

Week ending 6 September 2025

## Connect

The bulletin for clergy, lay leaders and all who are the Church in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.



### Joy – Christmas is coming!

The great joy of Christmas is the good news the angel declared to the shepherds - the news of Jesus' birth as Emmanuel (God With Us). This year the Church of England's Advent and Christmas theme for 2025 revolves round the word: Joy! The resources on offer are designed to help all ages to be drawn into the joy of the first Christmas. They include:

- Christmas episodes from the Cheeky Pandas
- Advent reflections content outline

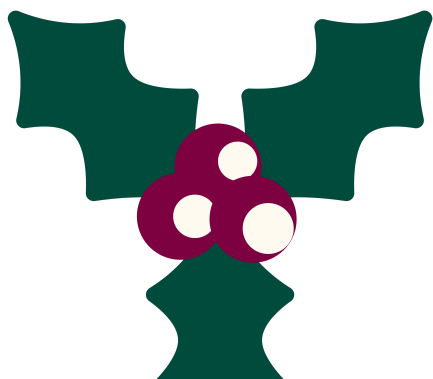
#### Resources for individuals

- Reflections via email
- Downloadable reflections for 11-15 year olds
- Daily reflections via Everyday Faith app

#### Resources for schools

- Four weeks of collective worship resource materials is available from the National Society for Education for use by schools during Advent.

[Find out more](#)



## The Christmas digital planner webinar

Thursday 18 September  
12:00 - 13:00

This webinar will walk you through the Digital Planner resource made to help you make the most of social media platforms and spread the message of Christmas with ease and creativity.

[Register now.](#)



## Digital giving at Christmas webinar

Tuesday 14 October,  
12:00 - 13:00

This webinar will dive into digital giving and how it can help your church, whether it's online donations or contactless and in-person. Find out about templates and resources you can use to maximise giving opportunities. [Register online](#)



## Generosity Week - 28 September to 5 October

Generosity Week is an opportunity to give thanks for all that our churches already have in their hands, and to celebrate the gifts shared throughout the year, whether that is in time, talents and treasure.

Spanning two Sundays, it provides an opportunity, not only to reflect on what is, but also what might be. It is a chance to inspire further acts of generosity by introducing new giving tools, such as contactless giving or the Parish Giving Scheme, and to set out the

financial challenge for the coming year, whether that is the day to day running costs of the church or finance for a major project.

Whilst the Harvest season is a great time for holding a Generosity Week, [the resources](#) are available all year round. They can be used at any time that best suits your church.

For further support contact the Giving and Funding team  
[givingteam@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:givingteam@bathwells.anglican.org)

## Money Matters sessions

There is also still time to sign up to attend one of our autumn Money Matters sessions. These are an opportunity for anyone interested in church finances to look at the financial challenges, share hopes and successes with those facing similar challenges, and find out more about the resources available to help.

[Register to attend one of the sessions](#)

### Bath Archdeaconry

St Luke's, Bath BA2 2BD at 14:00 to 17:00 on Monday, 15 September

### Taunton Archdeaconry

St Luke's Centre, Cotford St Luke TA4 1HY at 18:00 to 21:00 on Tuesday, 14 October.



## Redress Scheme data breach by Kennedys Law LLP

A data breach by Kennedys Law LLP, who are responsible for administering the independent safeguarding Redress Scheme for the Church of England, resulted in the unintended disclosure of email addresses belonging to individuals who had registered for updates on the scheme.

Bishop Michael says, "I know this will be deeply upsetting for those individuals affected, who have already been through so much. I continue to hold them in my prayers and urge anyone affected or traumatised by this incident to draw on the support available, whether that is our Safeguarding team or other professional support."

Read more about this and find out what support is available to those affected on [the diocesan website](#).

## Season of Creation

The Season of Creation, or Creationtide, from 1 September to 4 October, is dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life. It is a time to give thanks for God's gift of creation.

This year the National Church is encouraging churches across the country to pledge to make the Great Switch for Creation by pledging to take a small but impactful step towards the net zero mission by switching to a green energy tariff.

[Find out more about the pledge to switch on the Church of England website and in the video below.](#)



## Rural Forum 2025

Monday 3 November

The 2025 Rural Forum returns to Bagley Baptist Church and will be focussing on Calling in the Countryside. Matthew Frankum, Vocations Team Leader, and Bishop Michael will help us consider what God is saying to us in our rural setting and how we can encourage others in using their gifts in our churches and communities.

The event is free of charge, and lunch and refreshments will be provided. The Forum is open to all, so please do share this all who may be interested.

Bookings can be made via [the Rural Forum online registration form.](#)

## Confirmations in Bath and Wells

The diocesan confirmation takes place on Saturday 18 October at 14:00 in Wells Cathedral. Please note this is an earlier date than usual.

If you have candidates for confirmation within your worshipping communities who are hoping to be confirmed at the October service, please send details of them to the Bishop's Office by Friday 10 October. [Email penny.gibbs@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:penny.gibbs@bathwells.anglican.org)

[Visit the Confirmations page on the diocesan website](#) for more information.

## Beyond the Walls Webinar

This autumn Bath and Wells Diocese are partnering with Exeter, Truro and Bristol dioceses to deliver a monthly webinar all about Pioneering. Hear stories and experiences to inspire, encourage and equip you to develop innovative contextual mission and new Christian Communities. There are lots of different topics. Simply [register online at Beyond the Walls - Home](#)

It's not too late to sign up for Tuesday 9 September at 13:00 with Revd Dr Ash Barker sharing his experiences of ministry in urban areas.

For more information about leading contextual mission, creating new worshipping communities or developing a 'mixed ecology of church' contact [Richard Priestley](#).

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## Taizé evening for young adults

14 September 2025

Join Bishop Michael and team for a Taizé-inspired evening at 17:00 at The Bishop's Palace, Wells. Whether you have been to Taizé before or are simply curious, you are warmly invited to experience the music, silence, peaceful rhythm with prayer, and community of Taizé.

Come on your own or bring a friend. [Simply sign up online.](#)

## Encouraging young leaders

Are you a young leader, or do you know a young person or young adult who you would love to see supported to grow as a Christian leader? Do you know someone who would be excited for what God might call them to do in the future? Then why not check out the [Young Leaders Learning Hub](#) to find out more.

From this autumn there will be hubs in the Bath, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare areas where young leaders aged 15-25 gather monthly to learn and practise leadership skills, learn from the Bible about how to lead, pray and support one another, and have fun with others of a similar age.

In the video below young leaders Jake and Issie talk about how they lead in their own distinct ways in their different contexts.



## Considering Ministry?

Saturday 27 September 10:30 - 16:00. Exeter

Step Forward South West is an event for young adults (18-30) who may be interested in ministry in the Church of England. Find out what your options are, where to start and what Anglican ministry actually looks like. [Register online.](#)

Bishop Michael is one of those who will be speaking at the event in Exeter.



A fond farewell



This week we said goodbye to Martin Canning, who has been Chair of the diocesan World Mission Group for 5 years. Martin and his wife Jane are moving to Liverpool to be closer to their family.

Thanking Martin for his work Bishop Michael said, "I want to say a huge, thank you, because it's been an immense achievement, and it's helped us all enormously. We will, of course, continue to build on your legacy. We wish you Godspeed."

Martin spoke of his joy in being part of the Zambia link and expressed his gratitude to all those who have supported the link and continue to work hard to build relationships with our brothers and sisters in Zambia.

## In brief

- Earthed in Mission - Resourcing rural churches, Doynton, Bristol, Saturday January 31 2026. [Book tickets online](#) or for more information email [mmsupport@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:mmsupport@bristoldiocese.org)
- Spiritual Walk with Hedgerow chaplain Steven Wort 21 October, 10:00am Yarde. It will be 3.5 miles & take about 2.5 hours. [Email stevenwort@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:email.stevenwort@hotmail.co.uk) or text 07557 958013.
- Congratulations to Wells Cathedral Chorister Trust (WCCT) which has announced that the Coronation Fund, launched in 2023 has surpassed its target! Thanks to the generosity of individual supporters and grant-making bodies, more than £500,000 has been raised in just two years. The money raised allows the trust to support families by covering "virtually all" of the costs of a chorister's education. [Read more about the Trust.](#)
- The cathedral will be hosting a 'Be a Chorister for a Day' event on Saturday, 20 September. Details are available at [wellscathedral.org.uk](http://wellscathedral.org.uk).

If you have news to share, tag us on your social media channel or [email the Communications team.](#)

## A space to be still

A quiet initiative is drawing people together each week, not around activity, but around silence. The Julian Prayer Group, started by Revd Rona Stuart-Bourne, Priest in Charge, Milborne Port offers space for contemplative prayer and stillness. "We decided to start a silent Julian Prayer Group. More and more people are joining, and what's fascinating is that many of them don't normally come to church,

## Support for families

This summer St Mary's Church, Chard stepped in to help support families with their food bag scheme. The project grew out of a conversation between Revd John Rollings, Associate Vicar at St Mary's, and Revd Georgina Vye who noticed that while schools provided breakfast during term time, families lose that support during the holidays. John says, "There are a number of families really struggling. This additional

## Wells Cathedral Cider & Cheese Festival

Cider and cheese makers from across Somerset will be setting up their stalls at Wells Cathedral, to take part in its first Cider & Cheese Festival on Saturday, 27 September. Event organisers at the cathedral are inviting cider and cheese connoisseurs to sample a vast range of Somerset's best produce, and to meet local makers and experts, while enjoying a special

but they say that they feel drawn to sit in stillness here rather than anywhere else. There's a real hunger for it in the community."

Rona says the gathering seems to be meeting a deeper spiritual need. "There's a real yearning in people right now for silence, stillness, and connection with God. I tell people at the start that this might feel uncomfortable. That's okay. I suggest they try different approaches. I stress we are not there to achieve anything, simply just to sit with God." [Read more about the group.](#)

resource makes a real difference. Many have told us how tough it is to cover the cost of meals when children are at home. Rising food prices make finding enough to pay for all meals a real challenge and breakfast is often one families skip in order to make ends meet." Supported financially by the Lord's Larder Food Bank, a local initiative that was started by Chard Churches Together, the holiday breakfast scheme, was open to anyone who wanted to take up the offer. [Find out about the scheme.](#)

programme of live music and family activities.

The new festival is part of Wells Cathedral's drive to welcome more people into the building, as Toby Wright, Dean of Wells, explains: "At Wells Cathedral, we are pursuing the bold ambition to become this country's most joyful cathedral. And as part of that vision, we want to ensure that Wells Cathedral is a place where the whole of our local community feels warmly welcomed." [Discover more about the festival.](#)

Photo: Bray's Cider

## Diocese of Bath and Wells

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