

# Stour Vale Benefice Services for Lent

## Ash Wednesday Communion

with imposition of Ashes



**Morning service**

Fifehead Magdalen 10:30am

**Evening service**

East Stour 6pm

## Mid-Week Communion for Lent

10:30am Every Wednesday at East Stour

## Compline for Lent

There will be a weekly Compline via Zoom during Lent.

If you would like to join 'Compline over Zoom' please contact Fiona on [fjhedges1@gmail.com](mailto:fjhedges1@gmail.com) or 01747 838 942 and she will send you the link to use, or make other arrangements if Zoom is difficult for you.



# Stour Vale Benefice

**For Sunday services please see the services rota (p20 )**

**Other services and Benefice related events :**

## Every Tuesday

Said Morning Prayer 9:30am West Stour

## Every Wednesday During Lent

Communion 10:30am East Stour

## Monday 19th February

Knit and Natter 2:30pm East Stour Village Hall

## Thursday 27th February

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour

## From the Vicar

Dear friends

Easter falls early in the calendar this year and so it seems that we've hardly got over Christmas and New Year celebrations before Lent is upon us. Lent is a time in which we are called to mirror Jesus's time in the wilderness in some way in our own lives. It has often been customary to abstain from something or perhaps grow closer to God through personal retreat, prayer or study.



On Ash Wednesday the set reading from Isaiah (58:1-12) warns us against showy outward acts of repentance which do nothing to change oppression and suffering in the world. Instead, we are reminded that God requires us to take action which changes others' lives for the better. We are exhorted to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the homeless and support acts of healing, peace, and reconciliation.

Therefore, increasingly people are exploring other ways to re-focus their lives on God through acts of generosity or kindness towards others. Sometimes individuals chose to reflect upon reconciliation with God's creation by re-evaluating their impact upon and care for our planet.

So, if like me you struggle to give things up during Lent, why not consider doing something proactive and positive instead? Here are a range of suggestions:

### **How about joining a course?**

Following on from the Advent course from the Bishops and the Dean, there will be a diocesan Lent course this year, offering weekly reflections. The course will focus on the passage which underpins our new diocesan vision, Luke 4. Content will be available from the end of January on the diocesan website. If you'd like a copy emailed direct, email: [comms@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:comms@salisbury.anglican.org)

### **What about an online retreat?**

The Benedictine nuns at Turvey Abbey have put together material for your own online retreat.

<http://www.turveyabbey.org.uk/pilgrimage/lent-retreats/>

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## From the Vicar—continued

or try a different retreat:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ashes-to-ashes-online-petite-retreat-for-lent-tickets-790171312667?aff=erelpanelorg>

Join us for online Compline every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm during Lent and Holy Communion at East Stour on Wednesday morning at 10.30am. See the weekly newsletter for details.

### **Something to do with the kids and grandchildren?**

These website have lots of creative ideas for Lent

<https://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/search/label/Lent>

<https://www.muddychurch.co.uk/lent-40-moments-and-40-bags>

### **Other activities**

How about a short prayer walk around your village, praying for people that you meet or who live in particular houses or streets? Why not turn your daily dog walk or similar into a prayer walk?

### **Helping others**

Put an item for the food bank into a box every day, then donate it at Easter. Donations can be brought to your local church, where the churchwardens will organise delivery to the local foodbank, or can be left at the vicarage. Tinned and non-perishable goods only please.

### **Thanking God**

Set a phone alarm or similar every day and use it as a prompt to say thank you to God for something.

Or create a “thank you or grateful for jar”, fill it up with little reminders over Lent, then reflect on it afterwards.

### **Love gardening?**

Plant some seeds in trays or gardens, look for new life growing. Lent can be such a time of positivity, of growth - physically and spiritually. Thank God in prayer for that new life and growth. Pray for the seeds of faith in those you know to be sown and nurtured.

### **Pray more or differently.**

Try using a prayer app or podcast – e.g. Pray As You Go

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

## From the Vicar—continued

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray>

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/>

<https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/daily-prayer>



### **Do something about the Climate Emergency**

Make a small lifestyle change for God's gift of the planet.

### **Tidy your house.**

Give up clutter for Lent. Every day find something to go in a bag or box to go to charity and pray for its new owner. Alternatively, sell it on eBay or similar and donate the money to charity. By the end of Lent, you will have less clutter in your house!

### **Read a book.**

Lent is always a good time to read something reflective. Here are some suggestions:

**Tarry Awhile** – *The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2024*

**Wisdom from Black Spirituality for People of Faith**— Selina Stone

**Failure: What Jesus Said About Sin, Mistakes and Messing Stuff Up**—Emma Ineson

**A Truth Universally Acknowledged, 40 days with Jane Austen**—Rachel Mann

**Lent and Easter for Everyone**—Tom Wright

**LENT/EASTER: Apprentice to Jesus: 40 Days of Walking in the Way** - Cris Rogers

**The Wilderness within You**—Penelope Wilcock

**Forty Women** Ros Clarke *Unseen Women of the Bible from Eden to Easter*

**An Ocean of Grace** Tim Chester

**Broken Bits & Weirdness: (but God still loves us)** Fay Rowland

Whatever you decide to do as we journey through Lent, reflect on where you might be in the “wilderness” and those who might be stuck in their own version of the “wilderness”. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you as to where you and those who might be stuck need your help and prayers to find the refreshment that only Jesus can bring.

Blessings on your Lenten journey.

*Clare*

## Thought for February

It made me chuckle when I realised Lent, this year, starts on 14<sup>th</sup> February. Could there be a greater contrast between the start of the Lenten season of discipline, and the commercialised sentimentalism of our modern Valentine's Day celebrations?

I expect St. Valentine would be quite horrified at how his martyrdom, caused by his refusal to deny his faith in Jesus, is celebrated these days. His love for God was not slushy, romantic or indulgent, as Valentine's Day now seems to be. The name Valentine means strong, healthy and brave, and I think his love for God was probably all those things, too.

We are all loved by God. Nothing we do, or say, or think can change that. God's love is generous, but not indulgent. We get what we need, not necessarily what we want, and at times that will require discipline. The sacrifices we make during Lent demonstrate our understanding of that, and echo the amazing sacrifice God made for us, allowing his beloved Son to be killed, to show us just how much he loved us.

On Valentine's Day, I hope you will remember how great is God's love for you, and celebrate it appropriately!

*With Love Fiona*

## Prayer for the month

Lord Jesus, my friend,  
you love me and know all about me.  
You understand my deepest needs  
and have forgiven all my sins.  
Teach me to love you more,  
and how to love other people  
in the way you love me.



The Bible Society

### **Knit and Natter**

Knit and Natter will be on Monday 19th February.  
All welcome—2:30 - 4:30pm in East Stour village hall.

*Love Bridget*



## Stour Vale Benefice

### Benefice Lunches

Would you like an informal pub lunch in a relaxed atmosphere with some company? Would you like to get to know people a bit better across the Benefice? Blow away those winter blues and join us in the Crown for our first monthly lunch club on 20th February at 12:30pm.

For bookings: please contact Revd Clare or Jill. If you need a lift please let Clare or Jill know and we will organise someone to pick you up.

**Tuesday 20th February—12:30pm**  
2 courses at £15 or main only for £11.



The Crown Inn,  
East Stour,  
Gillingham,  
SP8 5JS



## Stour Vale Benefice

### Other events in Lent:

(full details in the 'News from the Benefice Villages')

### Pancake Coffee Morning

Tuesday 13th February East Stour

### Lent Lunches

Wednesday 21st February—Buckhorn Weston

Friday 1st March—Todber

Tuesday 5th March—Kington Magna

Friday 22nd March—Stour Provost

(Look out for more Lent Lunch dates in next month's  
Octavo and the Benefice Newsletter)



## Isaiah 58:1-12

### True Fasting

58 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion

and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;

they seem eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions

and seem eager for God to come near them.

<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted,' they say,

'and you have not seen it?

Why have we humbled ourselves,

and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please

and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,

and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today

and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,

only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed

and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,

a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free

and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry

and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,

and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?



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## Isaiah 58:1-12—Continued

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

<sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.



## Stour Vale Benefice

### Advanced notice for Holy Week services:

#### Holy Week services:

Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Taize</b>	East Stour Village Hall	2:30pm
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Compline</b>	Buckhorn Weston	7:30pm
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Mid-Week Communion</b>	East Stour	10:30am
<b>Maundy Thursday:</b>		West Stour	7:30pm
<b>Good Friday:</b>	<b>Hot Cross Bun Service</b>	Todber	10:30am
	<b>Hour at the Cross Stour</b>	Provost	2-3pm
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>Sunrise Service</b>	Fifehead Magdalen TBC	
	<b>Benefice Communion</b>	Stour Provost	10:30am
	<b>Family Easter Service</b>	Buckhorn Weston	11:00am



## Stewardship 40 Acts Challenge for Lent (2019)

### **ACT 10: Drop Everything**

CONTRIBUTOR: Kezia Owusu-Yianoma



I'm Kezia. I like laughing, talking, dancing, adventuring, day-dreaming and night-dreaming (a.k.a. sleep – I like to sleep). I'm also the campaign's manager person here at Stewardship.

How do you view the resources you have at your disposal? Are they there for your benefit only or the benefit of those around you? Today we're dropping our personal intentions for things we own and using those very things as generous gifts for someone else.

Green: Think of an everyday item that's in good condition. Find a recipient and give it away. Umbrellas, handcream, etc.

Amber: How do you get around? Can you give a friend a lift too?

Red: Just like Mary with her alabaster jar, what can you give away that you can't undo? Maybe it's a bottle of perfume, or a favourite jumper. Bless someone else with something that means something to you.

"While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, 'Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.' And they rebuked her harshly. 'Leave her alone,' said Jesus. 'Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.'" (Mark 14:3–6 NIV)

Not long after I passed my driving test, I got Lisa: an 11-year-old Nissan Micra. Like most 18- year-olds, I had been dreaming of this day since I first laid eyes on my provisional licence.

Most people wouldn't ask for a car like Lisa. (I didn't; I wanted a Fiat 500 to drive around and look cute in.) But, when it was time to say goodbye, I was shocked at the number of people who were sad to see her go!

As it turned out, I didn't end up spending that much time driving around in my car, doing whatever I wanted. Instead, every Friday Lisa and I would drive young people home from whatever food spot we had ended up in after youth. Every winter, Lisa would carry a group of us to a youth leader's weekend away somewhere.

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## Stewardship 40 Acts Challenge—Lent (2019) —Continued

### **ACT 10: Drop Everything—continued**

And more often than not, Lisa would be there to transport my mentees and me to a coffee shop somewhere so that I could talk, pray with or encourage someone through a difficult season.

Lisa ended up serving a way bigger purpose than just my convenience (and vanity); she was a real blessing to the people around me.

Did Mary have to break the jar to pour such an expensive perfume out? Surely she could have just opened it and poured out a little bit.

Mary could have kept some perfume for herself, but instead she used it all as a generous gift for Jesus. She had no idea that this simple change in perspective was going to be remembered ‘wherever the gospel is preached’ (Mark 14:9).

How often do we see what’s precious to us as a generous gift to someone else? I had no idea my little Nissan would be cherished by so many. I’m sure you have an incredibly generous gift sitting right under your nose. Maybe you haven’t seen it that way because it serves you so well. Who knows how many people you could bless by choosing to share that very thing?

<https://www.stewardship.org.uk/40-acts-lent-resource>

**Clare mentioned giving donations to our local food bank during Lent —  
Gillingham food bank are currently asking for the following  
under urgently needed.**



- Custard, tinned or packet
- Rice, 500g easy cook
- Tinned meat
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned rice pudding
- Tinned vegetables
- UHT fruit juice
- UHT milk



Please remember they cannot accept anything past its use by date, nor any item that has been opened and/or part used. Additionally, they can’t distribute baby formula (World Health Organisation recommendation), medicines of any sort and nutritional supplements/slimming aids.

# Stour Vale Benefice Newsletter

**Are you receiving our weekly newsletter by email?**

It gives details of our church services, news of our events happening across the Stour Vale parishes, plus prayers, reflections, encouragement and much more!



If you would like to receive a copy by email each week, just send your email address to: [octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com](mailto:octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com) with the subject title "Newsletter"

**Don't miss out!**



## STOUR VALE BENEFICE FACEBOOK PAGE

Please search 'The Church of England in the Stour Vale' in Facebook or use/click on the link below to find us.



Or go via the Benefice Website—there's a link on the home page.  
'Follow' us to keep up to date, and please do 'share' the good news!

[www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748)

## Stour Vale Prayer Group

We meet once a month for a short prayer meeting in which we bring our own concerns and the needs of the world in these troubled times.

Please join us on the Last Thursday of the Month—2pm at East Stour Church  
All welcome!

