Biography – the Right Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

Bishop Michael grew up in rural Staffordshire attending a small Church of England primary school and a country church. He was educated in Stafford before studying biology and epidemiology at Imperial College, London and Oxford University.

His scientific career focused on epidemiology - particularly concerning infectious diseases of children in low-income countries, primarily with The Partnership for Child Development, a research group based at Imperial College’s Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology. He undertook projects with the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF and UNESCO, working extensively in Tanzania, Eritrea, Zambia and other countries.

Bishop Michael trained for ministry at Cranmer Hall, Durham, before being ordained in the Diocese of Lichfield in 1999. Initially he combined his scientific career with his Christian ministry. He was a missioner and theological educator until 2010, when he was appointed to the fulltime position of Director of Mission in the Diocese of Oxford. From 2015 he has been the Bishop of Hertford in the Diocese of St Albans.

Bishop Michael says he ‘married into Somerset’ – his wife Lizzie is from a farming family and grew up within the Diocese of Bath and Wells, Somerset Girl Guides, the Young Farmers Club (YFC) and the Red Cross. They have two children, Charlie (10) and Connie (8).

In the last few years he’s been called back to epidemiology. First resourcing faith groups during the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2019, and more recently supporting the response of churches here in UK and across the Anglican Communion during the COVID pandemic. During Covid he worked with UNICEF, the NHS, the Government and leaders of different faiths to launch vaccinaid.org which has raised more than £10 million in support of vaccination for low-income countries. He also enabled the establishment of the Anglican Communion Health and Community Network which supports the work of churches on various health issues worldwide.

He loves being a bishop - most especially taking opportunities to be out and about with the people and parishes he serves. The line from his consecration that's stuck with him most is 'bishops know their people and their people know them’.

His priorities on coming to Bath and Wells are to be present for people, communities and churches as we re-emerge from the restrictions of the COVID pandemic and re-connect with each other after a time of separation and shock. He hopes to engage with all the communities he’s called to serve - helping churches speak Jesus’s message of peace in a time when there is both international tension and local concern about the cost of living crisis.

In the emerging post pandemic world, he wants to enable us to think afresh about how the Church can reach out to the people it serves, to help us explore together how faith can be good news in our lives and to support our response to the issues and questions that we face

He also keen to ensure we recognise ourselves as part of the world-wide Church - from whom we have much to learn as well as much to give - giving thanks especially for our links with Zambia.