Celebrating 30 years

The Revd Jo Stobart, St Mary's Ilminster, was one of the team behind the recent service of celebration of the ordination of women priests at Wells Cathedral.



A defining moment for Jo was seeing her name on her church's Clergy Board.

Why do you think it is import to mark this anniversary?

Significant milestones are always a good opportunity to reflect on where you've been and where you're going. So, this thirtieth anniversary was a chance for all of us in Bath and Wells to celebrate the many gifts and richness that women have brought to ordained ministry over this time.

What does it mean to you personally?

In 1994, I had just left University and was working as a primary school teacher. I had no sense that ordained ministry would ever be on my agenda. But God, as God so often does, had other plans. This service of celebration was my opportunity to acknowledge the deep gratitude I feel to the women who were pioneers, whose faith, courage, and perseverance made it possible for me, thirty years on, to live out a

vocation that gives me such joy.

What are your hopes for the future of ministry in Bath & Wells?

My longing is that as people look at our ministers, whether lay or ordained, they encounter the richness of all God's people, a wide variety of role models, who will help them to believe that God just might be calling them too. In terms of patterns of work, family roles are changing rapidly. I hope that ministry can keep up with these changes.

How was the celebration at Wells Cathedral?

If you have the opportunity enrol on the foundation course do it, you will learn so much. I'm learning so much and I never expected that. It's good for us to move out of our comfort zone and to explore different possibilities and aspects of prayer life because there is so much more to it than shutting your eyes and bowing your head.

Hear more from Jo at bathandwells.org.uk/celebrating-30-years

DIOCESE OF Bath&Wells

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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells July 2024

A time to celebrate

What a joy it is to come together to celebrate. Wedding season is upon us and across Bath and Wells this summer, churches will be the scene of couples pledging their lives to one another. But it also a time for us to celebrate those who minister in the church, both our ordained ministers and those who minister in other ways.

In June, colleagues, family and friends came together for the ordination of our new deacons and priests at Wells Cathedral. St Paul's Weston-super-Mare was the venue for our Celebration of Lay Ministries service which saw people from across the diocese come together to give thanks for all that lay people give to the life of the church and to their community.

In May, many of our women priests, past and present, came together to mark the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women priests. Our PCCs and Treasurers have also been coming together at Wells Cathedral for an



Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women priests.

Evensong with Bishop Michael, followed by refreshments at the Bishop's Palace. "These are all special occasions and an important reminder of how we all serve our God and His Church in a host of ways. In Bath and Wells we are blessed with the gifts of so many people – from those who lead, including ordained ministers, Readers and those who serve in other ways, from mowing the churchyard, to serving refreshments. Our church life is richer for all these gifts and it is important that we take time to cherish them and nurture them as we seek to grow our church and transform our communities together."









Arichness of ministry

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

with children and young people to

worship to pastoral care, ministry

in local communities – from leading

undertaking across our churches and

responsibilities that lay people are

bless the many different roles and

super-Mare saw us affirm, thank and

Ministries' held at St Paul's Weston-

the ordained ministry. At the end of

contribution of women throughout

impossible now to imagine what our

women to the priesthood. It's almost

Back in May we acclaimed the 30th

Recognising diversity has been very

ability to think not only more widely

organisations are seeking to become

never saw that one coming!'. For this

reason, companies and all kinds of

which we're unaware - 'Crumbs we

or worse, spot risks and dangers of

doesn't help us think out of the box

reassuring - 'Everyone around here

same. This can be comfortable and

If we're all alike we tend to think the

sees things just like I do'. But it

church would be like without the

anniversary of the ordination of

Diocese of Bath & Wells recently.

much part of our life here in our

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viewpoints, skills and abilities is

more diverse. Having differing

but more effectively too.

June the 'Celebration of Lay

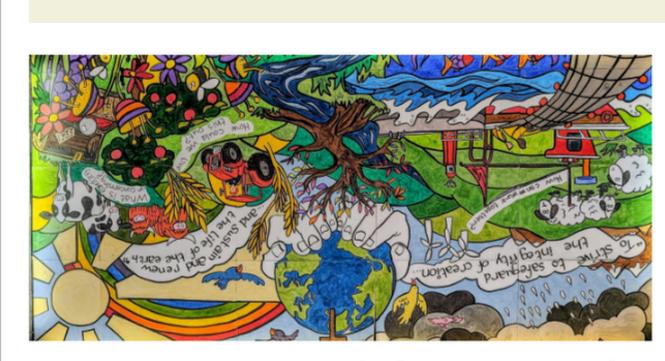
to celebrate! make. Now surely that's something everywhere, has a contribution to recognizes that everyone, 'shared local ministry'. This commending across our diocese is that one of the priorities we're us are needed. It's for this reason the ability to reach everyone. All of either individually or as a group, has connect with. For none of us alone, especially those we find hard to everyone in our communities – and to bring the light of the Gospel to and grow. For it's essential if we're been honouring will only flourish Our hope is that the diversity we've be like without such richness. imagine what our churches would ot əldiszoqmi tzomle z'ti ,nisgA preaching and teaching the faith.

Bishop Michael



Church Tent returns

explore and enjoy. created by the Revd Andy Gray, to colour in, as well as a large version, post their prayers, Bible Chat mats to drawing wall where people could coffee to visitors. There was a churches who offered free tea and staffed by volunteers from local care for creation. The tent was resources and find out how we can Visitors were able to access with a Caring for Creation theme. Bath and West Show last month, The Church Tent returned to the



their enormous gratitude." which the Mar Thoma expressed our vicar and Bishop Michael, for opportunity, warmly welcomed by Infrabnow a saw sidT", bias Felstead, Lay Worship Assistant, approached St James'. Mark hold regular worship and

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

Youthful bell ringing

".gnignin dtiw evol have a go and after I tried it, I fell in history. So, I asked him if I could it fascinating, and I loved the her father, James. She says, "I found bell ringing a year ago, inspired by Mare, discovered her passion for Locking Church, near Weston-super-Sophie, who rings the bells at ringers association in the country. youngest elected members of a bell Locking has become one of the 11 year-old Sophie Taylor from

Jaird ni zwaM



congregation Church welcomes new

area were looking for a place to members of the church in the Yeovil the province of Kerala, India. Some Christian denomination, rooted in Church, a reformed Orthodox for the first gathering of Mar Thoma at St James's Church, Yeovil recently Around 100 people came together