



BENEFICE NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2025



Well, it looks like Summer is here at last and with that comes the season for holidays and the chance to step out of our usual routines and relax. If you are planning a break, or have already had one, I trust it is (or has been) refreshing and revitalising. In Mark's Gospel, we read that Jesus told the Twelve on one occasion, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile." As it turned out, their planned trip was interrupted by 5,000 people requiring lunch, but they managed a quiet boat trip together before that happened!

In writing this newsletter and recounting all that is happening in our churches, it could give the impression that endless activity is the mark of a healthy Benefice, if not a successful Vicar! In truth, busyness can be a substitute for intimacy with God, and constant activity an escape from addressing issues of the heart that God wants to heal and transform. This is not always the case of course, but I would urge us all to take time to be still, be silent and just be with God. It is from that place that we hear His word that transforms us and where we also receive a fresh vision of Him that inspires and equips us for service in His Kingdom.

As usual, I will try to inform you of new or fresh initiatives that are happening in our churches or report on any new developments in existing projects. Thank you all for your ongoing prayers, support and efforts in growing God's Kingdom in this Benefice – you are a great team to work with!

Holy Trinity, Ash

The Bell Tower steps are now completed along with a beautiful new handrail. The transformation has been amazing (see photos below) and it was a joy to welcome Ash Primary School for a church visit just recently. The highlight for the children, who ranged from ages 4-5 up to 9-10 was a visit to see and hear the bells being rung. Our new steps and hand-rail survived the test with glowing colours and all went up and down in groups of 6 very easily and safely. It has been a remarkable project, made possible by the generosity and hard work of many people both inside and outside of the church community. We will be having a short service to dedicate the steps on **Saturday 16th August at 3.00pm**

followed by tea in The Bell Inn. It will be a great opportunity to give thanks to God and to all who have made this happen. Do come and join the celebrations if you can.



BEFORE



AFTER

Some of the work involved



St. Martin's Kingsbury

We have been delighted by the steady turnaround in the finances of St Martin's in recent months. This has been bolstered by many of the regular worshippers joining the Parish Giving Scheme, also by some gifts and a great effort by Barb and the team providing teas at the May Festival. We have also formed The Friends of St Martin's a sub-committee of the PCC whose sole aim is to raise funds for the church. So far, their collective planning has put in place dates for: a Flower and Craft Show on Sat 30th August; a Shanty Band Concert on Friday 3rd October at 7.30 in the church and the return of Kingsbury Town Band on Saturday 20th December. We hope all these events will raise funds for the church as well as provide many with a great opportunity to get together and enjoy some good entertainment.

The church family have embraced the new monthly scheme of worship which consists of one Morning Prayer, one Holy Communion and a new initiative we are calling **Family Time**.

This will run on the afternoon of the 3rd Sunday in the month from 4.00-5.00pm in the Church Rooms and is aimed at parents and children who would not otherwise come along on a Sunday morning. It will be a fun time of crafts, a bible story, music and tea. This has come about as the church family has recognised that continuing to do the same thing, the same way and expecting people to come when they haven't done so up until now is a strategy doomed to fail. Our first **Family Time** will be on **Sunday 15th June** which also happens to be Father's Day so we hope we can have a great time together. I will let you all know how things are progressing in the next Benefice Newsletter.

St Peter and St Paul Muchelney

We have seen the first of our weddings this year which turned out to be a beautiful day. Elizabeth and Stephen had a wonderful wedding service and they and their guests strolled across the road to the Almonry Barn for a delightful wedding reception. Stephen and Elizabeth had attended Sunday services over a period of 6 months and it was lovely to get to know them and their families. We managed to complete some essential maintenance to the Bell Tower ceiling just in time and to our delight Tom Rees also cleaned the window at the West End which let in more light and made the bride's entrance and exit all the more

special. Our recent Big Breakfast was very well attended and much enjoyed by all who came. It raised £330.00 for church funds so a great effort by all who worked so hard to make it happen.

All Saints' Martock

On **Thursday 24th July** at **7.00pm** in All Saints we will be holding a “**Come and Sing**” taster session. We have been in discussion with Rachel Crane who has wide experience in running choirs with a view to starting a community choir that meets in All Saints'. The hope is that this will be a great way to meet others in our community who love to sing and enjoy meeting new friends. If we get a good turn-out on the day and everyone is keen to continue we will start the new choir in the Autumn. It will be fun and offer a mixed genre of music to sing and possibly to have two or three occasions in the year when the choir can sing at the key festivals in the church calendar.

On **Wednesday 10th September** we are holding an outreach event called 'Supper with Friends' at 7.00pm in All Saints' Church. It will consist of a meal and some entertainment followed by a talk by Rev Roger Morgan on a big question of life. We have yet to finalise what that question will be so any suggestions are very welcome! The idea is to invite some friends whom you have been praying for that you would love to see come to a knowledge of God's love and grace in their lives. The evening will be relaxed and fun and Roger is a seasoned evangelist with great experience in running such events. The hope is that he will provoke a desire to discover more amongst those who attend, and we will be ready to offer a follow-on offering to any who would like to discover more about faith.

Finally, if you are observant you may have noticed that the chancel steps at All Saints' have begun to break up in places (see photos below)



To my joy, I discovered that the Church Commissioners are responsible for chancel repairs at All Saints! So, I have had a meeting with Ian Simpson from the Church Commissioners and they have agreed to finance the repair which will be in the region of £18,000.00. If left, the blue lias stone will continue to fragment as it forms in layers and once it starts to become friable and crack it continues to do so - as we are observing in the chancel.

I have obtained the necessary permission from the Diocese and work should start to replace the steps entirely in September. So the high altar area will be out of action for a period of about 4-6 weeks whilst work is carried out. I trust that the end-result will be well worth the effort and the wait and will maintain the beauty of All Saints for generations to come.

Hope you all have a good Summer

Blessings

Your friend Paul