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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

April 2026

He is risen!

Across our Diocese of Bath and Wells, churches are preparing to celebrate Easter, this most important day of our Christian calendar. Throughout Holy Week and on Easter Sunday there will be sunrise services and church services, community meals and coffee mornings with hot cross buns, and so much more.

During Holy Week, Bishop Michael will be witnessing many of these activities as he undertakes a pilgrimage walk through Exmoor and the Quantocks, calling in on churches along the way.

Bishop Michael says, "During this year of 2026, as a diocese together, we are having an especial focus on prayer. Pilgrimage is one of the most ancient ways that Christians have prayed, come closer to God and learned how better to walk with the Lord throughout their lives. I'm so excited that during Holy Week I'll be making this pilgrimage, meeting members of our churches, praying with them, and experiencing God in the beauty of His creation that's all around us. It's going to be an inspiring journey



A cross is placed on Nether Stowey Mount for Holy Week

that I look forward to sharing with many different people."

One of the places that Bishop Michael will be visiting is Nether Stowey, where a large cross is placed on the mount there at the start of Holy Week. On Good Friday, Bishop Michael will be joining the Walk of Witness down from the mount, into the village and on to the church where many hot cross buns will be consumed.

The Revd Eleanor King, Rector of the Quantock Villages Benefice said, "This walk of witness is one of the three big outdoor services that we have during the year. It is a special occasion when we are joined by members of the community, as well as our Christian brothers and sisters from other local churches."

Find out more at: bathandwells.org.uk/bishops-pilgrimage

News in brief

Bringing the youth voice to General Synod

Bath and Wells' Eleanor Motion has been selected as one of five Young Adult Representatives joining the Church of England's General Synod, giving young people a direct voice at the heart of the national church. The new Young Adult Reps initiative is part of a pilot project running across five dioceses and follows a motion passed in February last year, to create a clear pathway for young adults to take part in Synod discussions, ensuring their perspectives and experiences help shape the future of the Church.



Faith leaders head to Plymouth

Somerset faith and civic leaders, including Bath and Wells Interfaith Adviser Narinder Tegally and Diocesan Chaplaincy Adviser Richard Kelley, joined a visit to Plymouth to explore the city's community and cultural heritage. The trip, organised by the Somerset Interfaith Forum, brought together representatives

Spreading God's love across the sea

Ladies in the parish of Middlezoy are spreading God's love far and wide by knitting hats for the Seafarers' Mission in South Shields. What began with a few members of Holy Cross Church has grown into a village-wide effort, with more than 200 hats sent in recent years.

Jean Campbell, whose family has naval roots, says each hat is "a reminder to a seafarer that someone has made something just for them." Paul Akerman from the Mission adds, "Every knitted item shows seafarers they are seen, valued and remembered."



from the Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Quaker, Non-conformist and Anglican communities.

Hosted by Dr Judith Beckman, the group toured Plymouth's 263-year-old synagogue, the oldest Ashkenazi synagogue in continuous use in the English-speaking world.

Find out more on these and other stories at bathandwells.org.uk/news

Grace, truth, love & courage

By Fiona Gibson, Bishop of Taunton

Guilt, shame, mercy, and forgiveness. Four words all linked with Easter, which we shall celebrate this month. The last two of those seem to be in short supply at the moment. The 'gods' of social media are ready instantly to punish all offenders, now and in the future.

People often offer George Orwell's nightmare vision of Big Brother as a way to understand our times. I'm more drawn to the image of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon – a building where a watchman could observe all the inhabitants at all times but without the inhabitants knowing whether or not they're being watched – which ensured compliance. When we hear about online data harvesting it can feel as if everything you say, or do, can be recorded and held against you, ready to be brought out and used if needed.

Where's the mercy or the forgiveness in that? Where's the grace that understands we all make mistakes and need second chances? There's no possibility of wiping the slate clean and beginning again. Which is where the astounding grace and mercy we celebrate on Good Friday and Easter Day comes in.

Mark Greene of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity highlights how the wonder of Easter speaks words of grace and hope to our unmerciful world:

"All this judgement serves to highlight the majestic, counter-cultural grace of the Christian gospel. Yes, God is a God of justice, opposed to the degrading of any human on any grounds. Yes, he has seen our every furtive action, picked up every sly whisper, logged every darkling thought ... yet his mercy flows from the cross like an ocean, drenching the universe. As today's media Pharisees rage, God's offer is 'mercy, mercy, mercy' to all who would repent and receive him. And our watchwords: grace, truth, love, and courage."

May this encourage us all as we continue through Lent, experience Holy Week, and finally reach the joy of Easter.

Bishop Fiona



The light of Jesus' resurrection

As Easter approaches, the Revd Alice Watson, Vicar, Glastonbury, St John's, St Benedict's, and Meare, reflects on how our churches are preparing to share the hope and light of the resurrection with their communities.



Revd Alice Watson

What have you got planned for schools at Easter?

We'll have an interactive Easter experience in St John's for both Glastonbury schools. They'll come in, explore prayer stations, and walk through and learn about Holy Week.

What happens in Holy Week in Glastonbury?

There'll be Stations of the Cross in Abbey House Gardens. On Good Friday we're holding three hours devotion, there'll be a Service of the New Fire with baptisms and the lighting of the Easter candle. On Easter Day we're planning to go to the top of Glastonbury Tor at sunrise.

Is the timing of the reopening St John's significant?

It wasn't planned this way, but it is wonderful that it's happening in Holy Week. People want a quiet space for

prayer and devotion, and we're glad we can offer that. Glastonbury is a place of pilgrimage for many people. We will be able to offer a space for the community to come together and also for visitors to drop in.

Why is it important to be outside sharing your faith at Easter?

In a place like Glastonbury where so many people are on various spiritual paths and so many are searching for something, it is important for us to share our faith. Things like the walk of witness on Good Friday and prayers within and outside the church show that Christianity is a live and living faith which is deeply rooted in the tradition of Glastonbury.

What's the Easter message you most want to share?

That darkness is just shadow, that it has already been vanquished and that God has already defeated death and conquered evil. We all live in the light of Jesus' resurrection. And the hope, which is breaking in all around us, is for everybody. Just as we look outside and see spring breaking in all around us, God's kingdom too is breaking in around us.

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