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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

October 2022

## Growing faith, making connections

**G**rowing Faith may be an initiative from the Church of England, but it is not another project, more an encouragement to place children, young people and households at the heart of all aspects of church life – and giving them a genuine and meaningful voice.

Growing Faith seeks to bring church, household and school together so that it becomes second nature for children, young people and households to be included in church life. Ultimately, it seeks to enable children, young people and households to encounter God and develop an everyday faith.

Ed Gregory, Director of Education for Bath and Wells says, "Growing



Faith is about creating, or strengthening, pathways between churches, schools and households; between generations. There is so much to be gained, individually and in community, from the sharing of energy and experience, enthusiasm and questions. We know that many connections and pathways are already there, they simply need to be encouraged and equipped."

Lucy Moore, Head of the Church of England's Growing Faith Foundation, is visiting Bath and Wells in November. Why not come along to one of her talks on the 1st or 2nd of November to hear more about how we might put children, young people and families at the heart of ministry and mission in Bath and Wells? Find out more at [bathandwells.org.uk/talking-growing-faith](https://bathandwells.org.uk/talking-growing-faith).

The Go Team is here to offer advice and support as, together, we look to further develop these incredible connections across Bath and Wells. We also want to celebrate examples where local connections work well so if you've got a great example to shout about, do get in touch! #GrowingFaith

## News in brief

### Bishop Michael's installation

The Installation of Bishop Michael as the Bishop of Bath and Wells will take place at Wells Cathedral on 12 November at 3pm. The service, which will be ticketed to manage the number of those attending, will be also be livestreamed to the Bath and Wells Facebook page so that as many people across the diocese can join in the joyous occasion.

In addition to the formal service of installation on the morning of 12 November, Bishop Michael will be travelling from Bath to Wells, meeting people across the diocese along the way.

More information on this journey through the diocese, and how you can join in will be shared on the Bath and Wells website



### Can you offer a warm welcome

As the cost of living crisis starts to impact communities, churches across Bath and Wells are preparing to support their communities in a host of ways. The Warm Welcome campaign aims to equip churches and other community organisations who want to open their doors to create free, safe, warm and welcoming spaces this winter. To access the resources and pledge your support by offering a Warm Welcome Space [visit warmwelcome.co.uk](https://warmwelcome.co.uk)

### Bringing Bible stories to life

A unique exhibition of more than 30 Bible stories, brought to life by talented knitters, is on display at St Lawrence's in Wick St Lawrence, Weston-super-Mare until the 14 October. The exhibition has been on tour throughout the country and in its first week on display in the church at the end of September, was enjoyed by a host of school children. The exhibition is free to visit although donations are welcome and additional special events will also be taking place while the exhibition is in place. . Find out more at [facebook.com/stlawrencechurch1](https://facebook.com/stlawrencechurch1)



# The same yesterday, today & forever

## The Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

**M**any of us know well Bob Dylan's song 'The Times They Are A-Changin'. Was it written with us in mind? None of us could have predicted the changes that we have seen in 2022. The death of our beloved Queen Elizabeth, the accession of a new King, a war in Ukraine, a cost-of-living crisis. None of these were on the cards as we made our new year's resolutions on 1 January.

Yet happen they have. And whether we like it or not, we're forced to agree with Bob Dylan's lyrics that the times are indeed changing. What can see us though these days?

A phrase that's often used about the period through which we're going is 'unprecedented'. I'm not

sure it's entirely valid! Previous generations have faced situations as challenging or more than ours – seasons of plagues, wars, famines and conquest. The times in which the New Testament was written were, for its writers, periods of profound uncertainty. Its writers faced violence and vulnerability, conflict and dispute. Yet into their times they were able to speak words of hope, confidence and assurance.

One such phrase that stands out for me is a line from the letter to the Hebrews, which was written in response to a time of persecution and the possibility of people falling back from the faith as a result. Into its time and ours, the writer of the letter makes an extraordinary claim: 'Jesus Christ is the same

yesterday, today and forever.' (Hebrews 13:8)

Just imagine! The one who walked in Galilee has been there for his people throughout time, is with us now, and will be whatever the future may hold.

So respectfully, I have to disagree with Bob Dylan. In his song he tells us that in the face of times that are 'a-changin', we'd better start 'swimmin'. Much better than hyperactive splashing, I suggest, is to live out our vision to 'live and tell the story of Jesus'. For it's as we do so that we can hold fast to the one who is constant and unchanging, who holds us always in the palm of his hands; Jesus Christ who is 'the same yesterday, today and forever.'

**Bishop Michael**

## Children & young people at our heart

Lucy Moore, Head of the Growing Faith Foundation shares her vision and hopes for the initiative.

### Tell us about the Growing Faith Foundation.

It's a massive investment by the Church of England in helping churches put children and young people at the heart of all they do. A team of four of us are busy developing networks to connect different communities; creating imaginative programmes and training and creating twelve exciting Learning Hubs across the country.

### What's your hope and vision for it?

Imagine what the country could be like if the Church became the go-to movement for children and young people who want to serve God, serve their community and discover their whole purpose in life together with people of all ages! Imagine



Lucy Moore, Head of the Church of England's Growing Faith Foundation

the renewed energy, the life, the purposefulness bubbling up in every church!

### Why is it important?

So much of who we are as a Church is orientated around the preferences of older people and those who've been in a church for a long time. Jesus always went out to people on the edges and championed the most

vulnerable – we need to relearn that radical hospitality that puts our own preferences last.

### Will your teaching and Messy Church background help?

When you look at what God's done with Messy Church, you really get the confidence that comes from a sense of 'Wow, Lord! You really can grow huge trees from little mustard seeds!'

### Looking forward to visiting Bath and Wells?

Absolutely, I'm hoping to meet people who have a heart for children and young people and for us all to inspire each other to catch God's vision for the next step for each parish that longs to welcome children and young people

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