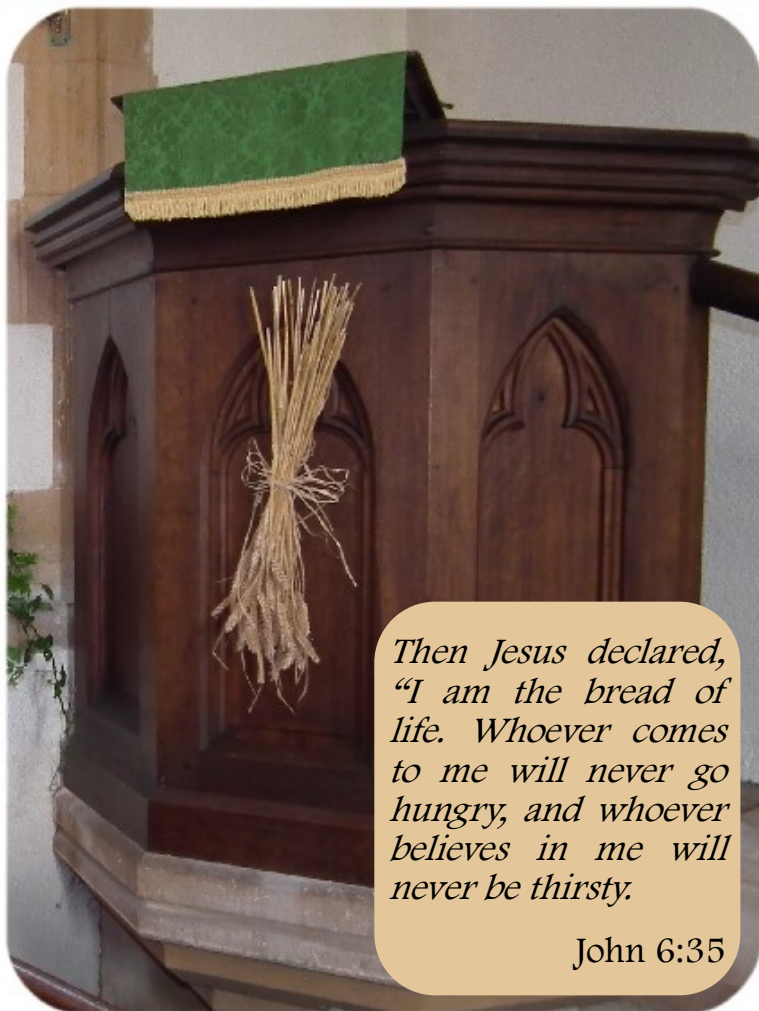


OCTAVO



*Then Jesus declared,
"I am the bread of
life. Whoever comes
to me will never go
hungry, and whoever
believes in me will
never be thirsty.*

John 6:35

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

Stour Vale Benefice

Mid-Week Services / Benefice events September 2025

Every Tuesday

Said Morning Prayer 9:30am West Stour Church

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

Monday 15th

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

Tuesday 23rd

Benefice Lunch 12:30pm Udder Farm

(Please book with Revd Clare or Jill Perry—see page 17 for details)

Friday 26th—please note change of day

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

Stour Vale Benefice

Harvest Festivals

September



Friday 12th

Buckhorn Weston 7pm

Sunday 21st

Todber 10:30am

Friday 26th

Kington Magna 6:30pm

Saturday 27th

Stour Provost 6:30pm

October

Sunday 5th

West Stour 10am

East Stour 11am

Sunday 12th

Fifehead Magdalen 6:30pm.



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

From the Vicar

Dear Friends

September always feels like a turning point to me. We start to notice that the days are that little bit shorter, the evenings cooler, and suddenly we notice the year moving on. There is somehow a whiff of Autumn in the air. September is often a time of fresh starts as it was for my family two years ago when we moved to Stour Vale and we continue to feel very blessed to be here.



In some families, little ones are putting on school uniforms for the very first time – shoes polished, huge blazers and bags that look almost bigger than they are! Others are moving up to secondary school, facing new teachers and new routines. And then, of course, there are those who are packing up for university or college, leaving home and setting out on a whole new adventure. Parents are left with a quiet house, a mixture of pride and anxiety, and the challenge of learning to let go and trust.

It's at times like this that we're reminded that life has its seasons. The writer of Ecclesiastes put it so well: *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). We know it's true from our own experience: there are seasons of joy and seasons of sadness, seasons of holding on and seasons of letting go. Sometimes life feels busy and full, and at other times it feels stripped back and bare. But however the seasons change, we are never outside God's care. He walks with us through them all, and in his time, he makes all things beautiful.

We can see this same pattern in the world around us. At this time of year many of us are planning the Autumn tidy up in our gardens – cutting things back, clearing leaves, digging over the soil. It's not always the most exciting job, but it's what prepares the ground for next year's growth. And perhaps there's a lesson in that for our own spiritual lives. Sometimes it's worth asking ourselves: what needs tidying away in me? Are there habits I've picked up that are cluttering my faith? Are there things God is gently asking me to lay down, so that He can plant something new in their place? Just like the garden, our souls need a bit of care and clearing from time to time.

Some of that comes with a time to rest and reflect in preparation for the new season and I am very much looking forward to a quiet time on holiday before a busy season of activity in our church calendar in the months ahead.

Continued

From the Vicar—continued

For September also brings us our Benefice Harvest Festivals and Suppers – always such lovely occasions. I love the colour, the produce, the decorations, and of course the chance to sit down together over a meal and share in the joy of thanksgiving. The auctions of produce are such a lively and fun way of raising money for charity too. Yet Harvest is a time to pause and remember that all we have comes from God's goodness. This year, however, our thanksgiving comes with a more serious note. The dry summer has left many farmers deeply worried, and they have real concerns about how livestock will be fed over the winter months. For them, harvest may not be an easy time. So, as we decorate our churches and bring our offerings, let's remember to hold our farming community around us in prayer and support them in any way we can. Our thanksgiving is all the richer when it is joined with compassion and solidarity.

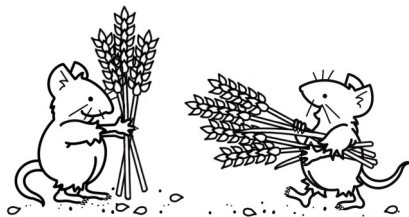
In the middle of changing seasons and times of worry, Jesus gives us something we can hold on to. In John's Gospel, he tells the crowds, *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst"* (John 6:35). It's a wonderful reminder that while the seasons shift, while our routines change, while even the harvest may falter, we can always depend on him. He is the one who feeds us, strengthens us, and sustains us through every stage of life.

So, whether you are facing a new start, or simply finding your way into the slower rhythm of autumn, take some time to rest in God's care. Tidy up the garden, by all means – but don't forget to tend to your soul as well. Let Jesus, the Bread of Life, nourish you with his presence, prune away what needs to go, and plant in you seeds of hope for the days to come.

Whatever season you feel you're in right now, may you know that you are held in God's love – today, tomorrow, and always.

With love and blessings,

Clare



Congratulations to:

Robin Batten Watkins on
his baptism at Stour
Provost on the 10th
August 2025.



*We welcome you into the church
family and pray for you and your
family.*

The Church Tent at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show

This is being written in haste on the day following the Show. More news in the next issue.

The Church Tent was as popular as ever. Very busy day on the Wednesday, a bit slower on the Thursday. Lovely community feel with folk saying how welcome they felt. A special thank you to everyone who sent in cakes always the highlight. And a thank you to all our volunteers who gave their time before, during and after the Show. Very hot work.

Special guests on Wednesday – Bishop Karen from Sherborne and The Bishop of Bath and Wells.

I received a handwritten note from our own Bishop Stephen assuring us of his prayers for the Church Tent and sending every blessing.

We also all congratulate Alma on her recent Award received from King Charles for her work in the Community. So well deserved.

Jo Churchill—Church Tent Organiser

Thought for the Month

Recently I've been getting lots of encouragement from members of our church congregations, which reminded me of the difference between oaks and sequoia trees.

There's something very majestic about lone oak trees, but they need to have very deep roots to keep them upright in high winds. Not everywhere has soil deep enough for that, and any tree with shallow roots will be vulnerable.

However, sequoia trees, despite their enormous size, do have shallow roots, so they are able to grow in rocky areas with little soil. To protect them from high winds they grow in groves and their roots overlap and intertwine, holding each other up and providing mutual support.

So, for those times when the road feels rocky or our foundations feel shallow, it's great to have a church family supporting us and holding us up as the winds of change blow round us. We all have times when we need support, and times when we can do the supporting. Let's thank God for that!

With Love, Fiona

Prayer for September

O God, you have bound us together in this bundle of life; give us grace to understand how our lives depend on the courage, the industry, the honesty and integrity of others; that we may be mindful of their needs, grateful for their faithfulness and faithful in our responsibilities to them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Reinhold Neibuhr

Carol and Martin Hibbert

want to thank everyone for the messages, cards and flowers we have received after Matthew's sudden death.

We are so grateful for the kindness, concern and support shown us after what has been a tragic bereavement.

I am especially grateful for the prayer support of the Benefice and I count myself blessed to be part of this loving community.

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 next one is on **Monday 15th September**
and they meet between **2:30-4:30pm**
in **East Stour village hall**.

Prayer Walks

This Summer and 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 Saturday 6th September 10am starting at the church and finishing at the Lakeside Kitchen, Todber Lakes.

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 **BREAKFAST CHURCH**

SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER

Breakfast served from 8.45am

Worship Service 9.00am - 9.30am

Buckhorn Weston Village Hall
(SP8 5HF).



Scan the QR code for more information,
Or contact us on stourvalemessychurch@gmail.com

Stour Vale Benefice **Benefice Lunches**

Please note: we need to pre-order food, so let us know your choice when you book your place—see their website for menus.

Tuesday 23rd September —12:30pm

at **Udder Farm East Stour**—do join us for a relaxed chat over a meal in pleasant surroundings. For bookings: please contact Revd Clare or Jill by Tuesday 16th September.



The Udder Farm Shop
Manor Farm, Front Street, East Stour
SP8 5LQ

[https://www.theudderfarmshop.co.uk/
restaurant/restaurant-menus/](https://www.theudderfarmshop.co.uk/restaurant/restaurant-menus/)

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.

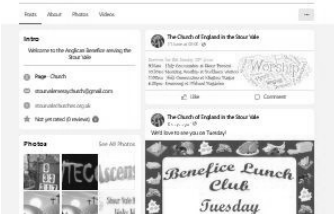
Or go via the Benefice Website—there's a link on the home page.

'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!



New Beginnings by Canon Paul Hardingham

September is the time of year when we get back to our routines after the summer break. As whole-life disciples (lit: *learners*) we are all called to learn from Jesus and live like Him. God wants us to make a difference in our workplaces and schools, and with family and friends. As Paul writes:

'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.' (Colossians 3:17).

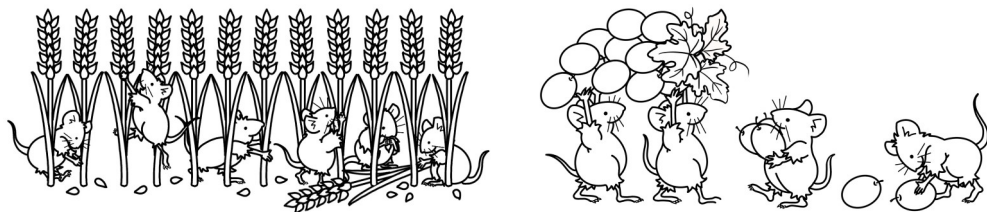
'WHATEVER you do': God is at work in every aspect of our lives. He can use whatever we do to make a difference to those around. Do we believe this? Our lives shouldn't be like an orange, segmented into the sacred and secular, but more like an apple, in which all of our lives are available to Him.

'Whatever YOU do': God wants to use us to share God's love as we serve others around us, wherever we spend time. We can trust Him for the resources we need hour by hour, day by day, year by year. What do we need from Him?

'Whatever you DO': We work for God alone, in responding to God's love for us. How does this perspective make a difference when what we do is hard, unrewarding, or even unappreciated by others?

A man standing on a train platform was asked one day: *'Who are you?'* He replied, *'I am a Christian thinly disguised as an accountant.'* If we were asked the same question ourselves, how would we respond? As disciples of Jesus Christ, our identity is rooted in God and His call upon our lives. For each of us, September means learning from Jesus about how we might live for Him in the different places we find ourselves.

Parish Pump



Services for the Stour Vale Benefice September 2025



Sunday	7 th September Trinity 12	14 th September Trinity 13	21 st September <i>Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist</i>	28 th September Trinity 15
Buckhorn Weston		9:15am Parish Communion	8:45am *Breakfast Church In the Village Hall	10:30am Morning Worship CW
East Stour	11:00am Parish Communion		6pm Evensong BCP	
Fifehead Magdalen		6:30pm Parish Communion		6:30pm Evensong
Kington Magna		11:00am Morning Worship CW		11:00am Parish Communion
Stour Provost		10:30am Morning Prayer CW		No Service (Harvest Festival 6:30pm Saturday 27 th)
Todber	9:15am Parish Communion		10:30am Harvest Festival	
West Stour	10:00am Morning Worship CW		10:00am Parish Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

Services in September

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

Readings for September 2025

Harvest Thanksgiving (Festival) for all of September and October

Deuteronomy 26.1–11 Psalm 100

John 6.25–35

7th September

Trinity 12 (Green)

Deuteronomy 30.15–end

Psalm 1

Philemon 1–21

Luke 14.25–33

14th September

Trinity 13 (Green)

Exodus 32.7–14

Psalm 51.1–11

1 Timothy 1.12–17

Luke 15.1–10

21st September

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Proverbs 3.13–18

Psalm 119.65–72

2 Corinthians 4.1–6

Matthew 9.9–13

28th September

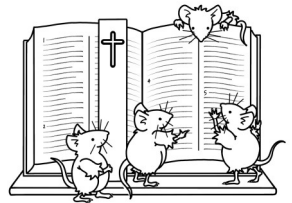
Trinity 15 (Green)

Amos 6.1a, 4–7

Psalm 146

1 Timothy 6.6–19

Luke 16.19–end



Services in September

Harvest Festivals - September

Friday 12th

Buckhorn Weston 7pm

Sunday 21st

Todber 10:30am

Friday 26th

Kington Magna 6:30pm followed by Harvest Supper.

Saturday 27th

Stour Provost 6:30pm followed by Harvest Supper.

Harvest Festivals – October

Sunday 5th

West Stour 10am (Harvest Lunch at 12:30pm)

East Stour 11am followed by Harvest Lunch.

Sunday 12th

Fifehead Magdalen 6:30pm.