



Stour Vale Benefice

Seven Churches, One Body, One Benefice

Newsletter No. 300

Sunday 25th January 2026

9:15am	Parish Communion Stour Provost
10:30am	Morning Worship Buckhorn Weston (CW)
11:00am	Parish Communion with Baptism Kington Magna
6:30pm	Evensong Fifehead Magdalen (BCP)

Please remember all who are ill or bereaved in Sunday's intercessions and in your prayers this week

All who are ill, especially Joyce (ES), Richard (ES), Irene (KM), Peter (KM), Nicky (T), Margaret (WS) and Tony (WS); for the family and friends of Jim White (BW), John Score (KM), Jeremy Seavers (T), Maureen Richards (formerly SP) and all those who are bereaved.

Other Benefice services/events coming up in February

Every Wednesday – Said Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

Every Tuesday during Lent – Morning Prayer West Stour 9:30am

Monday 16th – Knit and Natter 2:30pm East Stour Village Hall

Wednesday 18th – Ash Wednesday Communion Service at East Stour 10:30am

Tuesday 24th – Benefice Lunch 12:30pm Lakeside Kitchen

Friday 27th – Stour Vale Benefice prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church



Readings Sunday 25th January *Conversion of St Paul*

Acts 9.1–22

Psalm 67

Galatians 1.11–16a

Matthew 19.27–end

Galatians 1.11–16a (NIV)

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being.

Matthew 19.27–end (NIV)

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

²⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Collect and Post Communion for Sunday 25th January

Collect

Almighty God,
who caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world
through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul:
grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
may follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God,
who on the day of Pentecost
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:
by the power of the same Spirit
strengthen us to witness to your truth
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer in the Benefice –Sunday 25th to Saturday 31st January

Please join us in prayer this week, either by adding the topics to your usual daily prayers or by praying the specific prayers suggested below. If you would like us to pray for something, or someone, then please contact Jill Perry (octavoeditorsvb@gmail.com).

Sunday: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Growing into Christ

May I rise with You, Light of the World, called to bring grace and mercy. May I journey in the wake of Your Spirit, called towards righteousness and peace. May I rest with the hope of good things in the places of Your creation that You, O God, call me to bring healing. May we all, with courage and joy, work faithfully for the coming of Your kingdom. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Monday: The Government

Sovereign Lord, we pray for those who hold positions of power in our country. Make them servant-hearted, promoting the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Give them wisdom and a universal perspective as they consider the complex issues facing our world and our fellow citizens. May they behave with integrity and honesty. Amen.



Tuesday: Our Own Communities

Lord Jesus, you taught us that all who come our way are our neighbours. Hear our prayer for those with whom we come in daily contact because they live close to us. Help us to be good neighbours to them. Give us grace to overlook petty annoyances and to build on all that is positive in our relationship, that we may love them as we love ourselves, with genuine forbearance and kindness. Amen.

Wednesday: All who are ill or bereaved, especially those listed on the first page of the newsletter we have specifically been asked to pray for; those struggling with their mental health.



Merciful Father, you are the source of all health and healing, all strength and peace. Pour your healing power onto those who are ill, those who mourn and those who struggle. We pray especially for those who struggle with their mental health. Grant them the strength to face each day with courage. May they find their solace in you. Comfort and encourage them. Amen.

Thursday: The Persecuted Church in Syria – A Prayer from *Open Doors*
(www.opendoorsuk.org)

Lord, the Syrian people have been through so much – and Your people have endured endless trials and tribulations. And now, God, we see how they face such an uncertain future, unsure of what new leadership and new regimes will mean for them, even as the reality has grown even more dangerous. God, we implore You to bring Your perfect peace to Syria; help new leaders to recognise how Syrian Christians have been part of the fabric of the region since the time of Christ. Lord, You brought St Paul to You as he travelled to Damascus, the capital of Syria. We pray that You would repeat this miracle in our time, reaching the hearts of even those who oppose You the most. In Jesus' name, we ask these things. Amen.

Friday: Our Families

Loving Heavenly Father, may our families be touched by your love. By all that we do, or say, help us to build the confidence, faith and hope of those we love. When we quarrel, help us to forgive, and be forgiven, quickly. May we show no favouritism, but treat all our family members with the same love, respect and care. Amen.



Saturday: Generosity

Gracious Lord, We pray for ourselves. Make us ever eager to share the things you give us. Grant us such a measure of your Spirit that we may find more joy in giving than in getting. Make us ready to give cheerfully without looking for gratitude. Amen.

25th January - Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now

stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Parish Pump

Here's a question for all our nature lovers.

This 'cocoon' has appeared on the inside of the porch door at West Stour Church.

It is about 2 inches high.

So, can anyone identify it?
Have any of the other churches seen one?

If you know the answer, please let Pat Fowler know
and Jill so she can tell the rest of us!



Smile Lines - Are you taking a mid-winter break?

If you are preparing to take off for foreign climes, do keep an eye out for signs that have English words... but perhaps not an English meaning! In hotels and train stations and airports all over the world there are polite little signs that will bring a smile to the lips of even an exhausted traveller. For instance, how about these*:

Romania: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret you will be unbearable.

Russia: If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it.

Spain: Our wine list leaves you with nothing to hope for.

Denmark: In the event of fire, open a window and announce your presence in a seemingly manner.

Canary Islands: If you telephone for room service you will get the answer you deserve.

**With thanks to 'Lost in Translation: Misadventures in English Abroad' by Charlie Croker (Michael O'Mara Books, £9.99) From Parish Pump*

You can contact Revd Clare on: 01747 838171

Or by email: clare@evzone.co.uk

Please Note: Mondays are Clare's usual day off and she will also be on leave
Saturday 31st January.



This Newsletter



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 name, parish and email address to Jill Perry at octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com with the subject "Newsletter Mailing List". But, if you do not wish to continue receiving them, please email her with "Unsubscribe" in the subject field.

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748
or search for 'The Church of England in the Stour Vale' on Facebook,
or follow the link on the Benefice Website.

Newsletter produced on behalf of the Stour Vale Benefice:
Buckhorn Weston – East Stour – Fifehead Magdalen
Kington Magna – Stour Provost – Todber – West Stour