

# manna

From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

March 2024

## Sharing the Easter story

**W**ith Easter falling at the end of March this year, preparations are well underway for some creative celebrations across Bath and Wells during Holy Week – in our churches, in our schools, as well as in our homes and outdoor spaces.

Suzi Darwin, Children and Youth Worker at St Swithin's, Bath is one of the organisers of an event designed to share the good news by recreating the wonder of the Easter story in the city's Victoria Park, in the area below the Royal Crescent.

Between 2pm and 4pm on Good Friday, Suzi and other volunteers from six Bath churches, will be holding the [Easter Adventure in the Park](#). At stations dotted around the park they will be telling stories and engaging children in a range of ways, from waving palms to mark Jesus's journey into Jerusalem to sharing squash and biscuits at a Last Supper.

She explains, "Last year's event was really lovely, with people from different churches getting involved and acting out the Easter story at churches around the city. Around 100



Volunteers from churches across Bath will bring the Easter story to life.

people took part, some who regularly attend church and some who don't, who also enjoyed it, including some families who attend the toddler group in my church.

"This year's event is going to be very interactive. The children can get fully involved and at the end we hope to be able to give them an Easter egg and a Bible. By holding it in Victoria Park we hope that even more people can join us - and can meet and come to know Jesus."

You can find out what your church has planned for Holy Week by visiting [achurchnearyou.com](http://achurchnearyou.com).

Looking for something creative to do at home to engage with the Easter story? Why not download our Easter Bible Chat Mat at [bathandwells.org.uk/chat-mats](http://bathandwells.org.uk/chat-mats) ■

# News in brief

## 'Puppet-packed' worship

St John's Church in Peasedown, just outside Bath, is piloting a new type of service for families with young children. Called Bubble Church, it is described as a 'puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-croissant-fuelled, 30-minute kids and families adventure.' Bishop Michael recently attended and said, "It is fantastic to see all the children enjoying Bubble Church. It is a really joyful service and a wonderful opportunity for the whole family to worship together and share their journey of faith." ■

Find out more on these and other stories at [bathandwells.org.uk/news](http://bathandwells.org.uk/news)

## A royal visitor for Bath

Her Majesty The Queen attended a Service of Celebration at Bath Abbey in February, to mark the 850th anniversary of St John's Foundation. Queen Camilla, who is Patron of the Foundation, had tea with residents of St John's almshouses in the Chapel of St Michael Within, before walking through the city to the Abbey. The foundation provides shelter and support for older adults in the city and works with children locally ■



Credit: Beata Cosgrove Photography

## Hospital visit boosts spirits

Bishop Michael recently met patients and staff at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton.

Bishop Michael said, "It was a privilege to see our NHS in action and to see such professionalism and expertise combined with such warmth and humanity.

"It also was brilliant to meet the chaplaincy team and to see them

serving and offering kindness to people of different faiths and of none."

Colin Drummond, Chair of Somerset NHS Foundation Trust warmly thanked Bishop Michael for spending so much time with at the hospital and said, "It was a wonderful boost for patients and colleagues alike in our very busy hospital." ■

# New life for all the world

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

**S**owing seeds, chitting potatoes, choosing varieties. Easter acts as starter's orders for the gardening year. Beds are cultivated, lawns mown, plans for all the growth and new life that spring and summer will bring made and then turned into action.

There's a much greater connection between gardening and Easter than it merely being the time to dust off forks and spades. For in the Bible, a garden is the setting for Easter itself. In John's Gospel (Jn 20:1-18) Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus in a garden. Indeed, Jesus's appearance to Mary is so unexpected that at first she can't believe it's really him. So she mistakes the man she meets 'supposing him to be the gardener' (John 20:15).

In John's account, all the new life contained in the first Easter chimes with a much earlier story set in a garden too. This is of the new life of another man and woman, the creation story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and contained in the book of Genesis (Genesis 2:4- 3:24). In that story, Adam is

the gardener (Gen 2:15), only for things to go wrong. In John, Jesus is portrayed as the new Adam – come to bring new life that has no end.

What would happen if we were to think of our churches as gardens, primed to welcome the spring that is the new life of Jesus this Easter? What would happen if we imagined ourselves called to be gardeners – like our father Adam and the new Adam, Jesus? What would we expect to grow? What might need pruning or weeding? What new plans for the coming season would we make and turn into action? What would be the harvest that we'd sow for, tend and then reap?

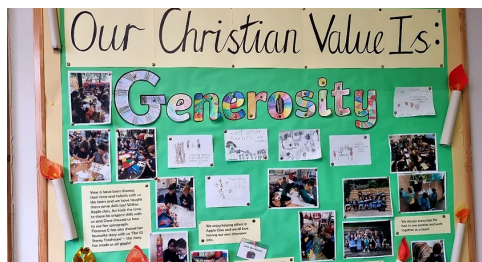
For I reckon we should see Easter as the starting point of all that God wants to do among us and with us. Jesus's resurrection opens us to being part of God's new creation. Easter offers us a fresh start for life, relationships and the life of our churches: new life for all the world.

Happy gardening and a very Happy Easter to you all ■

**Bishop Michael**

# A time to reflect

Grant Swarbrooke, Head of Swainswick School in Bath, shares their Easter plans.



Christian values underpin Swainswick's wider curriculum

## How do you mark Easter at your school?

At Swainswick we have two curriculums, our subject curriculum and our wider curriculum that focuses on the children's personal development that is centred around our Christian values. This is lived out in our Easter celebration, which the children have got total ownership of.

## What is planned this year?

We always have a beautiful music concert that is entwined with Easter. The children will be performing individually and in bands. They will write and perform their own poetry, prayers and readings.

## What message do the children take away?

Easter is a time of reflection and the story of Jesus dying on the cross offers

us a time to stop and reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It also offers us a time to reflect about ourselves, the world around us, and each other.

That is at the centre of our values and our learning. Easter is a lovely way to encourage the children to think about those important things - in this very busy world.

## How else do you live out your Christian values?

In our lesson called Future Fridays we discuss 'Our Global Responsibility'. Every Friday the children run a refill shop for the community, and have invited speakers, such as Amnesty International and Red Card to Racism.

We've also recently introduced the Archbishop's Young Leaders Award.

## What is the award?

It is designed to equip children and young people in character education, to build their leadership skills and faith development, and to empower them to undertake a variety of transformational social action projects in their local communities.

We feel it fits well with the work we are already undertaking at Swainswick ■

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