

Stour Vale Letter No. 55

Our Church Services – 4th April

We have two services for Easter Day so please do book your place as we are expecting more people than usual. Service venues and contact details are below.



The usual safety procedures of sanitizing on entry and exit and the wearing of a face covering will be in place, and please do maintain a social distance from others at all times.

9.15am	Buckhorn Weston	Easter Communion	Contact: Jenny Sledge 01963 370709
11.00am	East Stour	Easter Communion	Contact: Sue Jones 01747 838784

Collect & Readings for 4th April – Easter Day

Acts 10.34-43

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Mark 16.1-8

Collect

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity.



Holy Week & Easter in the Stour Vale



We have two final Holy Week services before we reach Sunday. On Friday afternoon we will be at West Stour church for a Good Friday service – do join us at 2pm.

And, on Saturday evening at 7pm on our Facebook page, Barbara will be presenting reflections for Holy Saturday – one of her favourite days of the Church Year! Do tune

in or watch the video at a later time.



Services on Facebook can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Stour-Vale-CofE-107130680934164/>

Services for 11th April are:

9.15am	Todber	Parish Communion (CW)
10.30am	Stour Provost	Morning Prayer (BCP)
11.00am	Kington Magna	Morning Worship (CW)
11.00	Fifehead Magdalen	Morning Prayer (BCP)

(CW = Common Worship BCP = Book of Common Prayer)

Praying for our communities



As we celebrate Easter, let's pray this week for God's blessing on the whole of the Stour Vale Benefice –for our church congregations and for all who live and work in the villages and surrounding areas.

Please find a few moments in the week to hold them in your prayers and let us remember that we are all His Easter people and "Alleluia" is our song!

Poem

For Easter we turn to Malcolm Guite as he ponders on Mary Magdalene's Easter dawn experience:

He blesses every love which weeps and grieves
and now he blesses hers who stood and wept
and would not be consoled, or leave her love's
last touching place, but watched as low light crept
up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognise the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question 'Why,
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
'They took my love away, my day is night'
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.



Prayer for Easter



Lord, in this sunrise of wonder,
May we walk out of the tomb of sorrow
and stroll through the garden of renewed life,
refreshed by the morning dew,
strengthened and nurtured by the new growth around us,
and ready to recognize you
when you call our name.
Amen.

Quote of the Week

*“Easter is the only time
when it is perfectly safe
to put all your eggs in one basket”*

Evan Esar



Pause for Thought

Some thoughts adapted from a longer reflection by the Rt Revd Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath & Wells, who has recently announced early retirement due to ill health: we wish him and his family well:



“I am sure we have all had the experience of meeting someone who perhaps we have known for many years, but then failing to recognise them. We bump into them unexpectedly, perhaps in the High Street or supermarket, but because we don't expect to see them in that place and at that time, we don't realise that the person in front of us is someone we know. It can be very embarrassing and when we say “I'm sorry, I didn't recognize you,” it sounds so feeble. But that was the experience of Jesus' disciples at that first Easter. Every person Jesus to whom appeared failed to recognize him at first.

That makes me wonder how often God is trying to show me something but I am too busy to see what it might be. Or perhaps God is trying to speak to me but I am too busy to listen. The Easter message is that Jesus is alive, that God is with us, that God cares for us and that God loves us. And because of this, God really does seek to speak to us.

Let's not be so busy that we fail to recognize that god is with us wherever we are and whatever we are doing. We may not expect to meet Jesus in the supermarket but if he is the risen Lord, then who knows where and when we might meet him. And what a wonderful surprise that could be.

Photo of the Week

This lovely Spring scene of a new lamb exploring his brave new world is certainly a wonderful image of life and hope.

Thank you to our Malvern friends, Pat & Terry, for sharing it with us!



For your Prayers

We pray for all pupils, students, teachers and helping staff. We pray for their well-being in these difficult times and pray for school chaplains and all who support our young people.



We think of the many businesses who continue to stay closed due to the restrictions, and those who are preparing to re-open in some form, especially those within our own Benefice.

We pray for all who remain anxious at this time. We remember all who are struggling in any way; the anxious, the lonely and afraid, the forgotten and the unloved, and those who are low in spirits. We pray for those who have financial worries and those who may lose their jobs. We pray for all who are waiting for delayed hospital procedures. We pray for all who have lost loved ones during the past year. We commend all who have died to God's loving care and ask for comfort and strength for those who miss them.

We give thanks for the roll-out of vaccines and for those who are continuing to work so hard to prepare and administer them. We pray for all in our medical professions, carers and health visitors, counsellors and those who operate helplines for those in need.

Private Prayer

From April, most of our churches will be open throughout the week for private prayer. Please do take advantage of this. While we move forward on the Government roadmap, there is still much that needs our prayers.

And if you visit our beautiful churches and feel you can make a donation to their life and upkeep, please do so. In these difficult times it would be very much appreciated.



This Newsletter



We'll be taking a little break next week but the Newsletter will be back in your inbox on Friday 16th April.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful. If you know of anyone who would like to join the mailing list, tell them to send their email address to richard@allegro.co.uk with the subject "Newsletter Mailing List". But, if you do not wish to continue receiving them, please email him with "Unsubscribe" in the subject field.

Revd Richard Priest – Vicar of the Stour Vale Benefice
Telephone: 01747 838494

Email: richard@allegro.co.uk