

Week commencing 16 August 2026

Connect

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



South Quantock benefice Lammas service supports our farming communities

On the first Sunday in August, Bishop Fiona joined the South Quantock Benefice Lammas service. Held in the open air near the church of St Mary and All Saints, Broomfield, it's a service that has been organised and led for many years by the parish's Reader, Diana Taylor who is also a local dairy farmer. Around 85 people of all generations were present, from the Benefice and beyond, and Revd Jim Cox sent us these wonderful photographs.

Diana and others led the service, a local farmer brought some wheat as a symbol of the harvest, and many people brought loaves of bread as a sign of thankfulness to God. Bishop Fiona preached on Jesus as the Bread of Life, from John 6.

She says, "After the service, we very much enjoyed eating the bread, along with Somerset cheese, and partaking of Somerset cider or apple juice for those, like me, who had to drive home! It was particularly poignant to hold the service when we're in the middle of a prolonged drought which is having such a terrible impact on our land and our farmers." [Read the full story](#) which includes the 'Prayer for rain' on our website.



Prayers for our farming communities

Diocesan Rural Adviser, Rob Walrond, has shared a prayer for the farming community, inviting us to hold all those involved in farming in our prayers and to offer them care and support during this challenging time.

Loving Father God,

We lift up to you at this time all working in our farming communities.

Bless them in their endeavours, sustain them in these challenging working conditions, protect them and their animals from harm and keep them mindful of

Your love and care and the care of those around them.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen

Rob, who is a farmer himself, says, "This is one of the hardest times I have ever known for the farming community. The unprecedented number of heatwaves and persistent drought have hit every farmer across Somerset. On top of this, the virulent disease Bluetongue is now rife across Somerset, meaning every cattle and sheep farmer is on high alert.

"I know many churches will already be holding farmers across the diocese in prayer, and offering care in quiet, thoughtful ways. Where people feel able, a simple card or message to a farmer nearby, letting them know they are being thought of and prayed for, can mean a great deal."

If you have particular concerns, the Christian support charity the [Farming Community Network](#) can be contacted.



New Building Management Portal to replace Online Faculty System

The Church of England is introducing the Building Management Portal, which will replace the Online Faculty System for applications relating to works on churches, their contents, and churchyards, with a planned release date of 6 October 2026.

The existing faculty, List A, and List B processes are not changing, but the new portal will provide a clearer digital route for preparing, submitting, reviewing, and managing applications.

Users will access the portal through the CofE Portal, which includes two-factor authentication. Some users may also need to complete a one-time registration process so that the correct church, diocese, and role access can be assigned. Further guidance will be shared locally during the rollout. [Read more here.](#)



Generosity week

Generosity often sits at the heart of our Christian communities and while there isn't an official Church of England Generosity Week in 2026, that doesn't mean you can't make the most of the Generosity Week resources to hold your own. Harvest is recognised as one of the best times to conduct an annual giving review, when many church members will already be preparing to reflect on and give thanks for God's generosity to us, and to prayerfully consider their own response to that generosity.

Natalie Wainwright, Lead Giving and Funding Adviser says, "You can run a Generosity Week in your church to coincide with your Harvest Festival but, if that doesn't work for you, don't let it put you off. We are called to be generous 365 days a year, so run it whenever suits you!"

[Visit the Church of England's Generosity Week web page](#) to find a range of resources to help you plan your generosity week, from sermon starters to daily prayers and small group resources. Generosity Week can be a great time to thank your current givers and ensure your congregation and wider community know how their gifts can make a real difference. It can also be a good way to introduce new giving mechanisms, such as the Parish Giving Scheme, or launch a fundraising appeal for a new project.

If you have held a generosity week in your church in the last few years, we'd love to hear how it went, what resources you found most helpful and how it impacted local giving. Do share your story by emailing comms@bathwells.anglican.org

Don't forget you can also [join the Giving and Funding and Finance Team at 12:30 on 9 September for the next online Midweek Money Matters Chat](#). Or sign up to attend our [Money Matters training day](#) on 10 October at Flourish House from 10:00 to 16:00, for more inspiring ways to engage givers and encourage generosity.



Safeguarding Sunday: register now

Registration is now open for Safeguarding Sunday which will take place on 15 November. This year's theme is inspired by 1 Corinthians 13, which reminds us that love "always protects", helping churches explore safeguarding as an expression of care, protection and love.

Ben Goodhind, Safeguarding Manager for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, says: "I hope all our parishes will take advantage of these resources and hold a Safeguarding Sunday service, even if it isn't on the 15 November. A Safeguarding Sunday service is an important opportunity to share the message that we take safeguarding seriously, to remember those who we have failed in the past, but also to celebrate the efforts of those who are making a difference in our churches and helping them be safe places for all."

Safeguarding Sunday is an annual awareness campaign led by Thirtyone:eight, the UK's leading Christian, independent safeguarding charity. Resources, including service-planning materials and ready-to-use content, are available when you register.

[Find out more and register to receive your Safeguarding Sunday resources.](#)



A big thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) this year. Our completion rate has risen from 65% last year to 80%, which is a brilliant step forward.

Completing the EFT is important because it is a requirement for all national church grant funding. Churches that have completed their EFT are eligible to apply for National Church Net Zero Carbon grants, including the Net Zero Quick Wins Fund, which can be applied for [directly through our website](#).

Our Net Zero Project Lead Dan Wills, says, "Over the next couple of months, we will be analysing the 2025 EFT data and will be back in touch with churches where there may be useful follow-up, support or opportunities. The EFT will open again in January, and we've found that churches who completed it most easily were often those who kept a simple record of their energy bills throughout the year. With that in mind, now is a good time to start gathering your 2026 electricity, gas, oil or other fuel bills into one place, ideally in a simple spreadsheet, ready for next year's submission. Thank you again for helping us build a clearer picture of energy use across the Diocese and supporting our shared journey towards Net Zero Carbon."

If you'd like more information about the EFT, [check out the environment section](#) of this website.

Hello from Jon Rae, our new Net Zero Regional Fundraiser

Since then, I have done many interesting things including serving as a senior scientist on common property with the United Nations in Southwest Asia and North Africa and taken the biodiversity lead for the Dorset National Landscape. The thread throughout has been raising funds for nature, built heritage, education and peace-making. Working across five dioceses, my focus is to raise money, to save money, and to co-weave compelling narratives that bring religion, society and science together behind ambitious projects.

I will work with the leadership teams and parishes identifying and securing funding opportunities towards delivering net carbon zero projects. Over my first six months I will be



meeting staff, clergy and lay people across the South West to identify the projects I will assist with in the first instance, while keeping everyone aware of emerging funding opportunities and lobbying for your interests within the public and corporate bodies that shape the energy we use to deliver mission.

I look forward to meeting you along the way.

I grew up in the shadow of Westminster Abbey, with the Dean, Edward Carpenter, as my Godfather and the Cardinal, Basil Hume, down the road as my mentor. I studied at Baylor, the Christian university in Waco, Texas, where my son starts later this month.

Green investment roadshow

Would you like to explore how to make your church finances work for climate, nature and social justice?

Churches are faced with an increasingly complex landscape, including the environmental and moral implications of AI, mining, fossil fuels, and emerging green technologies and solutions.

The roadshow will bring together experts and organisations showcasing inspiring examples of climate solutions alongside investment opportunities for institutions, churches and individuals.



If you're interested then the date for your diary is Monday 7 September at Friends' House, London.

[Find out more and book your place online.](#)



Windrush generation nurse who trained in Taunton shares her inspiring story

We had the pleasure of welcoming Lynette Richards-Lorde, a pioneering nurse and member of the Windrush generation, back to Somerset this week. She met Bishop Fiona and shared her story and memories of arriving as a teenager in Taunton in 1959, more than 4,000 miles away from home.

Lynette was just 19 when she travelled from Guyana to train as a nurse at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, the place where her remarkable career began.

During her visit to Bath and Wells, she shared memories of homesickness, finding community through church, and what it meant to be a young Black woman building a life and career in Britain at that time.

She also reflected on the faith that sustained her and on her achievements, including championing personalised care in midwifery and becoming the first Black woman in the UK to be appointed divisional nursing officer for midwifery. [Read more about Lynette's inspiring story](#) of courage, service and hope.

Image: Lynette with Bishop Fiona, Susann Savidge, Chair Somerset African Caribbean Network, Lynette's daughter Chrissy Richards-Levi.



Photo credit: Geoff Crawford

General Synod opportunities for young adults

Could you encourage the young adults in your church community to consider these three opportunities to help shape the Church of England?

Standing for General Synod

Elections take place in Autumn 2026 for a five-year term. It is an opportunity to represent your diocese nationally, contribute to decision-making, and help shape the Church's future.

Nominations close 7 September 2026. More information is available online at cofe.io/StandForSynod and [How to Get Elected to General Synod](#)

Becoming a co-opted young adult Synod member

Young adults can join General Synod for a year as a non-voting member, contributing to debates and discussions while connecting with Church leaders and peers.

Young adults can [apply here](#). Application deadline: 2 October 2026.

Joining the General Synod Young Voices Network

This is an opportunity to connect with other young adults, attend online gatherings and events, and help support young people's voices within Synod. [Register here](#)

If you too are interested in standing as a member of General Synod find out more about the process [on the Bath and Wells website](#).

Advent and Christmas theme 2026



This year's national church Advent and Christmas theme focuses on the first and greatest Christmas gift of all: the gift of God being born as one of us in Jesus Christ.

The Gift of Christmas invites us to join with our communities this Advent and Christmas:

- to celebrate the great gift God offers to each one of us in the birth of Jesus
- to receive that gift – and all God gives to us – with gratitude and joy, and
- to respond to God's generosity by serving others, especially those in need.

[Find out more about the resources available](#) on the Church of England website, or you can register for the special [Advent and Christmas resources webinar](#) on Tuesday 8 September at 14:00 to hear about how you can join in with the theme.



New youth confirmation course

'Confirmation' is a new resource funded by the Archbishops Council's Partnership, and delivered by Youthscape. A full free set of resources is now available to download by visiting the [Youthscape website](#).

The brand-new course supports and prepares young people journeying towards confirmation and provides leaders with a well-rounded suite of flexible resources from which to build a bespoke course that's right for their group and setting.

Grounded in evidence and research, the course has been through a rigorous development process and has been created in consultation with bishops, clergy (including Launchpad participants) and of course young people themselves.

In addition to the information on the website, you can also find out more by attending a webinar during which the team will introduce the course and take questions. The webinar is for anyone (laity, staff, or clergy) interested in finding out more about the course and how it might be used in their setting.

Two dates are available:

- Tuesday 15 September 2026 - 13:30 (45 mins)
- Wednesday 7 October 2026 - 13:30 (45 mins)

To register, please email jemimah.allen@youthscape.co.uk with:

1. Your name and role
2. Your parish name and code (Or diocese name if diocesan staff)
3. Which webinar you would like to attend (15/09/26 or 07/10/26)
4. Any specific questions or area you would like us to cover during the webinar.

You will then be sent a webinar link and joining instructions.



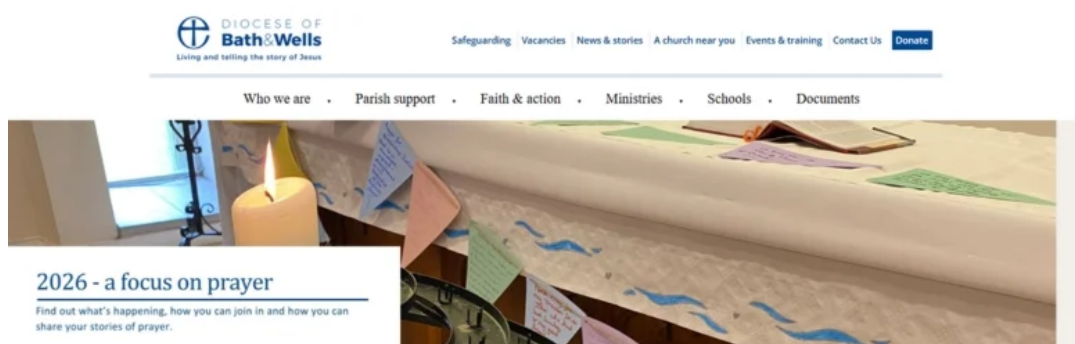
'On New Roads' - a reminder to join the Franciscan Peace pilgrimage

A national pilgrimage which began in Northumberland in July and is due to arrive in East London in October in time for the Feast of St Francis on 4 October, is due to pass through Somerset on its way to Hilfield Friary in Dorset.

On Friday, 4 September the pilgrims will be at Compton Martin before travelling on to Wells Cathedral on Saturday 5 September for Evensong at 17:15.

You are invited to register to join one or more legs of the pilgrimage route. Why not bring a group from your parish or chaplaincy?

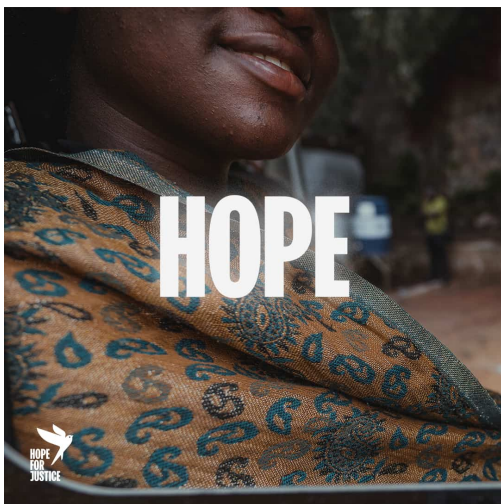
Full details are available online: www.spiritoffrancis.com or for further information about the Somerset legs contact TSSF Area Minister, Carolyne Stock carolynestock@ymail.com



Website changes coming soon

In the next couple of weeks, you may notice that our Diocese of Bath and Wells website looks a little different. The site is being updated and will offer an improved search facility and new-style menu to help users navigate the site and reach the information and resources they need more quickly.

Have your say: there is still time to share your feedback on our key diocesan communication channels, including the website, Connect and Manna. [Complete our online form.](#)



Help to end modern slavery

More than 50 million people are trapped in modern slavery worldwide. The charity [Hope for Justice](#) exists to bring freedom, restore lives and help end this injustice.

This summer, churches are invited to join Hope for Justice's 50 Days of Hope campaign to [pray](#), [raise awareness](#), and [fundraise](#). For more information [email Karen Roach](#) at Hope for Justice.

Marriage Preparation pilot course

For over 30 years, Alpha has offered The Pre-Marriage Course—a five-week course designed to help couples build a strong and lasting relationship.

Traditionally, this has been run in person (and more recently online) but Alpha is now piloting a new platform that enables couples to go through the course from the comfort of their own home.

The aim is to make marriage preparation more accessible, while also reducing the practical demands on local church teams.



If you'd like to find out more, you can do so on the [Alpha website](#) or by emailing [Chris Williams](#) at Alpha directly.

Take part in the National Conversation

You and your church are invited to join [The National Conversation](#) to have 'your say' on the future of our country.

The National Conversation is a chance for everyone to contribute ideas about how to shape a more united future for England. It has been launched by the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion. This is a non-partisan, time-limited commission tasked with uncovering a vision for the future.

The Commission wants to hear from churches because it knows that we are on the frontline of community life. We see the pressures on families and young people, the

impact of economic insecurity and cultural change, the tensions and misunderstandings between different groups — and the deep desire many people still have for belonging, meaning and hope. As trusted places where people of all backgrounds come together, churches have a view of connection and division like no other.

Churches Together in England General Secretary, Bishop Mike Royal, urged Christians to take part. He said: "The voice of the church is as important as any other voice. Make sure, as a church leader, you have your say in The National Conversation." Find out more on this video: <https://youtube.com/shorts/5kjyLr5TUfg>



A wonderful wedding entrance

The arrival of the bride at a recent wedding at Holy Cross, Mark caused something of stir both locally and in the national, and even international, press.

Why? Well, Victoria Lee, as she is now, arrived astride her favourite Swiss cow, White Chocolate Button!

Revd Eddie Wills, an Associate Priest for the Wedmore Isle and Moors Benefice, said, "I've never taken a wedding where the church was completely empty five minutes before it was due to start. Everyone wanted to be outside to see Victoria and White Chocolate Button arrive!" [Read the story here.](#)



Rededication for German airman

A special rededication ceremony has been held in Porlock to mark the installation of a headstone for Wilhelm Reuhl, a 20-year-old German airman who died during the Second World War, when his aircraft was shot down over the town. His body was recovered from the wreckage and he was buried in Porlock.

His grave was marked by a simple wooden cross and cared for by local people. This act of respect and remembrance led to friendships developing between his family and the residents of Porlock who tended his grave. This week Revd Ann Gibbs, Rector, the Benefice of Porlock, led



Songs of Praise comes to Bridgwater

There is excitement at Holy Trinity Church, Bridgwater as they welcomed the [Songs of Praise](#) production team on Saturday to film an episode of the programme at the church.

It is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the life, worship and community of the church, and to share something of Holy Trinity's story with viewers across the country.

The programme will be broadcast later in the year, and we look forward to sharing the date so everyone can tune in and enjoy it.

the service of dedication
ensuring that he is
commemorated with the
dignity afforded to all
war dead, regardless of
their nationality. [Read
more about this story.](#)

Photos by Adrian Moore

In Brief

- A [series of webinars](#) aimed at new curates to support them as they begin their new ministry. Called 'Talking Money 2026' the webinars explore the topics of money, budgeting, giving and generosity.
- Could you make a valuable difference to those who need support in times of need? Are you able to provide practical and spiritual care regardless of faith or background? If so, you may be interested in being a [Police Chaplaincy volunteer](#) with the Avon and Somerset Force.
- Wells Cathedral is hosting a major symposium on 9 October to celebrate the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale's New Testament (1526). The event will feature seven internationally respected scholars of Bible translation, textual criticism, Reformation history and theology. For more information and to book tickets [visit the cathedral website.](#)
- All Saints' Church in Martock are hosting a new staging of the Gospel of Mark. 'I am Mark' will be performed solely by Stefan Smart. More details are [available online.](#)
- [Cavatina Orchestra](#) Festival 22-25 September From and Mells, a classical music festival which is open to anyone who would like to attend. For more information and tickets visit the [cavantinaorchestra.com website](#)
- Cleeve with Claverham Benefice no longer have a choir but have a music library with a number of Festival Service books which they would like to offer as resource to others. If you would like more details please email [Dianna Cook.](#)

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

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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