



St Barnabas Church: Pioneering Vicar

A text only version (for printing) of this profile with labelled links, minus the photos, can be found here.¹ The screen-reader accessible version can be found here.²

Thank you for reading this profile and considering St Barnabas Church in the Magnificat Parish of Southdown, Whiteway and Kingsway. We are a small but committed community with a heart for bringing the love of Jesus to our large parish. We welcome all to our services and our events and delight in offering warm hospitality.

Since the pandemic, our Pioneer Worker has done a great job in rebuilding links within the parish, but we still have a long way to go in rebuilding the worshipping community so that we can serve our wider community more effectively. In addition to our Pioneer, during our vacancy we have been blessed with the support of other clergy and Christian lay leaders who have facilitated us in celebrating our diary of worship.

We are excited to be able to appoint a new Pioneering Vicar to join us in seeking the Holy Spirit's direction and to help us move forward on this next stage of our life together.

On behalf of St Barnabas PCC

St. Barnabas, Mount View, Southdown, Bath, BA2 1JX

¹<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/MsU9CUy88IMmeDCr?ref=Link>

²<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/MsU9CUy88IMmeDCr?accessible=true>

<https://www.stbarnabasbath.co.uk/>

Our Values and Vision



We want Jesus' kingdom to be built here in Southdown, Whiteway and Kingsway. We want God's love to continue to be known and experienced.

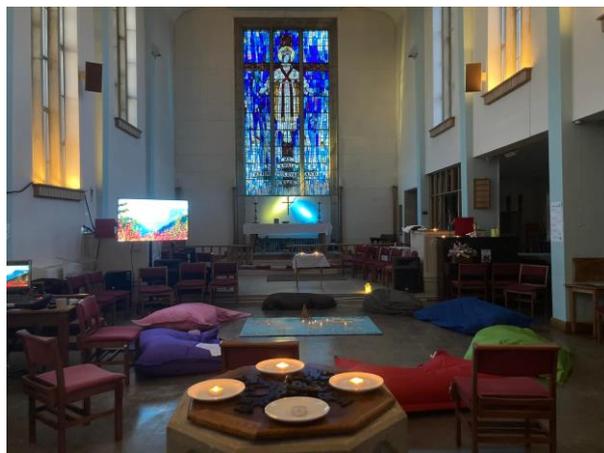
Our strapline is: Sharing God's love, encouraging faith.

We feel God has big plans for our parish, as we perceive its big needs. We are keen to build up our worshipping community in size and faith as this will provide more resources to enable us to love our community more effectively.





Who we are as a parish

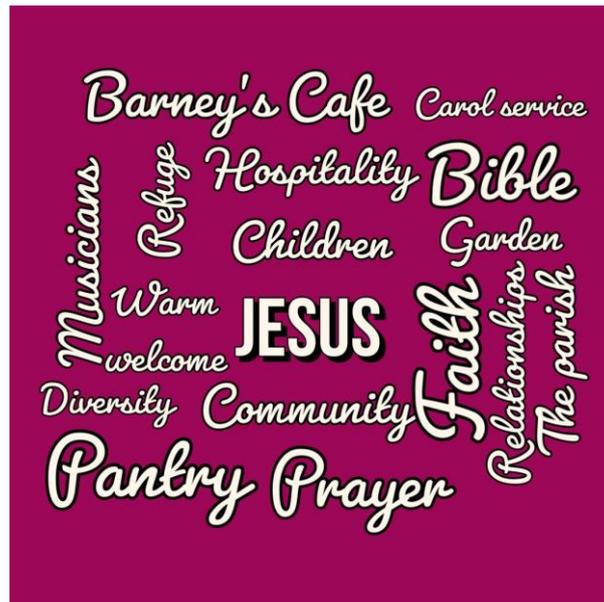


Being a small but diverse family, we value the opportunity of having a local church at the heart of our community. Our large East window is a stained glass representation of the crucified, risen and ascended Jesus and we feel this represents our community: people of all shapes, sizes and colours coming together to be the body of Christ.

The church is rich in approaches to spirituality. Our members value traditional sacraments, prayer walking in our neighbourhood and out 'in nature', daily Bible reading, the use of apps for prayer and Bible reflection, academic Bible study, silence and contemplation, traditional and modern musical

worship, discussion, active learning and creative and playful explorations of who God is. We advertise various Bible resources in services (e.g. books) and in the newsheet (online Bible and Spirituality resources). We currently operate a diary of worship services, including once a month Holy Communion, Cafe Church (afternoon), Morning Prayers, Muddy Church (afternoon, with the Methodists) and Contemplative Evening Prayer. We are looking for an incumbent who is comfortable working with lay leaders in all these spaces and more.

What are we celebrating?



We are celebrating new relationships with people in the community through opportunities like Barney's cafe, and church gatherings. We are celebrating the opportunity to share the love of God, with times to share faith and prayers to build each other up.

Our weekly Barney's café regularly has over 20 adults from young parents to the retired, representing a variety of ethnicities, and over 10 children. Encouragingly, this last year we had 49 people (mostly adults) at our evening carol service. We are eager to see how God will continue to multiply our small offering.





We particularly want to celebrate our outreach activities in partnership with the Methodists, creating Experience Narnia at St Barnabas and Experience Easter at the Methodist Church. Following the success of our previous Outdoor Nativity at Bath City Farm, our first Experience Narnia at St Barnabas this Christmas was attended by the local primary school, the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and 80 others (adults and children) who visited an open session. Attendees got to take part in the magical and interactive telling of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' story which was enacted by various characters in specially decorated areas of the church. Of course, Father Christmas also visited with his present sack. Experience Easter has now been a success for three years, hosted by the Muddy Church team and welcoming years 3 and 4 from the Primary School each time. It similarly engaged children at different creative and activity stations with the story of Easter. Discussion of their questions was encouraged as we feasted together afterwards. The St Barnabas PCC have similarly hosted an Experience Church event at the church for the Primary School where the children got to explore the font, the windows, the bells and the organ as well as discover our favourite encourager St Barnabas.

The Local Area

We are blessed to be at the transition between the city and the countryside. We can walk into the local countryside in a matter of minutes, but also be in the centre of town in 30 minutes on the bus.





Our church is situated next to Twerton Roundhill³ conservation area, from the top of which you can see all of Bath to the north and the countryside to the south. We join with local churches in a cross walk to the top on Good Friday.

How we connect to our local neighbourhood

The church congregation has many established and new connections to the parish. Most of the congregation live in the parish, or just outside it, and so use the neighbourhood shops, public transport and recreation areas. In addition to newer pioneering work, we also have members of the congregation who volunteer at the local community farm and the food pantry, on the board of the Scouts, and we are supported by one of our local councillors on the PCC. Many of our congregation attend Barney's café.



³<https://www.bathscape.co.uk/place/twerton-roundhill/>



The church attracts weddings and baptisms from the wider parish and hosts Beavers, Cubs and Scouts who parade on Remembrance Sunday. Several of the congregation have wider links to the city through family, intra-city Christian networks and participation in secular clubs, classes and choirs.

Opportunities we dream of for the future

- Our church to be a place where all ages can worship together and encounter the love of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- For creative ways of coming alongside people and supporting them exploring and developing faith where they are
- Our church as a safe space for all seeking God: a place where people can learn to pray and deepen their faith. A place for teaching and discipleship
- Using seasonal celebrations such as Christmas and Easter to engage with the local community and to share the good news of Jesus
- Teams to provide pastoral and practical support to the church and the wider community.
- Starting conversations with the people we know about baptisms
- A ministry to/for/with the growing number of students in our area, maybe linking up with the University Chaplains
- Putting on more occasional (large) events in the church

- Continuing to build a relationship with Roundhill Primary School⁴ and maybe supporting Lux Youth Project⁵ (formerly Bath Youth for Christ) with their new mentoring scheme for excluded children at St Matthias Academy⁶
- Supporting the curation of stories from the neighbourhood into a public archive to celebrate the place we live

To achieve this we currently consider our immediate priorities to be

- Building new teams with energy and enthusiasm to continue the work
- Building on our current relationships with the community
- Continued prayer and seeking God's will

Current Challenges

Other challenges include (in no particular order):

- Modest to scarce resources of people, time and money
- Effectiveness in advertising our services and events to people currently unconnected with the church (including our website <https://www.stbarnabasbath.co.uk/>⁷, other web presence and social media)
- Making our services accessible and desirable to the non-churched
- Shyness in inviting people to our services
- Building the momentum of regular attendance through mixed service types
- Limited kitchen facilities and lack of an accessible toilet in the church itself
- Gaps in our current congregation's giftings and the need to develop new giftings e.g. for youth work, office holders for the PCC, pastoral workers, people with practical and maintenance skills
- No attendees from the Kingsway part of our parish
- Improving communication between our different congregations and others that use our facilities

⁴<https://www.roundhill-pri.co.uk/>

⁵<https://www.luxyouthproject.co.uk/>

⁶<https://www.stmatthiasacademy.org.uk/>

⁷<https://www.stbarnabasbath.co.uk/who-we-are>

Our approach to pioneering



Our approach to pioneering, currently led by our wonderful Pioneer until June 24, falls into the activist and innovator categories of pioneering. We have experimented with different types of 'church', offer neutral spaces where relationships can be built and provide a link to the church at non-church events such as the toddler group in the Southside Youth and Community Centre. We have built relationships by asking questions and finding common ground with those who attend these spaces and occasions.

Working in the community

The large number of people who are aware of the church in the community are mainly connected to us via our Pioneer who has spent time getting to know people in our local social spaces such as Bath City Farm⁸, the Southside Youth and Community Centre⁹, the ecumenical Oasis Pantry¹⁰ and with the local Twerton and Whiteway Network¹¹ and its associated activities. We have a long-standing partnership with Lux Youth Project¹² with whom we are currently collaborating on an after-school club. Over the years we have also helped to support a local youth worker and joined in running a breakfast club for the local school. These are great opportunities to get to know the young people and their families.

⁸<https://www.bathcityfarm.org.uk/>

⁹<https://www.youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk/southside-youth-community-centre>

¹⁰<https://oasisbath.org/oasis-pantry/>

¹¹https://www.linkedin.com/posts/twerton-and-whiteway-community-network_communityresearch-activity-7047821282842669056-au86/?trk=public_profile_like_view

¹²<https://www.luxyouthproject.co.uk/>



Exploring alternative modes of church

In addition, we have experimented with and gathered some participation in forms of alternative church such as Muddy Church (at Bath City Farm, in collaboration with the Methodists), Play Church (at the Southside Youth and Community Centre) and Cafe Church (in the church building).

Additional Pioneering and pioneering-related activities over the last five years

- Pre-COVID: Listening to readers at school & Open the Book
- Prayer walking

- Citywide participation in online children’s holiday club ‘Unlikely Heroes’
- Whiteway FC Football Club¹³ founder and sponsor: our Pioneer is currently the secretary
- Seasonal outdoor displays/prayer in the church garden
- Participation in local activities such as (knit/crochet) 'angel bombing' and Advent Windows
- Participation in the Bath Local Community House of Prayer initiative¹⁴ and Bath Christian Action Network¹⁵
- Participation with Blooming Whiteway¹⁶ and Park Life

Needs of the neighbourhood

The population of the neighbourhood is diverse in age as well as economic status. The Parish has a population of 6,322 as of the 2021 Census. Our status as a Magnificat Parish means that it is one of the areas of multi-deprivation in our diocese. As such, it attracts a range of support from other organisations: the Youth Connect community centre (Southside Youth and Community Centre), which offers youth work and a playgroup; the Oasis Food Pantry (at the Roundhill Hub); the LUX Youth Project; and the Methodists' weekly lunch. As these needs are being met through these projects, we partner with these organisations to support them and our community.



¹³https://www.facebook.com/WhitewayFc/?hc_ref=ARQAUWg7F_evMZ4g_kTVYVa22MWJ7WMFhuenAx6Ce-H9-IgSwRm3CqAWpi-nuVQgNwU&fref=nf&paipv=0&eav=Afa72LyilOdqcaaKeZWcaaLsX4O1d6Kxl3blTmPtEwYF4_9J21z14H2WIP3sFYHix_l&rdi

¹⁴<https://www.houseofprayerbath.org/>

¹⁵<https://www.bathcan.org.uk/>

¹⁶<https://www.bloomingwhiteway.com/home>



Our survey of Barney's cafe attenders showed that people had a number of concerns about the neighbourhood at large around safe spaces for children, funding for neighbourhood services and anti-social behaviour. In addition, there is a recognition of loneliness within the community and its disjointedness. Many said it would be great if there were more opportunities for people to come together, mechanisms to enable people to support each other and more warm spaces. There was also a wish for our neighbourhood to be better regarded from the outside, a project for which is currently being worked on by Blooming Whiteway and Bath City Farm. For example, it is noticeable that the parish is the main area of Bath that is not served by the bike and scooter scheme. We are encouraged that our idea of creating an archive of people's stories to celebrate the neighbourhood is starting to happen, led by the Twerton and Whiteway Network Coordinator.

The local crematorium offers a good service to its users making the visibility of the church lesser in this space. However, there is much grief in the community and we wonder if the church could help by acting as a focal point for this. We could explore a dialogue with the crematorium to provide ongoing support to mourners and/or staff.

Although we engage the community through social media, we think there are further opportunities to do this through Facebook or Tiktok, as this is a key way the people in the neighbourhood find out what is going on.

How we hope to work together

What we can offer

- A warm and spacious church and church hall where we offer friendly and caring hospitality
- A church garden with space for outdoor events (when not being used by the nursery who rent the church hall)
- A congregation with a commitment to welcoming all and caring for the community
- A congregation who are generous with their time and their money
- Lay leaders who can lead traditional and alternative forms of worship
- Individuals passionate about serving, baking, tidying, welcoming, encouraging, praying, storytelling, crafting and music-making

- A four-bedroom vicarage with study, garage and parking, adjacent to the church

About you

We would like to encourage you to apply if you feel called to work with us in our wonderful neighbourhood.

- Committed to praying and listening to the Holy Spirit in seeking God's will for the parish
- Skilled at birthing and building new teams who can work together to meet the needs of the worshipping community and the neighbourhood
- A gifted communicator who can share Jesus's love, hope and compassion in all situations
- A people person who enjoys relating to all ages and diverse backgrounds and understands the various cultures of city-edge estates
- A listener who is patient, flexible, and tries to keep everyone on board
- Enthusiastic about working ecumenically and in partnership with other organisations to serve the needs of the neighbourhood
- Comfortable with leading traditional and alternative forms of worship and including all ages in both
- Comfortable with promoting engagement with scripture and tradition with both seekers and long-standing disciples, offering new vision and challenge
- Confident in mentoring lay participation and leadership across different worship formats
- Delights in encouraging and developing the giftings of others
- Passionate about discipleship and encouraging and enabling people to know Jesus better
- Understanding of the economic challenges in a Magnificat Parish and able to build faith and finance to meet the vision

The PCC would support the Pioneering Vicar to opt into the prayers of Living in Love and Faith.

Appendix A: Buildings and Building Users



Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of 1958 observed: **“We cannot but hold in high esteem the foresight of those who, years ago, reserved this excellent site from which the church in the parish can work.”**

A detailed history of the church and the church building, up to 2018, can be read here:

<https://tinyurl.com/StBhistory>

In addition to St Barnabas Church activities, the Church is currently used by Jesus Christ Assembly Bath¹⁷, mainly on Sundays.

Although the church building is modern, and had a more efficient heating system installed 7 years ago, it still has many limitations for the sort of community work we would like to do. The PCC has looked into improving the kitchen and the possibility of an accessible toilet, and there are probably other improvements that could be made with the right funding. We are excited to explore the potential of the building with you.

The Church Hall is currently leased to:

Little Blossoms Nursery¹⁸

Bath Unity Players¹⁹

¹⁷<https://www.rccjesuschristassembly.org/>

¹⁸<https://www.littleblossomsnurseryschool.com/>

31st Bath (St Barnabas) Scout Group²⁰

Fun Science²¹

We think our patch of Bath is the best, but the city of Bath is better known for its many other historic and beautiful buildings. If you have never visited, do browse photos online.

The vicarage has 4 bedrooms, a study, an open-plan lounge-diner, a kitchen with a pantry, a garage, a large garden with tasty apples, off-street parking and gas central heating.



¹⁹<http://www.bathunityplayers.co.uk/>

²⁰<http://www.31.bathscouts.org/>

²¹<https://www.fun-science.org.uk/>

Appendix B: Church Finances



St Barnabas is not a wealthy parish. Our income comes mainly from a core of committed givers, the majority of whom can gift aid. This income is supplemented by open plate and midweek café donations. We take a prudent approach to managing the finances, recognising that there are always minor repairs and maintenance costs to budget for. For the last three years we have paid an agreed Parish Share based upon a realistic assessment of church membership and our ability to pay. Income from the church hall primarily goes towards its running costs with any surplus held over for repairs and improvements such, as replacing light fittings with LED units, and in 2023 the complete redecoration of the hall itself. Although the church and hall accounts are dealt with as one, the income and expenditure for each can easily be identified. The final accounts for 2022 showed a small surplus, but the final accounts for 2023 will show a small deficit. A full copy of both these accounts can be made available on request.

Appendix C: Roundhill Primary School



Roundhill Primary School is a special focus in our parish with many families going past St Barnabas on their way there each day. Churches in Southdown have worked together there - through listening to children read, planning and performing Open the Book stories at assemblies, preparing and presenting invited classes to Experience Church, Experience Easter and most recently Experience Narnia. Methodist Deacon Annie Trembling has been a school governor there maintaining good relationships with the school, especially since the pandemic with several major staff changes. Our Barney's cafe on Wednesday mornings specifically opens at 8.45 am so that parents can come straight after dropping off their children at school.

While the school is commended for its Nursery, SEND support, safeguarding and pupils' respectful behaviour, the Academy Trust, together with an experienced new head teacher in post, is addressing concerns raised following an OFSTED inspection in June 2023. Currently, 46.4% of children qualify for free school meals, a figure which gives some indication of the number of low-income families in the locality. Many make use of the local Oasis Food Pantry and children call in at Breakfast Club, both taking place at Lux.

Statement from the Area Dean

Bath Deanery comprises the city of Bath and the surrounding villages. It is made up of 21 traditional parishes which comprise 39 church buildings. In addition, Grace Church is a Fresh Expression of church reaching out to families and those interested in sport. A pioneer minister is working in the South of the city to imagine what expressions of church might be appropriate in Southdown and

Whiteway areas. Readers, retired clergy, self-supporting and stipendiary clergy contribute to the senior leadership of churches, working with Churchwardens and other lay ministers. Deanery Synod is a vehicle for mission and learning together and Chapter's focus is building prayerful partnerships and learning from one another. It has an active WhatsApp group for communication, prayer and building relationships. The emphasis for the Deanery is threefold:

Prayerfulness: valuing our different church traditions and the way these manifest themselves in the ways we pray. Seeking to understand, respect and value different ways of praying – from the liturgical to the charismatic. Encouraging ecumenical prayer and together discerning God's vision for mission around the Deanery.

Hospitality: understanding that we are one in Christ, our Christian hospitality means that nobody is in ministry alone, but we are all called to work together because (and not despite) of our differences. Partnership working over parish boundaries and between leadership and ministry teams is vital for enriching the life of the church, treasuring giftedness, and providing resilience through change. Ecumenical hospitality and working through the outcomes of LLF and PLF are priorities.

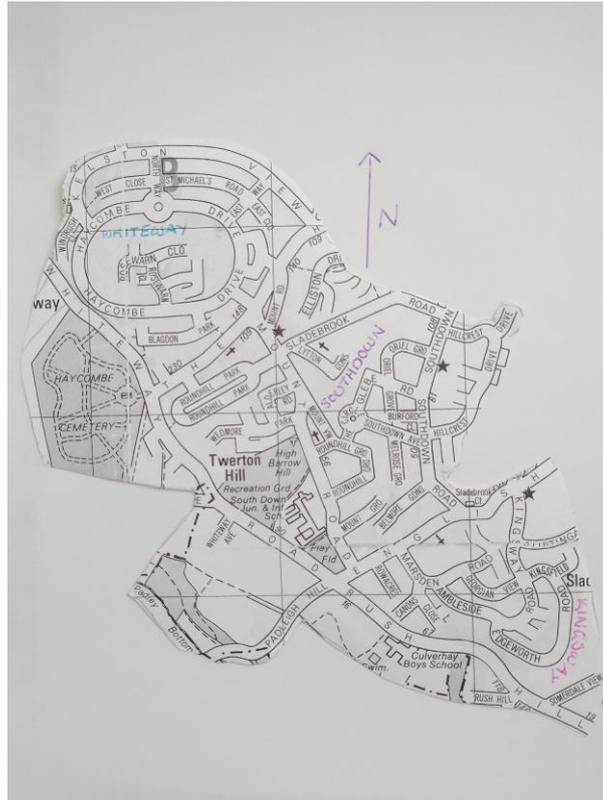
Innovation: the model of church most visible around the Deanery is the traditional one of church based around Sunday services, a building, and a Vicar. We are committed to innovating new ways of being the church. Apart from Grace Church and the Southdown / Whiteway Pioneer mission, the Deanery supports chaplaincy in Bath College, at both Universities, at the RUH Hospital and elsewhere. We work in partnership with other churches for youth ministry. As part of the Diocesan strategy for 2022-2027 the Deanery is having to reduce from 22 stipendiary clergy to make cost savings; transitioning to higher levels of shared ministry, lay and ordained, paid and voluntary. The Deanery has committed to achieve this reduction in stipendiary clergy by developing partnerships between benefice incumbents and senior leadership teams and by pioneering new ways of being the church. This is a demanding and exciting time to be part of Bath Deanery as we seek to follow God in His mission, to prayerfully work in partnership with him and with others in the city.

Revd Stephen Girling – Area Dean

Mrs Pippa Page – Lay Dean

Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation





Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Pioneer Vicar of St Barnabas, Bath in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in

both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have

We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.

To develop new Christian worshipping communities

Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.

To share in ministry and leadership

We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.

To deepen and grow faith

This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. 'I planted', he says, 'Apollos watered, but God gave the growth' (1 Cor 3:6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our

diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?



The Rt Revd Michael Beasley
Bishop of Bath and Wells



[The Venerable Dr Adrian Youings](#)
Archdeacon of Bath