

Generosity of heart

Revd Cheryl Hawkins, Vicar of St. Andrews, Burnham on Sea and the PCC met the Giving and Funding team to discuss what a Generosity Week might look like for their church.



St Andrew's offers a warm welcome

Why are you planning a Generosity Week?

We all naturally think generosity is that we've got put our hand in our pockets but it's a lot wider than that. At the heart of generosity is showing God's love. We want to focus on the generosity of giving, both in time and in volunteering, and think about monetary giving as well.

How did you begin to plan this?

We met with the Giving team and did a generosity health check. It got us thinking and praying about what generosity means for us as a church. Later we met them again to look at what our generosity and stewardship campaign would be.

How will you mark it?

During the archdeacon's Benefice Visit we'll have a special service. We're inviting community groups and the wider community to celebrate generosity and what happens in our parish.

Why is involving the community important?

Our doors are open to the community; we are part of the community. We want this to be a celebration of both what we do as a church, but also what the wider community do as well.

Is generosity just financial?

I think it is love in action. It's serving, listening, encouraging, and showing Christ's love to the people around us.

Why did you feel it was important to undertake a Generosity Week?

I love the expression generosity of heart, to me that is God's love. How can we be generous in showing that? We don't know whether it's going to be a success, but we've got to start somewhere.

What would you say to others thinking about doing this?

The Giving team has helped us to see that where are we at the moment and has encouraged us to push that a little bit further. In that way it doesn't feel like a risk. It has enabled us to see where our gifts are and use them in a way that helps us to engage with generosity. Others can do that too.

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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩ September 2025

Living generously

For Christians generosity isn't optional or extra to our faith, it is part of who we are. Jesus showed us how to live generously by giving himself completely, in love, in service and in sacrifice. He calls us to do the same, trusting that in giving we find life.

Natalie Wainwright, Bath and Wells Lead Giving and Funding Adviser, says "Generosity is central to who we are as Christians, but it is easy to lose sight of it in the busyness of church life. Generosity Week, planned for 28 September to 5 October but can be held in at any time throughout the year, allows us to reflect on what giving means and to explore what it looks like in practice. There are simple resources available help support us."

Generosity is a response to God's love, lived out in our everyday choices. Generosity can be expressed through time, encouragement, hospitality, prayer and finance. It starts with intention and grows through practice.

Natalie says we are often inspired when we think about giving in different ways. She says, "Giving isn't something we do once; it is something we do for life."



This may include discussions about what we pass on. Natalie adds, "Many of our churches have plaques and windows dedicated to those who left gifts in their wills. These are stories of faith in action and may encourage us to reflect on the legacy we may want to leave."

This may also inspire younger generations to contemplate what a generous life looks like. Children and young people often notice what is celebrated and are shaped by an invitation to take part. This could be encouraging them to see generosity not as something for later in life, but part of following Jesus now.

Generosity Week can become part of the rhythm of your year, taking a moment to pause, and reflect on what it means to live generously in response to God's love.

Read more about Generosity Week churchofengland.org/generosity-week

News in brief

Young adults from Bath and Wells speak to General Synod

Eleanor Motion and Alfie Rendell were among a group of young people who shared the views of young people with General Synod in York. Eleanor shared how important she feels it is that young people are given space to belong, grow and worship, not just serve. Alfie joined a panel of discussing the Bible Society, report, 'The Quiet Revival'. He explained why he feels it is important to listen to and hear from the young people in your church community.

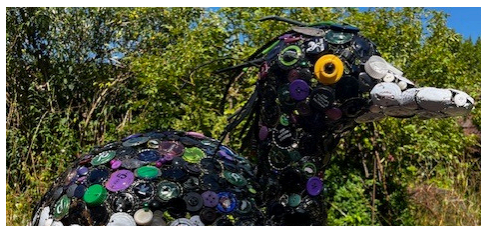


A space to be still

A quiet new initiative is drawing people together each week, not around activity, but around silence. The Julian Prayer Group, recently started by Revd Rona Stuart-Bourne, Priest in Charge, Milborne Port offers space for contemplative prayer and stillness. Each session begins with a short prayer and reading.

Bringing Somerset's waterways to life through art

An eco-arts festival celebrating the vital waterways of Somerset and the rich tapestry of plant and animal life they support took place in Shepton Mallet. Flock, a growing creative Christian community in the town, organised the event in collaboration with Somerset Wildlife Trust to highlight the importance of water ecosystems. At the heart of the event was the Water Life Trail, which featured 50 striking sculptures made by local artists from recycled materials.



Then Rona plays a piece of music, followed by 20 - 30 minutes of silence. If people want to share something afterwards, they can. 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."

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

Generosity begets generosity

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

In August I was privileged to dedicate the restored clock in the tower of Montacute church. It's not just any old clock. In fact, Montacute's is amongst the oldest in the country. Built in the village in around 1400, the clock is so old that it is held in place by iron wedges. At the time of its construction, the nut and the bolt wouldn't be invented for another hundred years!

Montacute's is not just any old clock. It is an artefact that seems to generate generosity. In the 1980s the clock was restored by Humphrey Hamlin, for whom it is now named. Humphrey poured time and energy into its mechanism, preventing it from being scrapped. During the last two years, heroic efforts by the people of Montacute have led to its further restoration. All this was marked last month by a whole village gathering. The community choir sang, morris men danced, the local pub provided a hog roast, cake was dispensed in huge quantities. Montacute is a beautiful example of how generosity begets generosity. Like a chain reaction, one act of generosity, the restoration of the clock, led to another, another and another. As a result, a whole

community was brought together in celebration and joy.

In his second letter to the Church in Corinth, Paul writes of the church in Macedonia that 'their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity' (2 Cor 8:2). Having nothing, the Macedonians discovered that they could still give. In turn, their generosity enabled Paul to challenge and encourage the church in Corinth to do the same. All to help the struggling Church in Jerusalem.

As I travel around our diocese, I see this pattern of generosity begetting generosity happening in so many places. One person starts, another adds their contribution, more join in and soon we learn that together we are so much more than the sum of our parts. This is the economy of God. It's an economy that all of us are invited to join.

Bishop Michael

