

OCTAVO



**The Voice of
The Stour Vale Benefice
£1 October 2025 Vol. 24 Issue 2**

Stour Vale Benefice

October

Harvest Festivals

Sunday 5th West Stour 10am East Stour 11am

Sunday 12th Fifehead Magdalen 6:30pm.

Sunday 12th **Baby Loss Service 3pm West Stour**

see Clare's letter and page 11 for more details.

Saturday 18th **Confirmation Service with Bishop Karen
5pm at East Stour**

*Please come and support the candidates from the
Stour Vale Benefice on their special day.*

All are welcome to join us for any of these services.

Stour Vale Benefice

Mid-Week Services / Benefice events October 2025

Every Tuesday

Said Morning Prayer 9:30am West Stour Church

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

Monday 20th

Knit and Natter Group—2:30pm East Stour Village Hall

Date TBC

Benefice Lunch 12:30pm—see newsletter for details

Friday 31st —please note change of day

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

From the Vicar

Dear Friends

Autumn seems to have come upon us suddenly this year or perhaps it is because the cooler weather now feels in stark contrast to the intensity of the summer heatwave.

October always feels like a month of transition. The long, light evenings of summer have passed, the mornings begin with a chill in the air, and the landscape changes its clothing. Trees are tipped with gold and red; fields lie quieter now that the harvest has been gathered in, and the evenings close in earlier as the clocks go back. Heating goes on and fires are lit. All around us, creation is showing us something of the rhythm of life: a mixture of light and shade, growth and rest, fullness and letting go.



This year, as I look at the stubbled fields and the apples ripening in gardens, I am struck again by how harvest speaks both of abundance and fragility. Harvest is above all a season of thanksgiving—time to acknowledge God’s generosity and the fruitfulness of the earth. We give thanks for those who work the land, for farmers and growers, for those who process and transport our food, and for the simple goodness of bread on the table and fruit on the branch. Yet harvest also prompts honesty. Not every harvest is plentiful. There are places in the world where crops have failed, or where conflict and poverty leave families hungry. Even closer to home, many are anxious about rising costs, or feel uncertain about the coming winter. Harvest gratitude and harvest need sit alongside each other, just as light and shadow mingle in the autumn skies.

This sense of both gratitude and sorrow is also present in another important moment this month. From the 9th to the 15th of October, churches and communities across our country mark **Baby Loss Awareness Week**. In this Benefice we will gather on **Sunday 12th October** for a special service of remembrance at **St Mary’s West Stour**. It is a gentle, quiet space where we bring before God the children we no longer see, but who remain forever part of our families and our homes. Some were lost in pregnancy, some in infancy, and some in later years of childhood. However long ago the loss took place, and however raw or tender the grief still feels, we will gather to remember, to give thanks, and to pray for one another.

The words of **Psalms 139** remind us of God’s tender care: *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb... your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

Continued

From the Vicar—continued

These verses tell us that every life, however short, is known, cherished, and held by God. There is deep comfort in knowing that the children we remember are not forgotten in heaven's sight, and that their place in our families is secure in love.

At our Baby Loss service, we will light candles. Each flame is a symbol: a symbol of memory, because love continues; a symbol of hope, because God's light shines even in the darkest valley; and a symbol of community, because when we stand together in grief, we also share strength and compassion. The act of lighting a candle acknowledges the shadows, but it also bears witness to the light that cannot be overcome.

As Christians we live with both light and shadow, both gratitude and grief. Perhaps that is the gift of this season: to teach us that life is rarely one thing only, but a weaving together of many threads. We are invited to give thanks for abundance, to share with those in need, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. And in all these things, we are assured of God's presence—the God who created us, who knows us from our mother's womb, who sustains us in sorrow and in joy, and who promises that his light will shine in the darkness.

May this October bring you moments of thanksgiving, glimpses of God's light, and the assurance of his love in every season of life.

With every blessing,

Clare

Prayer for October

Creator God,
you made the goodness of the land,
the riches of the sea
and the rhythm of the seasons;
as we thank you for the harvest,
may we cherish and respect
this planet and its peoples,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Collect for Harvest Festival

BABY LOSS MEMORIAL SERVICE



SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER 3PM
Remembering those who have been part of
our lives who died too soon
WEST STOUR

All welcome to this short and simple service at St Mary's Church, as we join with people across the world lighting candles this week in memory of babies who have died at any stage of pregnancy, or during or after birth, recently or long ago and in recognition of their grief.

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 17th October

*Stour Vale Benefice
Service
in the
Pub*



Open from 11am for an 11:15 start

Tea and coffee will be provided, and the
licensed 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

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.

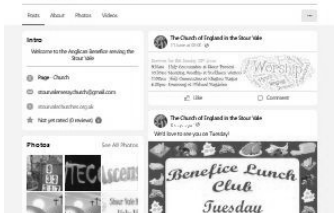
Or go via the Benefice Website—there's a link on the home page.

'Follow' us to keep up to date, and please do 'share' the good news!

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



The Church of England in the Stour Vale



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 Friday of the Month—
2pm at East Stour Church

All welcome!



Prayer Walks

This Autumn I am hoping to continue the prayer walks that we began last year. It is important to show a spiritual presence in all the Benefice villages and help to demonstrate our concern for those who live and work in each village community.

Prayer walking is rooted in centuries old Christian spiritual traditions such as “Beating the Bounds” and the practice of Pilgrimage. It offers an opportunity to bless people, places, businesses and animals, intercede for the concerns of villagers, and affirm the life and unity of the community especially in acknowledging those places which are key to village life.

Prayer walking can be an opportunity for spiritual renewal, providing a time for reflection, meditation, and connection with God in the created world. It is a shared experience as we walk and pray together, telling stories of village life past and present.

Why not join us? Look out for dates in Octavo under the parish entries or in the newsletter.

Next walk—Todber Friday 3rd October 10am starting at the church and finishing at the Lakeside Kitchen, Todber Lakes.



LOOKING
FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU !

SUNDAY 19TH
OCTOBER
Breakfast from 8:45am

Annual Memorial service – 2nd November at 4pm at Fifehead Magdalen Church

If you would like a loved one remembered at this lovely, quiet service there will be a list at the back of your church for you to enter names or contact your Church Warden.

Knit and Natter

Whether you'd just like some company and to knit some simple squares, or would like to learn how to make anything from beautiful baby clothes to creative jumpers, then come along to Knit and Natter on the 3rd Monday of the month.



The ladies have recently completed a number of lovely blankets for the local Women's Refuge. They provide both warmth and comfort and are very popular.



The next meeting is on **Monday
20th October
2:30-4:30pm
in East Stour village hall.**

Stour Vale Singers:

Stour Vale Singers choir meet weekly on Tuesday afternoons (2 o'clock for 2.30 until 4 o'clock), in West Stour Village Hall. Whilst some music reading skills are desirable this is by no means essential, enthusiasm and commitment (but not obligation) being far more important. All are welcome. if you are interested, do contact me for more information: (dagrierson@hotmail.com)

David

Stour Vale Benefice

Light Party

for

Halloween



Thurs 30th Oct

4pm-5.30pm

East Stour Church, SP8 5LP.

All children welcome, with their adult(s).

Come in fancy dress or as you are.



Pumpkin Fun,
Spider Splat,
Games, Crafts,
Puzzles.



Hot chocolate and
all the treats, without the tricks!

Services for the Stour Vale Benefice October 2025



Sunday	5 th October Trinity 16	12 th October Trinity 17	19 th October Trinity 18	26 th October Bible Sunday
Buckhorn Weston		9:15am Parish Communion	8:45am Breakfast Church* In the Village Hall	10:30am Morning Worship CW
East Stour	11:00am Harvest Festival Communion		6pm Evensong BCP	
Fifehead Magdalen		6:30pm Harvest Festival Communion		6:30pm Evensong
Kington Magna		11:00am Morning Worship CW		11:00am Parish Communion
Stour Provost		10:30am Morning Worship CW		9:15am Parish Communion
Todber	9:15am Parish Communion		10:00am Morning Prayer	
West Stour	10:00am Harvest Festival	3pm Baby Loss Service	10:00am Parish Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

Services in October

*Breakfast Church is open to the whole Benefice – more details from Fiona

Readings for October 2025

5th October

Habakkuk 1.1–4; 2.1–4
2 Timothy 1.1–14

Trinity 16 (Green)

Psalm 37.1–9
Luke 17.5–10

12th October

2 Kings 5.1–3, 7–15c
2 Timothy 2.8–15

Trinity 17 (Green)

Psalm 111
Luke 17.11–19

19th October

Genesis 32.22–31
2 Timothy 3.14–4.5

Trinity 18 (Green)

Psalm 121
Luke 18.1–8

26th October

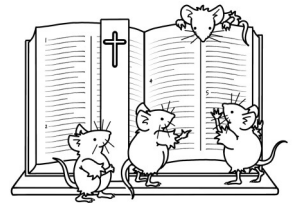
Isaiah 45.22–end
Romans 15.1–6

Bible Sunday (Green)

Psalm 119.129–136
Luke 4.16–24

Harvest Thanksgiving (Festival) October

Deuteronomy 26.1–11 Psalm 100
John 6.25–35



Services in October

Harvest Festivals

Sunday 5th West Stour 10am (Harvest Lunch at 12:30pm)
East Stour 11am followed by Harvest Lunch.
Sunday 12th Fifehead Magdalen 6:30pm.

Baby loss service – 12th October 3pm West Stour

**Saturday 18th October – Confirmation Service with Bishop Karen
5pm at East Stour**