in September the Archbishops' Appointments Secretary and the Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary will meet with various groups of people in the diocese and then hold an open public meeting, where all can contribute.

The process is taken forward by the Vacancy in See Committee, a cross-section of people from across the diocese. The Vacancy in See committee has two aims, to consult, discern and prepare a diocesan Statement of Needs, a document which reflects the hopes and challenges for the ministry of the next bishop and to portray what is distinctive about the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

The second aim is to elect six representatives to join the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) which is responsible for the actual interviews process.

Chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the CNC, is responsible for interviewing the potential candidates before a recommendation is sent to Her Majesty the Queen. The appointment of a new bishop is then made by the Queen following an established process.

Simon Hill, Archdeacon of Taunton and Chair of the Vacancy in See Committee says, "Everyone, young and old, church going and non-church going, has been invited to share their thoughts through surveys and consultation."

If you have any queries or views you wish to contribute please email: newbishop@bathwells.anglican.org. Find out more about the progress at www.bathandwells.org.uk/new-bishop.

News in brief

Cross cultural climate crisis conference

“We need to address climate concerns in our hearts and minds.” Bishop Ruth told clergy and church members from across the diocese at a climate crisis event organised with the charity Send a Cow.

The group heard Rob Walrond, rural affairs adviser, and Titus Sagala, Country Director of Send a Cow Kenya, who joined from Kenya on Zoom, tell them first-hand how climate change is forcing farmers in every country to find new ways of operating and how climate change is hurting crop yields and damaging farmland in places all across the world, from England to Kenya

Landlubbers Holiday Camp

Every year in Minehead the Exmoor Youth Project runs a summer holiday club for children aged 5 to 12. This year the theme was Landlubbers! The children learned all about Jesus and St Paul through song, games, story-telling and crafts. Fr Simon, vicar of Minehead, said "Our thanks go to Jess and Lynne from the Exmoor Youth project"

Magnificent Go Team mural made in Saltford

A fantastic school mural is taking shape in Saltford Church of England primary school. Andy Gray, the diocesan faith sharing enabler, also an artist, was commissioned to create the mural. It is based on the Go team's Bible Chat Mats, also designed by Andy, which encourage children, young people, and adults to read the Bible and have conversations together. Andy was presented with 400 design ideas from the children and he wove them into what he has called “The Chat Wall, the artistic sibling of Go Team Advisers’ Bible Chat Mats initiative.”

Looking to the next chapter

By Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton

Back to school!' perhaps has never sounded so good. For those of us who found last year disrupted in terms of school, college or University, some of our young people and their parents might be really looking forward to the doors re-opening! And perhaps their teachers too!

Of course things will not be the same as they were. A new school year always means change. New classes, new goals, new possibilities. An opportunity to start with a clean sheet, open the next chapter of the book of our lives.

Here in Bath and Wells we are also looking to the next chapter in our story of faith together. This month we will be bringing together all we have learnt from listening to others about where we are as a diocese and what sort of bishop we now need to lead us into the future. If you haven't already done so, please have your say by attending the open consultation Zoom meeting on September 20th. We have already heard the thoughts of almost 1000 of our children across schools in the county, as well as hundreds of adults!

It will be some time before we know who our next Diocesan Bishop will be but now is the time to start praying for him or her so that they might hear from God as we also seek God's wisdom and guidance. And let's pray too for ourselves and all those within our diocese, that each of us will find God's will for the next stage of our journey.

None of us can know what that might hold for certain. The last year or two have shown us how difficult it is to predict anything! Some of us have lost loved ones and livelihoods. It will take time to recover and to renew our hope.

There will be challenges along the way and we have much to face together. However, our hope is in the Lord and we hold to the promises of His word...

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

Bishop Ruth

Interview

All generations have their say

Youth worker Emily Hatton reflects on her role in the Vacancy in See Committee

What is the Vacancy in See committee for?

It's a group of people who represent the diocese in different ages and stages. Its for finding out what the diocese needs in terms of the next bishop.

Why is it important young people are represented?

I think it's really important that young people are represented because we are an equal part of the church. The church is a family, and in families you have all generations. The committee should ensure that all generations are represented and spoken for and all voices are listened to.

Who is on the committee?

So, we've got Archdeacon Simon, he's the Archdeacon of Taunton, who's been chairing a lot of it, Bishop Ruth is also on the committee. We've got people from the diocese's support services team like Sue Rose, and Matt Orr from Movement, the youth worship team based in Bath. There are also lots of clergy and lay people.

What has your experience of the committee been?

Most of it has been on Zoom, which is interesting when you've got such a big group of people and they've all got things to say. I'm really glad I'm on it, it's quite an honour to be on the committee.

Why does it take so long to get a new bishop?

It's a whole huge process, and the bishop has a lot of responsibility and is an important person in the diocese. You need to make sure you get the right person and that the person who ends up being the bishop is God's best for the diocese.