

**Swindon Old Town Partnership of Churches  
Anglican - United Reformed - Methodist - Est. 1969**

## **PARTNERSHIP MAGAZINE**

**MARCH 2022**

**80 PENCE**

### **THE JUBILEE MEMORIAL GARDEN AT CHRIST CHURCH**



**One in Christ - Together in Mission**



The High Sheriff of Wiltshire

*Requests the pleasure  
of your company at a*

**CHARITY CONCERT FOR  
ROTARY SWINDON CARES**

*FEATURING*

**THE WESSEX MALE CHOIR**

Saturday 26th March, 7.30 pm at Christ Church,  
Old Town, Swindon SN1 3HB

Rotary Swindon Cares is supporting  
**SWINDON DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICE**  
1175148 Tel. 01793 864984

Tickets are available from  
Christ Church Community Centre, Mon, Tues, Fri, 9.15am-12 noon,  
Wed and Thurs 1.00 pm-4.00 pm  
email: [ccooperations@christchurchswindon.co.uk](mailto:ccooperations@christchurchswindon.co.uk)

Swindon Central Library

By email to: [rotarynicky@nickyalberry.co.uk](mailto:rotarynicky@nickyalberry.co.uk)

<http://www.wessexmalechoir.co.uk/tickets>

Nicky Alberry, Business West, Park House, Church Place, Swindon SN1 5ED  
If you are unable to attend but would like to make a donation in favour of  
Rotary Club of Swindon Trust Account this would be appreciated.

**TICKETS**

£10 for Concert only

£20 per person including Reception after the Concert

Unreserved seating

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# Partnership Letter

Immanuel Manse  
152 Drove Road

Greetings to you all,

It's a rainy afternoon and I have just got back from a hospital visit. I think it's the first visit in nearly two years and it was a lovely visit – good smiles, good chat, all in all a good time for both of us. And this helps me to embark on what I want to share with you this month.

One of the Swindon events I always enjoyed attending was the Swindon Literary Festival – I heard some fascinating presentations and got to know some interesting authors. There was one in particular that I vividly remember: Roman Krznaric who spoke about EMPATHY: why it matters and how to get it<sup>1</sup>. The wonderful thing was that the following Christmas I received that book as a Christmas present. Now it is underlined, read and re-read and lots of the pages are earmarked. It keeps reminding me that it is a crucial topic; **Empathy is a sign of our humanity.**

The front quote, as you open the book, sets the tone of what follows: *“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?”* (Henry David Thoreau). To which I can only say Amen. Isn't that what our faith is all about?

“EMPATHY is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide our actions” (page X). The author equates that with the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. Do you think it works? I do! However, I also must admit that it doesn't work all the time, not with all people; but when it works, it makes a huge difference, in that we connect to our humanity which is one thing we all have in common.

In many ways, over the last months, most human beings from all around the world have experienced pain, loneliness, fear and challenges. We have gone through situations we could not have anticipated at all and in the midst of that we have heard of, seen and even experienced kindness in surprising ways and how to make sure that people knew that, even if shut up inside the house, ➤

there were people who cared, who shared, who phoned, who helped with the shopping, who were doing the best to make a point: you aren't alone. And WOW, didn't that make a difference?

Empathy has a healing quality to it and it has the capacity of healing both sides. That is another reason why it is so necessary, so important. In our current reality, when we see people in pain, excluded, ignored, isolated... this is often due to the lack of empathy on the part of others; it shocks us, it hurts us all and this too is happening at this time. Time and time again we read about selfishness, individualism, lack of concern, as if others didn't exist or didn't matter. It begins with one step and then another, and finally some just get used to ignoring people and a whole culture of indifference surrounds us. This is wrong, this is unacceptable and we need to challenge this culture of indifference for what it is: not the will of God.

I've just got back from church and it is still raining. On my desk was an envelope, and inside the latest bulletin of the Church Action on Poverty, celebrating its 40 years. It is one of the many publications that I receive, together with Amnesty International, Liberty, Solidarity with the people of Palestine, just to mention a few, and each and all invite us to do the same thing – can we put ourselves into their place, try and feel what they feel, imagine surviving on what they have... can we walk on as if nothing has happened?

I am moved. I am challenged. I often feel ashamed. I know that none of that will change the situation in which they are living, but can I pretend that it doesn't matter? Then the story Jesus tells us of what we call the Good Samaritan comes to mind – isn't that one of the most wonderful narratives of what Empathy is all about? A man injured, lying on the side of the road, the priest goes by ignoring him, the Levite goes by ignoring him but the Samaritan, the most unlikely of all of them, goes by, stops, cares and helps. I have to learn from that Samaritan.

Is it true that we, human beings are essentially selfish, as some people believe? That the only way forward is to care for our own interests? What do you think?

I believe it could be true, if we let it be true, but that we do have the empathetic gene given to us and we are invited to multiply it and expand it. Let us recognise how easy it is to be selfish but also to recognise that we can be empathetic, and so make a difference, as Roman Krznarich says "Empathy withers and dies



when we fail to acknowledge the humanity of others” (page 47): migrants, refugees, people from other cultures, people who are starving, people who cross the channel in search of a possibility of a better life.

To all, Jesus says “I have come so that all may have life in fullness.”



1EMPATHY: Why it matters, and how to get it. Roman Krznaric. Rider, 2014



## **STAINER'S CRUCIFIXION**

will be performed by our

**Partnership Choirs**

on

**Good Friday 15th April, 7.00 pm**

**at Christ Church**

Conductor: Geoff Gleed

Organist: Tim Eyles

Details will be in the April magazine.

## FAMILY EVENTS

### DEATHS

*We extend our sympathy to the loved ones*

#### CHRIST CHURCH

Jan 29 Hazel Shurmer, 94 years  
Feb 3 Cynthia Jasmine Batters, 87 years

### FLOODLIGHTING

If you would like to sponsor the floodlighting of Christ Church in celebration of a birthday, wedding anniversary, special occasion, to advertise your Company, or in memory of a loved one, the minimum gift per evening is **£30.00**.

Cheques to be made payable to 'Christ Church PCC'. Please write to the PARISH OFFICE, COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH, SWINDON, SN1 3HB at least a week before the date of the floodlighting. GIFT AID:

If you are a UK taxpayer and wish Christ Church to reclaim the tax, you may Gift Aid your donation. email: [parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk](mailto:parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk)  
Tel. 522832

**CHURCH MAGAZINE:** If you are experiencing difficulty in getting your magazine, you can always purchase one from Rose Earle, Newsagent, Newport Street, who kindly sells them for us throughout the year.

## THE PARTNERSHIP LENT STUDY



This is being held at Bath Road Methodist Church for 5 weeks on the following Tuesdays - 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th March and 5th April at 7.30pm and finishing by 9pm.

The Partnership Lent Study is based on the musical 'Hamilton' and is entitled 'The Room Where it Happens'. The study includes clips from the show that tie in with the

themes. The evening will be based around small group discussion.

The themes being covered are:

1. Identity and Belonging.
2. Ambition and Temptation.
3. Forgiveness and Redemption.
4. Love and Sacrifice.
5. Hope and Courage through Adversity.

Please put these dates in your diary and join us in this exploration of how our faith can impact the world around us.

“Hamilton” is an American Musical and tells the story of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton.

### Partnership Confirmation - Sunday 8th May

We are looking forward to our Old Town Partnership Confirmation on Sunday 8th May, 10.00 am at Bath Road Methodist Church. Bishop Viv will be joining Mark and Robert as joint confirming ministers. We will be having Confirmation preparation towards the end of March, so please have a word with one of the ministers if you would like to consider this exciting possibility. Please can we encourage you to include our Partnership Prayer in your prayers each day in March:

Loving God, we are one in Jesus Christ. Help us to live out this unity in our Partnership through mission, so that those around us may turn to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In His name we pray. *Amen*





## Women's World Day of Prayer

Salvation Army Citadel, Devizes Road, Swindon.

Friday March 4th 2022 at 11.00 am

**Theme: I know the plans I have for you**

**You are invited to the above service.**

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women in the USA and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission, at home and abroad. It is from such roots as these that WDP has taken its present shape.

Since 1812 women encouraged one another to engage in personal prayer and to lead communal prayer within their mission auxiliaries and associations. This emphasis on prayer led to annual days and weeks of prayers within individual denominations.

From 1861 onwards women founded numerous and effective women's boards for foreign and home missions, working directly with and for women and children.

The role of prayer in mission work:.

From 1887 - 1895 a day of prayer grew as Methodist, Baptist and then Anglican churches called for prayer for mission. By 1897 the women of six denominations had formed a joint committee for a united day of prayer for home missions.

1908: Women founded the Council of Women for Home Missions for joint work with immigrants and social issues and for preparation of the joint day of prayer. In 1912 the Women's Boards of Foreign Missions called for a united day of prayer for foreign missions.

Efforts for unity continued and in 1922 two separate united days of prayer, one in Canada and one in the United States, came together with a common date – the first Friday of Lent. In the second half of 1926 the women of North America distributed the worship service to many countries and partners in mission. The response worldwide was enthusiastic and the World Day of Prayer came into being. ➤

It was in 1928, at an international missionary conference in Jerusalem, that Scotswoman Grace Forgan first learned of the World Day of Prayer and brought the news to these islands: 1930 in Scotland, 1932 in England, 1933 in Wales, 1934 in Ireland, 1943 in Northern Ireland despite WWII.

The logo was designed for the 1982 service. The design comprises arrows converging from the 4 points of the compass, 4 figures kneeling in prayer, the Celtic cross and a circle representing the world and our unity through all our diversity.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there are now over 3,000 branches holding 5,000 services every year. Last year 275,000 copies of the order of service were printed.

## **Not by Erin Hanson**

You are not your age or the size of the clothes you wear,  
You are not a weight or the colour of your hair.  
You are not your name or the dimples in your cheeks.  
You are all the books you read and all the words you speak.  
You are your croaky morning voice and the smiles you try to hide.  
You're the sweetness in your laughter and every tear you've cried.  
You're the songs you sing so loudly when you know you are all alone.  
You're the places that you have been to and the one that you call home.  
You're the things that you believe in and the people whom you love.  
You're the photos in your bedroom and the future you dream of.  
You're made of so much beauty but it seems that you forgot  
When you decided that you were defined by all the things you're not.

*Erin Hanson is an Australian poet who began writing aged just eleven; she is now in her mid-twenties,*

Contributed by a reader from Bath Road Church.

Sent in by a reader from Bath Road Church.

# Christ Church with St. Mary's

## The Jubilee Memorial Garden at Christ Church

For more than 50 years, the Rose Garden at Christ Church has been the final resting place for the ashes of more than 1,300 local people. Even now that it is closed to new interments, it remains a centre for remembrance and consolation for many families. Many of the departed are remembered by small plaques but many more are unmarked, except in the memory of those who knew them. It remains a key part of our bereavement ministry to our local community.

Over the past year, a team led by Ian Handy has been working to restore the first part of the garden to a more accessible, manageable, respectful and dignified, final resting place. Importantly we have also made the garden safer and easier to visit. A place of peace and remembrance for the many visitors to our site.

**We intend to rename the garden the Jubilee Memorial Garden in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.**

**On Sunday April 3rd at 12.00 noon we are holding a short opening ceremony and reception to commission and name the new garden.** We will also have displays detailing our progress and our plans for the remaining part of the garden which we hope to complete by the end of this year, subject to permission and public consultation.

Many local families, and many from further afield, are affected by these changes and we are keen to ensure that everyone is kept up to date with our plans. We have created a Jubilee Memorial Garden newsletter. Please help us by passing on the subscription address: <https://mailchi.mp/c79de914e698/jubilee> or by using this QR code which can be scanned by a smartphone.

For further information, please contact Stephen Grosvenor or Daniel Pitt



## Christ Church with St Mary's Church Family Weekend at Home 16th-18th September 2022

The PCC are delighted to announce that, after several years, they are organising a Church Family Weekend at Home this September. Please make a note of the dates now. There will be activities on Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday, mostly on the Christ Church site.

The theme will be "The Glory of God is a human being fully alive;" St Irenaeus This takes forward our Parish Bible verse for the year; :Arise, Shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord is rising upon you', *Isaiah 60:1*

We would welcome your ideas about fun activities as we learn together and enjoy building new friendships, particularly with those who have joined us recently.

We are blessed to have leading us a wonderfully experienced Christian couple, The Rev'd. Douglas and Ann Holt who know Christ Church and Swindon well. Amongst other things, Douglas was the Director of Training for the Bristol Diocese and Simon's work Consultant for 12 years. Ann was the Deputy Chief Executive for the Bible Society and then the Director of Education for the Chichester Diocese. They are now living in retirement in Malmesbury.

Please remember them both and all the preparations for the weekend in your prayers.

Thank you gratefully,  
*Simon on behalf of the Staff Team.*

### Tea & Chat at the Goddard Arms Hotel Tuesday 1st March, 2.30 pm



Tea & Chat made a welcome return to the Goddard Arms Hotel last month, following the pandemic. Everyone is welcome to this monthly event and we look forward to seeing you. If you would like to know more, please phone Margaret Williams, 421102.

## The Rev'd. Trudie Wigley

We are looking forward to Trudie's return visit to Christ Church on Sunday 20th March at the 10am Informal Communion service. Trudie moved to be Vicar at St. Paul's Dorcan eight years ago at the end of her Curacy at Christ Church.

**Margaret's marmalade** has now sold out and she has been able to donate £105 to Christ Church funds as a result; so thank you to all her marmalade customers and she hopes to make more next year in the Seville orange season!"

P.S. This amount has been doubled and is now £210, thanks to an anonymous donation.

P.P.S. from Margaret - Thank you to the anonymous donor!



## Men's Breakfast takes place on the first Saturday of the month

Each first Saturday of the month a group of us meet for full English breakfast and a good talk and conversation. While the breakfast is cooked by men the gathering is open to all.

7.30 am optional Morning Prayer in Christ Church  
8.00 am Breakfast and talk in the Meeting Room  
at the Community Centre

**On Saturday 5th March**, we are looking forward to welcoming back Brian Harris who will be speaking about his and Karen's new life living in Lerwick on the Shetland Isles. If you would like to come along, please contact Mike Palmer via the Parish Office.



**Sunday 20th March, 6.30 pm  
at Christ Church**

Preacher:  
The Rev'd. Canon Debbie Dewes,  
Vicar of Cricklade in the Upper Thames  
group of churches.

## March Diary

**Walking for Health group starts from Christ Church every Monday at 10.30 am**

As from the first Sunday in Lent, March 6th, to Easter Sunday, April 17th, we have agreed, as a further pilot, to move to a weekly 8.00am service at Christ Church and 9.00am service at St. Mary's which will usually be Holy Communion.

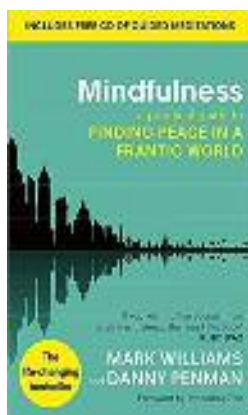
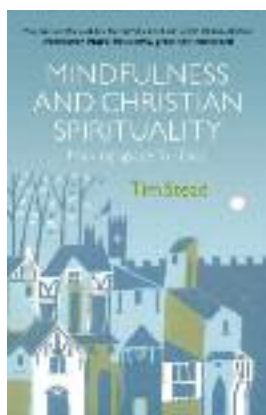
- |           |            |                         |   |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| 01        | Tues       | 2.30 pm                 | Tea & Chat at the Goddard Arms  |
| 02        | Wed        | 10.30 am                | Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion                                      |
| 05        | Sat        | 7.30 am                 | Christ Church, Morning Prayer followed by Fellowship<br>Breakfast in the Community Centre |
| <b>06</b> | <b>Sun</b> | 8.00 am                 | 1662 Holy Communion   |
|           |            | 9.00 am                 | St. Mary's, Holy Communion/Morning Prayer   |
|           |            | 10.00 am                | All-Age service   |
|           |            | 6.30 pm                 | Holy Communion  |
| 09        | Wed        | 10.30 am                | Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion                                      |
|           |            | 6.30 pm                 | Healing Prayer Group  |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Sun</b> | 8.00 am                 | Christ Church, Holy Communion   |
|           |            | 9.00 am                 | St. Mary's, Holy Communion  |
|           |            | 10.00 am                | Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  |
| 16        | Wed        | 10.30 am                | Christ Church, Christ in Quiet, often with Communion                                      |
| <b>20</b> | <b>Sun</b> | 8.00 am                 | Common Worship Holy Communion   |
|           |            | 9.00 am                 | St. Mary's, Holy Communion/Morning Prayer   |
|           |            | 10.00 am                | Christ Church, Informal Holy Communion  |
|           |            | 6.30 pm                 | Choral Evensong   |
|           |            | 10.30 am                | Christ in Quiet, often with Holy Communion  |
| 26        | Sat        | 7.30 pm                 | High Sheriff's Concert at Christ Church   |
| <b>27</b> | <b>Sun</b> | <b>Mothering Sunday</b> |   |
|           |            | 8.00 am                 | Christ Church, Holy Communion   |
|           |            | 9.00 am                 | St. Mary's, Informal Holy Communion   |
|           |            | 10.00 am                | Christ Church, Family Holy Communion  |
|           |            | 12 noon                 | Holy Baptism  |
| 30        | Wed        | 10.30 am                | Christ Church, Christ in Quiet often with Communion                                       |

# MINDFULNESS AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Quiet Day with Tim Stead

Saturday 2nd April 2022 9.45am-4pm

St Mary's Church Commonweal Rd, Old Town Swindon



## An introduction to Mindfulness with reflections on how it relates to Christian spirituality.

Tim Stead is a former Vicar and an accredited mindfulness teacher who trained with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. He is also the author of *Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality* (SPCK 2016) and *See Love Be* (SPCK 2018).

This will be a practical day with guided meditations with an opportunity to explore our experience of the meditations and including reflections on how these practices relate to the Christian tradition of prayer & spirituality, especially the Christian contemplative tradition.

**The cost of the day is: £20 (Financial Assistance available)**

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. Please bring a packed lunch.

For more information : [susan@tredget.com](mailto:susan@tredget.com) 07770583987

To Book a place : [parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk](mailto:parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk) 01793 522832

## MINDFULNESS AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, April 2nd 2022

Tim Stead, the Course leader, is an accredited mindfulness teacher who trained with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. He was a Church of England vicar for 23 years and now operates as a freelance mindfulness teacher, leading eight week courses, retreats and quiet days. His books, “Mindfulness and Christian Spiritually” and “See, Love, Be” – mindfulness and the spiritual life, are published by SPCK. He has also published a Grove Booklet: “Mindfulness and Prayer”.  
[www.timsteadmindfulness.org](http://www.timsteadmindfulness.org)

### Intentions for the day

- i. Give a basic experiential introduction to what mindfulness is.
2. Explore how mindfulness practice can engage with and support the spiritual journey with particular reference to the Christian contemplative tradition.
3. Serve as a quiet day where participants go away feeling they have had space for deep reflection.
4. Share ways that mindfulness could be taken forward for those who choose to.

### Programme

The programme for the day starts with a short introduction, then mixes guided mindfulness practices with reflecting on our experience and linking them with our spiritual journey. A basic timetable is offered but this can be adjusted.

### Venue, numbers and other practicalities.

We can accept up to approximately. 20 participants. The day will be held at St Mary’s Church, Commonweal Rd, Old Town Swindon. St Mary’s provides a quiet, light and airy space with good ventilation and a small kitchen and a toilet .We will sit in a loose circle in comfortable upright chairs. Coffee, tea and biscuits are provided at the start, lunchtime and mid-afternoon. Participants are asked to bring their own packed lunches.

**Costs and charging:** The cost of the day is £20 and for those in financial hardship there is help available.

**Any Questions?** Please do get in touch :

Susan Tredget 07770 583 987 or email: [susan@tredget.com](mailto:susan@tredget.com)

**To book a place, contact:**

Helen Parker Drabble 01793 522832.

[parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk](mailto:parishoffice@christchurchswindon.co.uk)





## LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

Living in Love and Faith sets out to inspire people to think more deeply about what it means to be human and to live in love and faith with one another. It tackles the tough questions and the divisions among Christians about what it means to be holy in a

society in which understandings and practices of gender, sexuality and marriage continue to change. It seeks to help all members of the Church of England engage with these issues and hear God's voice speaking into society today. The feedback from engagement across the church this year will inform discussions next year on whether or not to change the Church of England's stance on marriage and human sexuality. Will you be part of the conversation?

There will be discussion groups running across Swindon Deanery until the end of April 2022 to allow you to explore these issues in greater depth with Christians from other Church of England congregations. If you sign up to a course you can expect:

- To meet together with a facilitator and about 4 other people for 90 minutes each session, weekly over 5 weeks.
- To discuss issues including identity, relationships and sex from a variety of Biblical and contemporary perspectives using Bible passages and videos.
- To have your voice heard and your opinions, after the course, fed back into the national church's deliberations
- To be expected to be open-minded and willing to engage respectfully with those who may hold different opinions to yours.
- To have access to a chaplain should you want to discuss matters further and in confidence.

We hope you will be able to sign up to the course and engage in this very important moment in the life of the Church of England.

We will be running courses at the various times and places once we know how many people are interested.

To sign up for a course please contact David Caine  
TwelveTwentyFive@msn.com or 07774 150426 and tell him your name and church.

# Immanuel

## Services at Immanuel

10.00 am every Sunday morning

6.30 pm every Sunday evening

(The Evening Service takes place in the Atrium)

## Geoff's jottings

### 50th Birthday of the United Reformed Church

It's interesting to note that when Immanuel became a member of the then Ecumenical Parish of Swindon Old Town back in 1969 along with Christ Church, St. Mary's and Bath Road Methodist Church, it was still a Congregational Church for another 3 years. Times have changed and life moves on as they say.

### A welcome return...

It's been good to welcome back our friends from the Romanian Pentecostal Church after a period of absence. We know that their numbers are not as high at the moment because some families felt the need to return home to Romania for various reasons. Nonetheless we give a warm welcome to everyone who has returned.

It was great to have the church filled with the wonderful sound of the Aldbourne Band in January after a year of absence due to Covid. Emotions were running high that evening. Sheila Harrod also contributed to the evening with two of her 'Mature Students' singing solos and duets.

### A warm welcome...

We are very pleased to give a very warm welcome to friends from the Nepalese Christian Church who now use our premises for worship. We trust they will feel 'at home' with us.

### Good News...

Like our friends within the Old Town Partnership of Churches, we are so pleased to have some organisations back and using our premises again; it makes such a difference to the feel of the building and it has come to life once more.



## The Aldbourne Band

Saturday 29th January saw the return to Immanuel of the Aldbourne Band for their annual visit to the church. This would have been the 60th occasion of their January concert that for them marks the start of the new year – sadly last year’s covid restrictions and subsequent cancellation of the concert mean that the ‘Diamond Jubilee’ will have to wait to 2023!

From the very first chords of a ‘Jubilee Overture’ the audience was left in no doubt as to the complete mastery of the band: the quality of their playing has certainly not diminished despite the shortage of rehearsal time in the Covid lockdowns!

For those who don’t know about this magnificent band, even though they rehearse in a tiny village 10 miles from Swindon, they are no second-rate village band! They have earned their place in the premier league of Brass Bands and are counted among the best in the world!

With guest artists from the Sheila Harrod’s Kentwood Show Choir, the audience was treated to an absolutely first class evening of music that (with a moving tribute to past member, Jesse Jones) even included a prize-winning multi-media performance.

Make a note in your diaries for January 28th 2023!

*Steve Brain*

### **Smile as you eat your broccoli**

If you look happy while you are eating vegetables, you will help your children consume up to double the amount that they would have eaten otherwise.

A study by the College of Health and Life Sciences at Aston University has found that adults who have a positive expression on their faces while they eat can convey ‘food enjoyment’ to their children, who are then more willing to try the vegetables for themselves.

# Bath Road

## Appointment of Probationer Minister for Bath Road

We are pleased to let you know that, following the stationing process, the North Wiltshire Methodist Circuit has been allocated a probationer minister who will commence their ministry in September 2022.

Over the weekend of 15th and 16th January, Rachel Collins came to visit Bath Road, Rodbourne and St Andrews and met representatives of the three churches as well as Circuit Stewards and Circuit staff. We are pleased to let you know that Rach (her preferred name) and her husband Matt enjoyed the visit and are looking forward to coming to Swindon.

Rach is currently a student at The Queens Foundation Theological College in Birmingham. Prior to her call to ministry, Rach held several church lay worker and youth worker posts in the northwest of England.

Rach and Matt will be living in the Drove Road manse and the Circuit will be carrying out some refurbishments at the manse prior to Rach and Matt moving in.

Please hold Rach and Matt in your prayers.

Lynda Thomson (Senior Circuit Steward),  
Rev'd. David Gray  
*Circuit Invitation Committee*

## Services at Bath Road in March

6th	10.00 am Holy Communion, Rev'd. Mark Barrett
13th	10.00 am Morning Worship, Michelle Pickering
20th	Morning Service taken by the Worship Leaders
27th	Mothering Sunday, service led by Rachel Browning

## Surprise! Surprise! Margaret Jones's 96th birthday celebration



Margaret's birthday celebration at The Kings was a surprise for her, arranged by Sarah who visits Margaret twice a week. Margaret thought that Sarah was taking her to lunch at The Pantry, instead of which she brought her to The Kings where 6 of us were already seated awaiting her arrival.

It was a very happy occasion and we were all pleased to be part of the surprise.



## Church weekend at Walton Park Hotel, Clevedon 28th-30th January



Over 40 people from Bath Road Church spent time together staying at the Walton Park hotel in Clevedon.

After dinner on Friday we were introduced to the theme of the weekend, 'Aspects of Celtic Christian Spirituality'. We had discussion groups on Saturday morning and free time on Saturday afternoon when many walked down to the pier and seafront. After dinner on Satur-

day we all took part in a quiz evening. Sunday morning was spent preparing for our worship, in which everyone took part, included singing, poems, artwork, readings and sharing communion.

It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time together as a church family. We look forward to our 'At Home' weekend next year and another weekend away together in January 2024.

Gary Illing composed the following poem for the weekend:

### **My world, my God, my home**

The seagull soars as God looks out for me.  
God's rock beneath gives support to my every step.  
As waves lap the shore, God continually divulges his wisdom.  
The mist envelopes as complete as God's embrace.  
Fresh air invigorates as every word from God.  
A roaring fire warms and glows as God's protecting presence.  
God's light drives out darkness as evil cowers from its halo.  
Nature welcomes me unquestioningly as God's family.  
My world, my God, my home.

*See photos of the weekend on the inside back cover*

## **MOPS** (MOPS stands for Mix Of People)

**DATES:** the first and third THURSDAY of the month  
**TIME:** 2.30 to 3.30pm  
**PLACE:** Crossland Room at Bath Road Methodist Church  
**ORGANISER:** Janet Hunt Tel: 01793-521934 and  
Brenda Hewitt Tel: 01793 683926

The usual format is to spend the first half hour chatting and the second half listening to a speaker or doing an activity.

March 3rd Easter Card making, Janet Hunt  
March 17th The Rev'd Tony Barnes - A topic of Tony's choice

### **'WALK THIS WAY'**

An opportunity to reflect on the journey of Lent.



Connecting with the way of Jesus through scripture and prayer, creative stillness and activity.

**Stratton Methodist Church, Ermin Street, Swindon,  
SN3 4NL**

**Saturday 5th March, 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm**

led by Deacons Karen McBride and Ruth Richey,  
Warden and Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order.

For further information contact  
Deacon Stephen Roe 01793 523810  
stephen.roe@methodist.org.uk



## The Swindon Music Festival returns after a two-year break for the pandemic.

The Festival starts in Christ Church on Friday 18th March at 6.30pm with the brass classes followed by the church organ classes. Each organist will play two contrasting pieces and the adjudicator will make comments on their performances.

The evening will continue with three classes for solo singers, including novice, sacred song and oratorio and a duet class. It will conclude with the adult choir class and the church choir class. In the church choir class, starting at around 9.00pm, St. Sampson's Church Choir, Cricklade will be singing 'O perfect love' to the tune Highwood and 'I saw a new heaven' by Malcolm Archer. Christ Church Choir will be singing the hymn "How shall I sing that majesty" to the tune Coe Fen and the anthem: 'Arise, Shine' by Richard Shephard.

The adjudicator for the Friday evening will be Adrian Goss, a pianist, organist and choral director and chair of the Adjudicators Council.

**The Festival continues on Saturday 19 March and from Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 March (not including Thursday 24th) in the Arts Centre in Devizes Road, Old Town. Morning sessions start at 9.30am, afternoons at 1.30pm and evenings at 6.30 pm.**

The timetable is:

Saturday	19	Morning Afternoon Evening	Guitars, Harp, Strings Junior Vocal Adult Vocal
Monday	21	No classes	
Tuesday	22	Morning Afternoon Evening	Woodwind, Junior Piano Electronic Keyboard, Junior Piano Instrumental Recital, Adult Piano
Wednesday	23	Morning Afternoon Evening	Junior Piano Junior Piano, Instrumental Beatrice Plaum Challenge Cup (Piano) Instrumental Championship
Thursday	24	No classes	

*continued overleaf...*



Friday	25	Morning	Junior Vocal
		Afternoon	Junior Vocal
		Evening	Junior Vocal Championship Adult Vocal
Saturday	26	Morning	Adult Vocal
		Afternoon	Adult Vocal
		Evening	Senior Vocal Championship

The Festival deserves a much bigger audience – this year it celebrates over 111 years of supporting music in Swindon. Previous participants have included Diana Dors in the past and Jamie Cullum, Sarah Covey, Polly Leech and Harry Apps who are currently forging musical careers.

There is such a wide variety of music that there will be something for everyone during the eight days. We really need to support the young talent - and the older competitors like support too! At a previous year's final concert the adjudicator said several performances would have graced the West End stage – so come and hear future stars. She also commended our exceptional teachers.

Our world class accompanist is Paul Turner who is renowned for his sensitive and alert accompaniments; "He has that sixth sense of timing which is the true accompanist's particular gift." (Eastern Daily Press). He is also so kind to everyone including nervous novice singers.

Please do come along to support your Partnership musicians. There will be a small charge for listening.

### ADMISSION PRICES

£3.00 PER SESSION (16 and under FREE)

Except

WEDNESDAY EVENING	23 MARCH	£5.00*	16 and under £1.00
FRIDAY EVENING	25 MARCH	£5.00*	16 and under £1.00
SATURDAY EVENING	26 MARCH	£7.50	16 and under £1.00

\*(£3.00 after 8pm)

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE VENUE PRIOR TO EACH SESSION

The detailed programme listing all the participants, price £3, will be available from Christ Church on 18th March or from Holmes Music or the Arts Centre, and also on the website <http://www.swindonmusicfestival.co.uk>.

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**1st March**  
**SHROVE TUESDAY,**  
**Pancake Day**



This tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and severe fasting. So on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be 'shriven', or absolved from their sins, which gives us Shrove Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this. For the next 47 days, they pretty well starved themselves.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today's pancake races are in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she'd be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron and still holding the pan.

Some people have noted that the ingredients of pancakes can be used to highlight four significant things about this time of year: eggs stand for creation, flour is the staff of life, while salt keeps things wholesome, and milk stands for purity.

## **ST. DAVID'S DAY, Daffodil time**

1st March is St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear daffodils or leeks. Shakespeare called this custom 'an honourable tradition begun upon an honourable request' - but nobody knows the reason. Why should anyone have ever 'requested' that the Welsh wear leeks or daffodils to honour their patron saint? It's a mystery!



We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised and culted in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself, and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved. ■

## **A teenager's thoughts on Social Media**

written as a UCAS submission

### **What do you think is the most significant transformation to society in the 21st Century? Why?**

Social media is almost inescapable. It has revolutionised the way that we live and for many of us our entire world revolves around our phone. However, this phenomenon is something that has only developed in the last ten to twenty years so its impacts can appear unsettling and even potentially harmful to those that have not grown up with it.

It is a form of mass media that allows people with similar beliefs to connect and share ideas from all across the world and consequently breaking down many of the past geographical boundaries to the transfer of information.

Society has been transformed in such profound ways by its development due to the way that it enables ideas to spread so rapidly and its impact on our normal social activities. Some of these changes have been positive, such as forming a more integrated society, but there are also many aspects that have changed society in a less positive way.

Social media has had the biggest impact on the way that we connect with other people, causing drastic changes to society. This has been hugely positive in some situations, allowing people to keep in contact with family or friends who may live far away as well as connecting with strangers who have similar interests as them and being able to share ideas.

Some people may argue, however, that this has damaged our ability to connect with people face to face. On sites such as Facebook and Instagram you may have hundreds of 'friends' yet feel even more isolated and alone in real life without any friends that you can really depend on.

This has had an undisputed impact on people's mental health, an area which has had significant news coverage in recent years. It has had the greatest effect on young people who are more impressionable and susceptible to the negative effects of social media.

The average person spends 2 hours a day on social media and in young people this figure rises spectacularly with some spending 9 hours a day scrolling

aimlessly through their social media feed. Teenagers who spend 5 or more hours per day on their phones are almost twice as likely to display symptoms of depression than their peers who spent only 1 hour on their phones (Twenge et al. 2018), which is an issue that previous generations simply didn't have to worry about.

Part of the reason that social media has such a detrimental effect on our mental wellbeing is that it promotes the idea of perfectionism. A social media profile only shows a snapshot of someone's life yet creates a feeling of inadequacy as you compare your everyday life with the highlights you see online.

This has led to the phrase FOMO (fear of missing out) which was popularised in 2004 by author Patrick McGinnis during his time at Harvard Business School. It is an idea that epitomises some of the problems of the 21st century as it describes "a feeling that friends and connections are leading more interesting and rewarding lives, creating a desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing online." McGinnis and his friends at Harvard Business School described a constant feeling of wanting to live life to the fullest and, as a consequence, a feeling that they could never commit to anything in case a better option appeared.

Social media has also had an impact on the way that we think as a society. In Steven Pinker's 'The Better Angels of Our Nature' (2011) he explores some of the reasons that the instances of war and conflict have decreased over time.

One of these theories is cosmopolitanism; the idea that all human beings should be part of a single society with common understanding and acceptance of people from different backgrounds. Pinker argues that the growth of mass media has encouraged people to understand and sympathise with those less like themselves.

While not the single reason that levels of violence have dropped, social media has led to a more integrated and accepting society. It is much easier for people to express themselves online and make their opinions heard so we are regularly exposed to stories that present a different perspective to our own, often helping us to appreciate people from different backgrounds including class, gender, religion and race.

In contrast to the idea of cosmopolitanism mentioned above, it could also be argued that constant access to social media has created a more polarised society. ►

In the last twenty years, the number of Americans consistently holding liberal or conservative political views, rather than a mix of the two, has more than doubled (De-Wit et al., 2019) and this can partly be put down to social media confirming our already existing political views.

In the past, publishing your views required a third party such as the newspaper publisher. This would act as a form of moderation, limiting the spread of unsubstantiated claims to a wider audience.

The huge volume of information now available online and the ease at which it can be accessed makes it difficult to filter facts from opinion. The rise of platforms such as Twitter where anyone can share their views means that information travels much more rapidly than it did in the past and the lack of a need for evidence leads to instances of 'fake news'. This is particularly worrying in the field of politics with influential and powerful characters able to rapidly convey both valid and invalid messages to their followers.

It is undeniable that social media has caused significant changes to society in the last two decades because of the way that it has touched all areas of our lives, in both positive and negative ways. The way that we interact with one another has been altered radically and these changes will continue to impact our future.

*Isobel Swann*

## **What did your church learn during lockdown?**

This month marks two years since the UK's first Covid lockdown. Churches closed their doors for worship as infection levels, hospital admissions and, tragically, deaths rose. Even today, some worshippers are reluctant to return to 'in person' worship and churches are still taking care to limit Covid risks.

What did we learn in the 24 months since the pandemic became part of our everyday lives?

Churches built stronger links with their local communities.

Churches reached new people by going online.

Churches chose their priorities and focussed on supporting those in need. ■

## The Bible Reading Fellowship celebrates 100 years

The work of BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship) recently featured in BBC One's long-running programme Songs of Praise. Presented by Kate Bottley, the programme explored the power of the Bible to transform lives. It included features highlighting BRF's ministries Anna Chaplaincy, Living Faith and Messy Church, along with interviews with chief executive Richard Fisher, Anna Chaplaincy founder Debbie Thrower and BRF author Amy Boucher Pye.

BRF has its roots in St Matthew's Church in Brixton, South London, where, 'towards the end of 1921, the vicar, the Revd. Leslie Mannering, was talking with a member of the congregation about the spiritual needs of the church. What could be done to help people 'get a move on' spiritually?'

In January 1922, the Fellowship of St Matthew was launched, with the aim of encouraging spiritual growth through prayer, Bible reading and communion. Leslie Mannering produced a leaflet of daily Bible readings, reflections and prayers which, as Richard Fisher explains in the programme, "had such a transforming effect on his congregation that before long other churches in the area started asking if they could have copies for their own congregations."

After the programme Richard commented: "We are so delighted with the Songs of Praise programme that featured BRF's centenary. Many people have been in touch following the broadcast and we've been very moved by the messages and encouragements that we've received about BRF's ministry."

In the years following 1922 the BRF work grew into a worldwide ministry. Even today, the encouragement and resourcing of daily Bible reading remains at the heart of BRF' Living Faith ministry, alongside newer initiatives such as Anna Chaplaincy, Messy Church and Parenting for Faith.

### Hereafter

The minister came to see me the other day. He said that at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do it all the time. No matter where I am - in the bedroom, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement - I ask myself, 'Now, what am I here after?'"

## The Partnership Magazine – Monies collection 2022

Dear Magazine readers,

Thank you to everyone who has already paid their subscription for 2022, i.e. 80p per issue and £8 for an annual subscription for 10 issues. This remains good value.

We are pleased to say that the price will stay the same for 2022 i.e. 80p per issue and £8 for an annual subscription for 10 copies. This remains good value.

Subscriptions are now due for 2022 and this year there will be three ways to pay as follows:

1. By sending a cheque for £8 payable to the Partnership of Churches to George Kennedy, 31 Vasterne Close, Purton, Swindon, SN5 4EZ.
2. By paying your magazine distributor £8 either in cash or as a cheque payable to the Partnership of Churches. The distributor will then forward the payments to George Kennedy as above.
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If you do not wish to subscribe, you can buy individual issues at one of our Partnership churches or from Rose Earle's shop in Newport Street. Thanks are due to Rose for continuing to offer this service.

If you still have difficulty obtaining or paying for the magazine please contact either Daniel and Caroline Pitt (01793 521732) or George Kennedy (01793 772589).

With best wishes and thanks. *The magazine team*





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## Bath Road Church Weekend at Walton House Hotel



Quiz evening

I wonder what the joke was?



Afternoon Tea on  
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