

# THROUGH THE CHURCH GATE

*YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH, IBSTONE*



# AUGUST 2021

**YOUR VILLAGE CHURCH IS ALWAYS OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER**



# NEWS FROM YOUR VILLAGE CHURCH...

St Nicholas' Church was delighted to present each of the Year 6 pupils with a Bible as they leave Ibstone Church of England School this year and move to secondary school. This is the first group of Year 6 children to leave Ibstone for secondary school in many, many years. It also marks the end of the school's journey to become a full primary school. We wish all the leavers every blessing for the future and pray that a little piece of the Ibstone family will go with them.



## Sunday Services at St Nicholas' Church July & August 2021

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July** - 11:00 am Service of Prayer  
and Praise led by Rev Mark Ackford

**Sunday 1st August** - 8:00 am Service of BCP  
Communion Said led by Rev Philip Smith

**Sunday 8th August** - 9:30 am Service of Holy  
Communion led by Rev Philip Smith

**Sunday 22nd August** - 11:00 am Service of  
Prayer and Praise led by Rev Philip Smith

A message of thanks to all those in the village who support the Church either by financial donation or in time for cleaning, flower arranging or serving of the District Church Council. Without this level of 'people power' the church would not be able to function as a place of worship and as a historic building of note. Our village Church remains open 24/7 for private prayer or reflection offering a cool space in the heat of the summer sun.

**Everyone is welcome in God's house!**

# Services At St Nicholas' Church

Check our website for updates:  
<https://www.ibstonechurch.uk/>

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month**  
(June, July, August & September)  
**8:00 am** Said Holy Communion

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Month**  
**9:30 am** Holy Communion

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month**  
**11:00 am** Prayer and Praise  
Service

## Other services...

In addition to the services at St Nicholas' Church, you can also find details of services at Stokenchurch, Lane End and Cadmore End (the other three churches in our South Chiltern Benefice) on our church website:

<https://www.ibstonechurch.uk/services>

St Nicholas' Church is open 24/7 for private prayer, peace and reflection.

**You are always welcome in God's house!**

Should you wish to find out more about your local church please contact one of the following:

### Team Rector:

Revd Mark Ackford – 01494 266 891  
[revdmackford@outlook.com](mailto:revdmackford@outlook.com)

### Team Vicar:

Revd Philip Smith - 07879 456 840  
[philip@thevonsmiths.co.uk](mailto:philip@thevonsmiths.co.uk)

Information about baptism, weddings and funerals contact: Team Parish

### Administrator

Clare Bantick - 01494 854 045  
[parishoffice.sctc@gmail.com](mailto:parishoffice.sctc@gmail.com)

<https://southchilternsteamministry.wordpress.com/>

### Churchwarden:

Toby Long – 01491 638 909  
[stnicholasibstone@gmail.com](mailto:stnicholasibstone@gmail.com)

### Churchwarden Emeritus:

Veronica Murray – 01491 638 268

### Deputy Churchwarden:

Jenny Davis – 01491 638 245

**Email:** [stnicholasibstone@gmail.com](mailto:stnicholasibstone@gmail.com)

### Follow us on:

**Twitter:** @StIbstone

**Facebook:** St Nicholas Church Ibstone

# NEWS FROM OUR VILLAGE CHURCH SCHOOL

The end of the school's academic year has finally arrived after what has been a remarkable year. We have battled the regulations imposed from government to ensure we keep everyone as safe as possible and the education of the children at the fore front of what we do. Whilst we sadly had to close for three days back in June, compared to most local schools we have had very little disruption caused by Covid-19 and isolation rules. My thanks to the staff and governors at Ibstone for their dedication to the pupils of our school community during this time.

Revd Mark and Revd Philip have resumed their weekly visits to the school to lead collective worship for the children. This has been taking place outside and we are all delighted to have them in school once again. We are grateful and blessed to have Mark and Philip taking turns to lead worship with us and occasionally join us on the Worship Walk.

In July, several of our pupils were invited to attend Swan Upping at Marlow (*pictured below right*). The children loved hearing about this ancient tradition and meeting the cygnets with HM The Queen's Swan Marker. It was a real treat!

This July has been extra special for our first group of Year 6 Leavers. The 'amazing seven' have been a central part of the school's growth and development in recent years. This term ended with a Leavers' Service in Church for the seven pupils and their families at which Revd Mark presented each child the gift of a Bible. During the service the children created a prayer tree of memories, with leaves, blossom, and fruits to share what they will take with them from school (*pictured below left*). A film of memories was shown in the church on a big screen and we heard the children sing their own version of a song from the Greatest Showman with lyrics about their time at school and the vision and values that bond us together. We wish the children every success as they move to their various grammar and secondary schools.

Please continue to pray for the children, staff, families, governors, and work of your village school. May we take this opportunity to wish you a safe, healthy, and enjoyable summer.

*Louise Long*

**Headteacher**

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🌐 <http://www.ibstoneschool.org.uk/>



## The Calm After the Storm by Revd Philip Smith

This Sunday our Gospel reading tells of that most extraordinary incident where Jesus is asleep in a boat with his head on a cushion and the hardened and experienced fishermen are so afraid, that they have to wake Jesus up because we can only assume they are in a storm like no other.



At the beginning of the Pandemic, it was often said by commentators that we are all in the same boat. As the pandemic has ravaged through the earth, it has become clear that this is not true, for we are not all in the same boat, but we may be in the same storm.

We have discovered that some are in luxury liners whilst many are hanging on to driftwood and the few life rafts that may have been thrown from a sinking ship. We have not all been in this together. So, as we emerge from this season that has universally affected all nations in dramatically different ways how might we come out of our pupa and become butterflies.

Our deanery has encouraged us to have conversations through a review of the churches which have a more distinctive rural flavour. Part of the first stage of this has been opportunities to share excitements and fears from all 14 churches giving a 15-minute presentation on Zoom to one another. These presentations have been fascinating hearing common themes and distinctive issues peculiar to each church context. Thank you so much to those who have presented on our behalf.

There's a saying 'that if we do, what we've always done, we get what we've always got'. The outcome of the Rural Review is genuinely up for grabs but if nothing substantially changes then what may be feared will happen, though not tomorrow or next year. Whenever we are confronted with challenges, we can either see them as obstacles or opportunities.

Who'd have thought two years ago that we would be Zooming services, having contactless paying machines, singing outside, and learning to be more flexible and adaptable. It's been a steep learning curve for all of us not least viewing our double chins on zoom. So, what might we like to do differently, what remains constant and what should we perhaps stop doing? The answers will be as different as there are people. This season offers us a once in an era chance to have these refreshing and honest conversations.

What may change? Well, we need to think about having less wordy and more accessible liturgies, that our children can experience in school so that when they come to church it doesn't feel alien. Services will need to be tailored for strangers and guests that are not different to the atmosphere they enjoyed at a more family friendly event. Music will have more variety, using the gifts and talents of musicians where vocalists and instrumentalists are all valued.

All our buildings will become appropriately more accessible and flexible, welcoming and brighter, with places for activities that a hundred years ago were never dreamed of. We don't expect our wonderful local farmers to use 18<sup>th</sup> century farming practices to provide us with the nourishments we need today, though some timeless ways are always needed, such as helping a newly born lamb. But some things will never change. The journey by foot or other transport to places that stand to the glory of God. The opportunity to gather as a church family and community at times of sadness and celebration. Times when there are more visitors such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Services that are both joyful and reverent bringing young and old together. Music that lifts the soul and moves the body. Social and community events that bring our villages together. Perhaps these will take on a greater sense of gratitude with hopefully us all taking others and things less for granted.

And above all, what won't change, is that Jesus is in our boat, asleep or not, stilling storms and calming us, and teaching us to walk on water if we keep our eyes on him.

Keep the faith, but never ever to yourselves. Love Philip x

**Clergy across the Benefice regularly contribute to an online blog, for more:**

<https://southchilternsteamministry.wordpress.com/>

**The Assumption of Mary** is a Christian festival celebrated every year on 15<sup>th</sup> August in most part of the world. Christians believe, on this day the Virgin Mary "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

In ancient culture The Assumption of Mary is celebrated by public illumination and night time bonfires. In some other cultures people throw coins from their window down into the street and considered it as an idea of prosperity. There are many symbolic images and pictures associated with that event. Most people believed the colour blue is associated with the Virgin Mary as it is the colour of Heaven and symbolizes truth and clarity. Christians mostly associate Lily with the Virgin Mary because it is the symbol of purity, simplicity and divinity.

Different countries in the world celebrate The Assumption of Mary in different ways. In Italy and in the United States it is celebrated by decorating streets with different colours of light and firework displays. In Rome the bowing procession is the most important event of the day. People take the statue of the Virgin Mary through beautiful archways of flowers to a group of people that hold a statue of Christ symbolizing his awaiting for her to arrive in Heaven. In Brazil the feast called "Our lady of Navigators" is very popular. In Italy people take rides through the lakes in which they sprinkle roses and water over them and is considered as a symbol of prosperity. This Day is also considered as a monumental holiday in France.



The Assumption of Mary is a very popular summer festival in Greece and some of its surrounding islands. In the country of Andorra, it is a widely celebrated festival where natives pray for the Mother; it also has become a national holiday in Andorra. This Day also became a public holiday in Guatemala where people and their families hand out gifts, food and other items as well as have parties, elaborate feasts and just enjoy spending time together. The Assumption of Mary is celebrated by the Christian community all over the world through many different traditions and customs. This festival is a sign of love and harmony, and is respected as a sacred festival.

# Caring: A prayerful reflection on a parable

- Find a quiet place and time.
- Sit calmly and comfortably; then
- Just follow the arrows and everybody joins in the bold bits ...
- Remember to read slowly and carefully, different people can read different parts.
- Do not be afraid to pause to leave time to think.

'Where two or three are gathered together in my name,' says the Lord, 'there am I in the midst of them.'

**Welcome to everyone, welcome to God**

**A Bible Story**  
Jesus told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches."  
Good News Translation (GNT)  
Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society

**Is a tree full of birds your idea of a kingdom?**  
Some wonder questions...  
• Why do we not have a queendom?  
• Are the birds symbols for something else?  
• Who is the 'man'

**Lord of the kingdom**  
There are many times when we feel upset or uncomfortable  
We ask that you will be with us so that we are secure like the birds in the story and can learn ways in which we too can help and care for others who are in need.  
**Amen**

We live in the world to walk in God's light, to give God's love and to share God's care.  
**Amen**

The graphic features a wood-grain background with several text boxes and arrows. A purple arrow points from the top box to the Bible story box. A yellow arrow points from the Bible story box to the 'Is a tree full of birds...' box. A red arrow points from the 'Is a tree full of birds...' box to the 'Lord of the kingdom' box. A blue arrow points from the 'Lord of the kingdom' box to the 'We live in the world...' box.