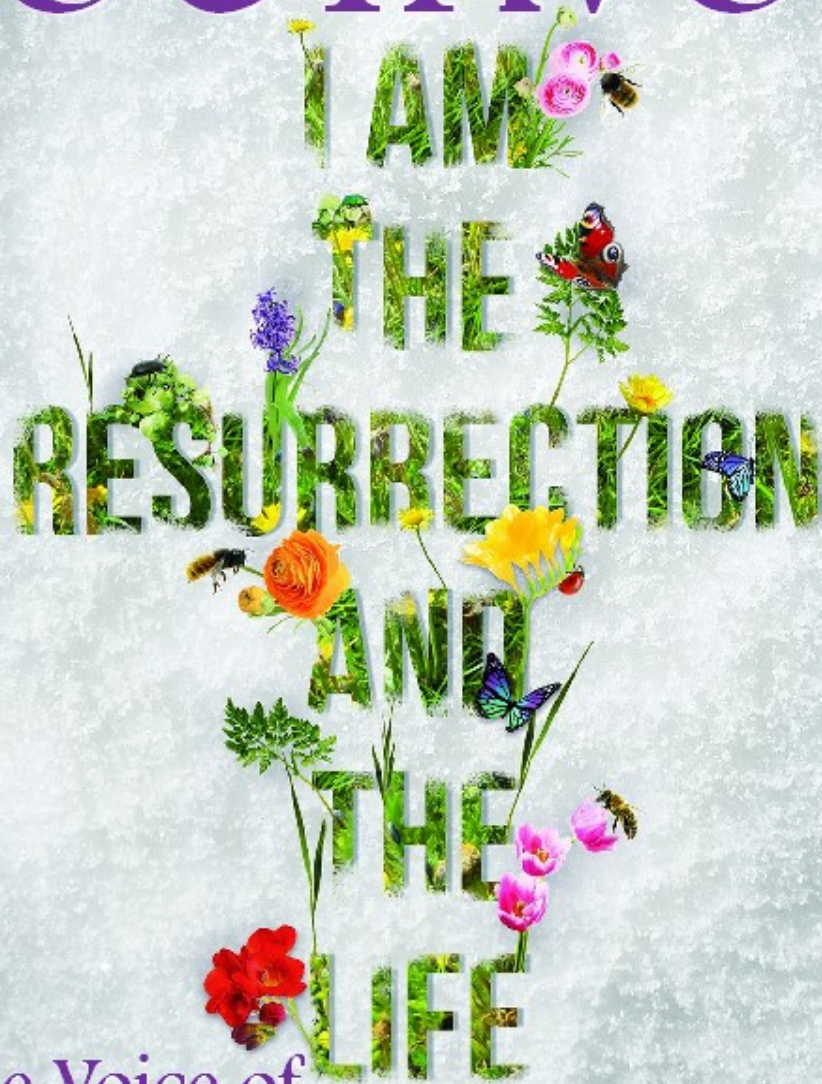


OCTAVO



The Voice of
The Stour Vale Benefice
£1 April 2024 Vol. 22 Issue 7

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 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!



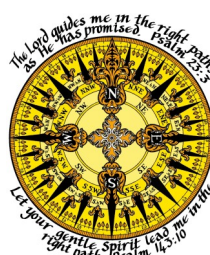
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748

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!



Stour Vale Benefice

Holy Week services:

Maundy Thursday: Holy Communion West Stour 7:30pm
For Reflection: A service to commemorate the Last Supper.

Good Friday: Hot Cross Bun Service Todber 10:30am
For All Ages: Join us to see what we can learn about Easter from a Hot Cross Bun (and eat them, too!)

Hour at the Cross Stour Provost 2:00-3:00pm
For Reflection: A service of hymns, readings and reflections on the sacrifice Jesus made for us on Good Friday, because of his love for us.

Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service Fifehead Magdalen 6:30am
For Reflection: Meet at the brazier outside Fifehead Magdalen at 6.30am for a simple act of outdoor worship as the sun rises on Easter Day. Dress for the weather! Feel free to bring your dogs, as well as a lantern to light if you have one. Followed by a simple breakfast of Hot Cross Buns and Coffee.

Benefice Holy Communion Stour Provost 10:30am
For All Ages: Come along to our joyful celebration of Easter Communion, with children's activities as part of the service.

Family Easter Service Buckhorn Weston 11:00am
*For All Ages: A service with an Easter Egg hunt....
What more is there to say?*

Stour Vale Benefice

Other services

Every Tuesday

Said Morning Prayer 9:30am West Stour

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour



Mid-Week Holy Communion

10.30am every Wednesday

East Stour Church

Thursday 25th April

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour

From the Vicar

Dear Friends

A very Happy Easter season to you all.

It seems that nowadays we live in a society which struggles with finding the truth. A society which is sceptical and which believes that the news we hear is likely to be fake. People are more suspicious about information that comes from previously well-respected news channels and government sources, whilst social media is awash with conspiracy theories.



In recent weeks, there has been much media speculation about the whereabouts and well-being of the Princess of Wales especially following the family Mother's Day photograph that was released which subsequently was found to be edited by the princess herself. Now we learn that Catherine has been undergoing treatment for cancer which she is coming to terms with herself, whilst doing her best to explain it to her young children.

Media attention of any sort can be cruel and unforgiving, and we hope and pray that the Princess of Wales along with King Charles will both be given the peace and respite that they need for a full recovery from their illnesses. Our prayers are with them as we also pray for others we know of who are undergoing similar medical treatment.

We might wonder how the media in the 21st century may have dealt with stories of Jesus's resurrection. We might suspect that there would be accusations of fake news and any sightings of Jesus would be assumed to be doctored photographs or some kind of CGI. His followers would most likely have been regarded with scepticism because surely nobody sensible believes in the resurrection of Jesus?

We might wonder too as to how easy it was to get hold of the truth in first century Palestine? It would be reasonable to imagine that there might be all sorts of rumours and conspiracy theories flying around in Jerusalem at that time. Some of you may have seen the film "Risen" with Joseph Fiennes which tells the story of a Roman Tribune who is sent by Pilate to investigate the disappearance of Jesus's body and dig it up from wherever it has been supposedly concealed by his followers. The Tribune never finds the body of Jesus, but does go on to have his own encounter with the risen Jesus, which means that he is never quite the same again.

Continued page 9

From the Vicar—continued

So, if Thomas needed a personal encounter with God to truly believe, do we? Paul did. I know that I did to believe in the reality of Jesus. I rather suspect that is the same for all of us. It seems, however, that we all experience God in different ways and sometimes we encounter God in ways which are so gentle and subtle we can hardly believe them, let alone want to share that experience with others.

So if you have doubts, like Thomas did, take them honestly to God in prayer, Jesus can cope with them just as he coped with Thomas's and he will respond to you in the way you need, but maybe not in the way you expect.

Believing in the resurrection is not an optional extra for Christians because without it, Christianity is merely a moral code. Through his death and resurrection Jesus both reconciled us to God and overcame death, which means we too can have eternal life. A truth to be shared with all.

God's blessing on you all this Eastertide,

Clare

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? Then do join us for the next Benefice Lunch.

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 23rd April — 12:30pm

2 courses at £15 or main only for £11.

(Senior Citizen meals also available.)

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



Thought for April

Happy Easter! Alleluia, Christ is risen!

It's almost impossible to imagine the impact of that revelation to the disciples. How hard it would have been for them to believe. It's a familiar story to us, one we retell every year in our Easter celebrations, a reality that we declare in our church services every Sunday, a central truth to our faith.

The challenge, certainly for me, is a different one. Since Jesus is risen, and proclaimed as Lord over all, why is our world in such a mess? The wars, the poverty, the injustices, the suffering, continue and seem to be getting worse, not better. Surely God's Kingdom of peace and justice should be having more impact?

Jesus did warn us that the Kingdom of God was not something that 'could be observed,' but that it is 'among you' or 'within you'. The Kingdom of God is ours to experience in our hearts and in our church communities. It's ours to bring to bear on the world, through our actions. **WE** can change the world, one small step at a time, and the best place to start is with prayer.

He is risen, indeed, alleluia!

With Love Fiona

Prayer for the month

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you breathed new life into your astonished disciples.

As you turned unutterable grief into unshakeable joy,
so renew and refresh your turbulent world
and establish now your reign of peace.

To you, Lord Jesus,
transforming the pain of death into the fullness of life,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.



From Common Worship Times and Seasons

Stour Vale Benefice

Easter Escape Room

or

Wed 3rd April

3pm-4pm

Stour Row

Village Hall



Thurs 4th April

3pm-4pm

Kington Magna

Village Hall

*Can you solve the puzzles
and work out
how to escape death?*

*Free fun for
all the family!*

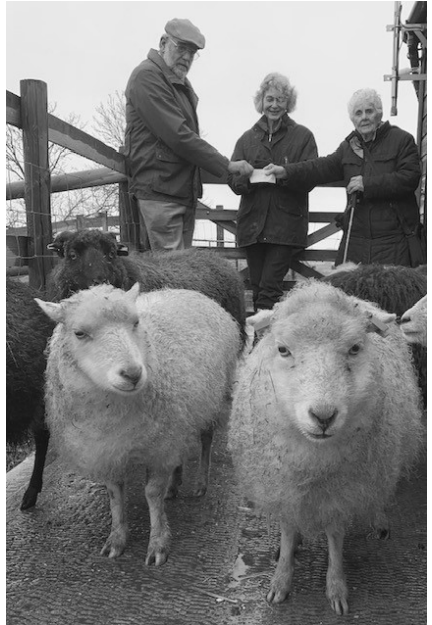
*Options for all
ages available.*

Why not come along and try our Easter Escape Room? Solve the puzzles to get the code for an encrypted message, then decode the message to see if you can work out how to escape death. There will be puzzles suitable for different age ranges, so everyone can enjoy the challenge! Come to take part as a family, or as an individual.

THE CHURCH TENT AT THE GILLINGHAM AND SHAFESBURY SHOW

A regular at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show is the refreshment Marquee run by the Church of England in Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Stour Vale. Working together they provide a welcome opportunity to sit down and enjoy coffee or tea plus home made cake. All profits are given to charity with an emphasis on the rural community.

A recipient in 2023 was The Student Fund founded by the G & S Show itself in 2020. The Student Support Fund helps to remove some of the financial barriers faced by students and trainees embarking on new careers in land based industries, which include agriculture, horticulture, forestry and so on. Their needs are varied from safety boots and laptops to travel expenses to access their training. Nothing is off the table; one student, with exemplary practical and technical skills but who struggled with dyslexia was helped with private tuition to achieve the higher level courses.



Sheep are the animal most connected with the Bible and here we have Matthew Price, Chairman of the Student Support Fund accepting the cheque with a helpful band of

Ouessant Sheep. Ouessants are a rare breed of heritage sheep and are the smallest in the world. They will be present at the Spring Countryside Show on the Turnpike Show ground on the 20th and 21st April where you can get to know these eco-friendly and people-friendly living lawnmowers.

The Church Tent will be at the Show in 2024 and welcomes all to visit and 'rest a while'. Please let us know if you have a favourite rural charity that we may be able to help.

For further information about this Press release please contact Jo Churchill on 01747 850432 or jo.churchill@enmoregreen.co.uk

It's church, but not as you
know it!
Join us for a drink, a chat
and a chance to spend
some time with God.

Friday 19th April

*Stour Vale Benefice
Service
in the
Pub*



Open from 11am for an 11:15 start

Tea and coffee will be provided, and the licenced bar will be open throughout for those who would like to buy a drink.

After the service, feel free to leave or stay for a drink. If anyone would like to stay and have lunch, we would advise you to reserve a table in the usual way.



**The Ship Inn,
West Stour, SP8 5RP**

For more details, please contact Fiona Hedges on
01747 838942 or stourvalemessychurch@gmail.com