

Generosity of service - it's contagious!

It's always inspiring to hear how individuals or churches are serving those in their community. Recently the actions of residents of the village of North Moreton in Oxfordshire hit the news when they came together to offer support for 60 refugees fleeing the Ukraine.

Gary Watson, Giving and Funding Adviser for Bath and Wells said, "The idea apparently came from one individual who wanted to help as she has friends in Ukraine. The village is home to around 350 people but it took just one person to start the conversation about how she was going to help. From that, others were inspired and motivated to do the same, resulting in a co-ordinated offering



of homes, transport, healthcare and even teaching for children in the village hall while they wait for places at local schools. A fantastic example of how contagious generosity can be!

Gary adds, "Much of our behaviour is influenced by our observations of those around us. We are led by example, both positively and negatively, by words

or deeds or their very absence. That's why it's so important for us to have people who will commit to be the examples of generous service needed to influence real change in the lives of our communities. Jesus knew the importance of serving as he humbly washed his disciples' feet, giving us the very example of servanthood and a command to do the same."

This month we celebrate the 70 years of service the Queen has given to our nation and the difference this has made. We could all take this opportunity to reflect on the ways we have (or haven't) served those around us and move forwards with a resolve to be examples of the generous love we have received from God in Jesus ■

News in brief

New bishop announced

On 28 April, Downing Street announced that the Rt Revd Michael Beasley will be the next Bishop of Bath and Wells. Currently the Bishop of Hertford, prior to taking a fulltime role with the church, Bishop Michael was an epidemiologist, a background he was called on to use during the pandemic on the Church of England's Covid task force. He is already familiar with Somerset, his wife Lizzie is from a local farming family, and before his interview for the role they both undertook a 60 mile walk around the county ■



Bishop Michael with pupils from St Mary's Church of England Primary

A warm welcome

On the day it was announced that he is to become the 80th Bishop of Bath and Wells, Bishop Michael undertook a 10-hour, 84 mile tour of the diocese. He met with a variety of people, undertook media interviews and attended a host of events at churches and in the community. The children of St Mary's school in Bridgwater were delighted to be the first to hear the news of his appointment at 10am.

Find out more at: bathandwells.org.uk/new-bishop ■



Bishop Michael meeting the Jenkins' family on their farm

Celebrating together

St Petrock's in Timberscombe, deep in the heart of Exmoor, is just one of our churches who will be celebrating the Platinum Jubilee with their community. They are holding a three-day open Village and Church Heritage Exhibition on 2-3 June, and again on Monday 6 June for local school children. Churchwarden Marion Jeffrey says, "It is our hope that visitors and villagers who may not normally enter the church will be able to visit and enjoy this event along with others."

On display will be historic church documents and some recent archaeological findings. Alongside this will be the school's Platinum Jubilee creative work and villagers' royal memorabilia ■

Guided by faith

By Michael Beasley, Bishop Elect, Diocese of Bath and Wells

Visits undertaken, trees planted, ambassadors welcomed, honours awarded, miles travelled! Just a fraction of what our Queen has done. When, on her 21st birthday, Elizabeth II pledged herself to our service her whole life long, she could scarce have imagined the commitment she was making.

What has enabled all the achievement that we celebrate in this year of the Platinum Jubilee? Her reign has seen joy and sorrow, triumphs and setbacks. The Queen gave an insight into what has seen her though in 2002 when she said:

"I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day

is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God ... I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel."

I'm inspired to be coming to Bath and Wells during this Platinum year that sees us celebrate the Queen's steadfast service that flows from her Christian faith. Just as the young Elizabeth II couldn't know what lay ahead as she looked to the future, neither can we. As we emerge from COVID, see war in Ukraine and confront a cost of living crisis we live in challenging times. To face our days we'll need all the

faith and experience, creativity and skills of everyone in Bath and Wells. Above all we have the hope of the Christian Gospel that has stood our Queen in such good stead throughout her long life. It's the faith I'm looking forward to serving and celebrating with you as together we live and tell the story of Jesus.

Every blessing
Bishop Michael



50 years supporting children

Margot Sampson MBE has just stepped down as chair of The Children's Society Winscombe St James Fundraising Committee.

How did you get involved with the Children's Society?

It has played a significant role in my life for over 50 years. It all began when I was a young mother, when our then Vicar, Rev Bernard Salmon approached me when the existing representative retired. At that time there were just six charity boxholders who met once a year.

How did you get on at first?

I felt committed to ongoing support once I discovered what it was all about. My own background did not prepare me for what I was to learn about the lives of so many of the young people with whom I had lived and gone to school. It was a learning experience for which I was totally unprepared and it mortified me.



Margot Sampson (centre) with the Children's Society's Jess Meale and Mark Russell

How have things changed over the years?

We have learned to adapt to the changing needs and attitudes of society. We used to knock on every door for our annual collection but now we collect at local supermarkets. At our height we had 127 box holders.

What has been a highlight?

Paul and Mo's Open Garden Days is one. Their ability to communicate Christian love and fellowship through superb food and comradeship is incredible. We were also one of the first churches in the UK to introduce Christingles -because we live in a cider area, we represent the world with an apple from the church orchards.

And your time overall?

It has been for me a truly meaningful and appreciated part of my life. Because of my involvement with the Children's Society I have learned so much and I give it – and always will – my deepest thanks and love.

Find out more at childrenssociety.org.uk

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