

# Learning from each other

Angeline White, Reader, Christ Church, Weston-super-Mare, draws on her master's degree research to share what can be learned about all ages and stages growing and learning together in faith.



## Why should we worship intergenerationally?

Intergenerational worship is different generations learning from each other. When Jesus called people to follow him, he called people from different backgrounds, people who didn't naturally fit together. Learning alongside someone who is different to us is part of learning to grow as a disciple.

## What is lost when generations worship separately?

In the 20th century, churches began to separate children and older people, young adults and parents, we tended to separate children and older people, young adults and parents. When you do that, something important is lost. You don't get that richness of faith, of discipleship, of mentoring, of learning from others.

## What do the different generations learn by worshipping together?

It's easy to be a Christian with people

who are like us. The real challenge is whether we can grow and whether the church be united as a true body of Christ across all ages, and cultures.

## How can worship include all the generations equally?

It takes time, thought and effort. It doesn't necessarily mean massive change. Think creatively about how you do things. Make and say things in a way that includes everybody; children, adults who learn in different ways and new people coming to church.

## How do you include young people without being patronising?

Give people of all ages meaningful roles and give them some freedom to shape it. Offer training.

## Does intergenerational worship help support faith formation?

Worshipping together allows children get to see their parents worshipping, and parents to see their children worshipping. Everyone is involved in everything in the church. Even when groups separate for teaching, shared themes encourage conversations that can continue after the service.

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## Intentionally intergenerational

At St Peter's Church in Milton and Mead Vale, the church community is excited about taking part in intergenerational worship – worshipping together across the generations, not simply being a church with lots of different age groups. The shared enthusiasm is infectious, "I get to be with my family the whole time," said one child. Another shared how, "I enjoy that you get to be with your family and do all the activities together." An adult commented that they, "feel like we're growing in faith better because we're doing it together."

These reflections come from children, young people, and adults who take part in services that are intentionally intergenerational. Families arrive together, sit together, and leave together, having shared the same worship. It is an understanding of church as a community where people of all ages grow and learn in faith together. Instead of dividing people into age-based groups, everyone takes part in the same service.

Teaching, prayer, worship participation is shared. Services are often interactive allowing those who are very young to participate as well



as those who may be unfamiliar with church.

Wendi Davis, a lay pioneer at St Peter's Church, Evercreech, often leads worship outdoors. She says this allows families to explore faith together through creation.

Andy Levett Go Team Adviser for Taunton Archdeaconry in Bath and Wells, enjoys intergenerational worship in Watchet. He said, "Being intentionally intergenerational encourages us to look out towards our community. Rather than just catering for those who have always come to church, worshipping this way helps us provide an environment that's more accessible to everyone, including those who aren't familiar with church."

Sharing in faith in this way helps all the generations to learn from one another and to grow in faith.

Listening to one another, having conversations that extend worship into daily life long after the service over.

# News in brief

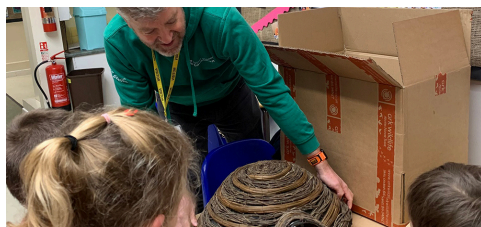
## Choral Honour

The parish church of St Nicholas, Kittisford, was the winner of the Choral Evensong Trust Patronal Festival of the Year Award for 2025. The St Nicholas' Day, celebrations to mark the feast day of the church's patron saint through a service of choral evensong brought together people of all ages, and from all parts of the local community. An eight-voice student choir from Wales, a local community choir, as well as the primary school choir and a student octet, all took part.



## A Better Planet School

St Margaret's Church of England VA Primary School in Tintinhull, Somerset, has been recognised for its 'consistently fantastic commitment' to environmental action by the Better Planet Schools programme, earning the school new equipment for its wildlife area. Anna Anderton, a teacher at St Margaret's, said: "The equipment will help us provide a safe and welcoming habitat for hedgehogs, insects, and birds, supporting biodiversity right here on our school grounds."



## Ask the animals

A new teaching programme for a group of rural churches in Bath and Wells has been put together to encourage parishioners to think about the significance of animals in the Bible, and what the stories about them can teach us in 2026. Churches in Peasedown St John, Foxcote, Shoscombe and Wellow

near Bath, will delve into the Bible to look at what guidance the scriptures have for us in the 21st century. Sunday sermons from January through to December will look at a different topic each month.

Find out more on these and other stories at [bathandwells.org.uk/news](https://bathandwells.org.uk/news)

# Growing in faith together

By Fiona Gibson, who will become Bishop of Taunton 8 February.

Our extended family recently got together for a celebration. We were nine adults from 24-68, one toddler, and one dog, and it was glorious! The joy was simply in being together, whatever our age.

I sometimes wonder what would happen in the life of our churches if we could adopt the same outlook there? Each generation glad that the other is there. Each generation contributing something to the whole. Each generation looking to the interests of the others, making sure there was something that spoke to the others even if not to them.

The writer of the Chronicles records something you could miss if you weren't looking for it. In 2 Chronicles 20, when Judah was facing attack from Ammon and Moab, King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and summoned the people. This is what it says in verse 13:

"All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children."

At a time of great peril, when the king was seeking the LORD, all generations came together to pray. We often think of intergenerational meaning us older ones passing on wisdom to the younger ones, and that's certainly part of it. But a truly intergenerational family, which the

church is, means all generations welcoming one another, valuing one another, learning from one another, and praying with and for one another. It's not a one-way thing.

Our younger generations are ambassadors from the future, with wisdom to give us about their culture, and how to share the timeless truths of the gospel with their peers. They are leaders and learners, just as we all are.

What might it look like across our diocese if we committed to making room for other generations? What might it look like if, like the people of God in ancient times, we came together in our year of especial focus on prayer - adults, young people, and little ones - and sought the power and wisdom of God together? I have a feeling we'd be surprised!

Bishop Fiona

Fiona will be consecrated on 6 February and will be installed as Bishop of Taunton on 8 February.

