

Growing together

Spring is a time that we celebrate the signs of new growth, making it the perfect time to come together to share stories of growing church. That's just what happened at the second Greenhouse gathering which took place in March. Those who attended were able to share the progress on their projects to grow their churches, learn from each other and get creative together.

Megan Jones-Dellaportas is part of the team planning to start a new church on the new Orchard Grove housing estate in Trull. She says, "It's great to have the opportunity to get together with others going through something similar. I didn't know what to expect at our



Gathering for Greenhouse at St Peter's & St Paul's, South Petherton

first gathering, but I came away inspired and with lots of ideas to share with my team. It also gives you an important time to reflect. When you are busy doing what you are doing it's easy not to realise what you have achieved, but today I've been able to reflect on the last six months as I share my news with others."

Sally Mottram and Barbara Taylor from Ilchester were also able

to share their good news. They started a new church gathering in September 2023, in a school at the other end of the village from the church. They said, "We wanted to offer a way to access worship for those who aren't drawn to worship in a church building and we've already got a core group of families who come every month. Even when it poured with rain the other Sunday and we thought no one would turn up, they did, which is a very encouraging sign for the future."

Find out more about Greenhouse and how it can help you nurture new Christian worshipping communities: bathwells.org.uk/greenhouse ■

News in brief

Good global neighbours

Wells Cathedral has announced changes to its admission guidelines from 22 April. Free passes are available to local people and to parishioners in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, with a new £14 entry charge for tourists. It will remain free to enter for worship, prayer, and to light a candle. The monies raised by the tourist admission charge will go towards the care of the cathedral building and its mission. Information about the Parish Pass and how to apply for it is available from the [Wells Cathedral website](https://www.wells-cathedral.org.uk) ■



Bishop Michael to visit Zambia

Bishop Michael will be making his first visit to Zambia as Bishop of Bath and Wells this month, having previously spent time there during his career as an epidemiologist.

Commenting on his visit, which takes place from 22 April to 5 May 2024, Bishop Michael says, "I am really looking forward to be going back to Zambia. It takes the whole world to know Christ and I'm so excited at the thought of all I will learn from our Zambian brothers and sisters. I am also looking forward to the opportunity to explore how we can potentially work together on a joint environmental project involving our schools." ■

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

A unique art exhibition

An immersive response by four artists to the Easter themes of ascension and love, grounded in the locality of Martock, the Levels and Somerset is on display in All Saints Church, Martock from 20 to 28 April. Painter Tessa Coleman, writer Lucy Jago, sound artist Zivi Sainsbury and sculptor Rachel Goodison, collaborated on the installation for the beautiful space of All Saints, finding inspiration in the church and its community ■



Worship is key

By Michael Langrish, Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Bath and Wells

In January I was back in my old Diocese of Exeter, marking the death of Sabine Baring Gould 100 years before.

What an extraordinary person he was, with an incredible range and roundedness of learning and interests, in a full and fulfilled life. He was a great traveller and prolific writer of biographies, folklore, travel books, theology, novels and hymns, including some, such as 'Onward Christian soldiers' that remain popular today. He was a linguist and translator; and, as an archaeologist on Dartmoor, very much a pioneer in the field. For many, his greatest achievement was collecting the folk songs of Devon and Cornwall, providing inspiration for such composers as

Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Holst. He was the Squire of Lewtrenchard and, being ordained, he appointed himself as parish priest as well!

This he saw as his true vocation. His responsibility, and that of the local church, was the cure of souls from cradle to grave. This meant a care for the spiritual wellbeing of all in the community and for their bodily and social welfare. Striving for good health and housing going hand in hand with growth in faith and prayer. All encouraged to full humanity, to holy discipleship, to the recognition, and use, of their gifts for the common good.

But, underlying all of this, one other aspect of this great man's life speaks very strongly to me now. That is how he understood worship

and its relationship to the whole of life. 'To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God'.

This edition of Manna contains encouraging stories of New Christian Worshipping Communities in Bath and Wells. Worshipping is key. I am reminded of the later words of Archbishop William Temple: 'It is sometimes said that conduct is supremely important, and worship helps it. The truth is that worship is supremely important, and conduct tests it.'

Bishop Michael

A life of shared prayer and mission

The Revd Liz Dudley, with Pioneers Elizabeth and Andrew Alden share plans for a new Christian Community in Frome.

What is happening in Frome?

Work is underway at the former vicarage at St Mary's to prepare the house for a new Christian community of four self-supporting adults. They will live there for a year and work locally.

What will Mary's House offer?

It will offer a lifestyle grounded in contemplative prayer and a Christian commitment to the environment. As a community, their shared life will be marked by a daily pattern of prayer, weekly work in the local community, and a rule of life with shared values and approaches to missional living.

Why Frome?

The combination of St Mary's site, the congregation's missional outlook, and the pioneering work at The Giant's Garden presents a



Preparations are underway at Mary's House.

compelling opportunity to explore and potentially establish a new Christian community here.

What's the local reaction to the new community?

Frome is open to the spiritual side of life, there is a common concern for those on the edge of society and we hope that those who choose to live here will be able to connect with that aspect of life here. Mary's House offers an opportunity to show that you can live out in the world and live in a Christian community with a rhythm of prayer and rule of

life; that it is possible to do the two together.

What's your hope for the community?

That this community will contribute to God's work of regeneration in the churches and the town, increasing the missional impact of God's people. Long term it could develop a model that could be replicated elsewhere in the diocese. The community will include a dispersed element of people living in their own homes but following a similar rule of life.

When do you expect to open?

We hope those called to help establish the residential expression of the community will move into Mary's House from September onwards. Read more at bathandwells.org.uk/st-marys-frome

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