

OCTAVO



The Voice of
The Stour Vale Benefice
£1 April 2026 Vol. 24 Issue 7

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday 29th March

10:30am—Stour Provost

*Come to hear a dramatised reading of the Holy Week story.
There will be activities for children and refreshments in the Village Hall afterwards.*

Monday 30th March – Taizé Service – 2:30pm West Stour Village Hall
A 30-minute service including Taizé chants, scripture readings, prayers and silence.

Followed by tea and hot cross buns, if you would like to stay.

Tuesday 31st March – online Compline for Lent – 7:30pm
This will be the final Compline for Lent online—see newsletter for details.

Wednesday 1st April – Holy Communion – 10:30am at East Stour
Our usual mid-week Holy Communion service, adapted for Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday 2nd April – Agape Meal 6:30pm at East Stour
Join us as we share a meal and commemorate Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples.

Good Friday—3rd April

Hot Cross Bun service –10:30am at Todber

An informal service, and the chance to eat some hot cross buns!

Reflections at the Cross – 2pm Stour Provost

A service of hymns, readings and reflections on the sacrifice Jesus made for us on Good Friday, because of his love for us.

Easter Day

Sunrise Service – 6:30am– Fifehead Magdalen

*Gather by 6.30am at the brazier outside the Church for a simple act of outdoor worship as the sun rises on Easter Day. Dress for the weather!
Feel free to bring your dogs, as well as a lantern to light if you have one.
Followed by a simple breakfast of hot cross buns and coffee.*

Family Easter Service – 9:30am – Buckhorn Weston

A service without Holy Communion, but with an Easter Egg hunt!

Benefice Easter service – 11:00am – Kington Magna

*Come along to our joyful celebration of Easter Communion,
with activities for children to do and opportunities for them to be involved in the service.*

From the Vicar

Dear Friends

Spring, it seems, is upon us. It feels as though it has come especially early this year, and many of us will be enjoying time in our gardens. We have been blessed by beautiful spring sunshine waking the earth up, and it is wonderful to see all the daffodils and celandines glistening in the light. I've seen some magnificent magnolias and camellias too in the gardens at Stourhead and Kingston Lacy in the last couple of weeks, on my days off.



In the Vicarage garden the lowlier hawthorn just outside my study window has just started to flower. The snow-white blossom is pretty, but the thorns on the branches are long and sharp. An appropriate plant, it seems, to reflect upon during the Easter season — a time when we celebrate the glory of Jesus's resurrection, all too aware that it was painfully won through his suffering and brutal execution. The sharp thorns perhaps remind us, both of the crown of thorns and the sharp nails which pierced Jesus's hands and feet as his body was hammered to the cross.

The story of Christ's passion and resurrection forces us to confront both the pain and the joy of what it is to be human, and to acknowledge that we have a God who, in Jesus Christ, is prepared to share that fully with us. A God who loves us so much that he is prepared to die an agonising death so that we might enjoy eternal life, and so that peace, justice, healing and restoration might come to the whole of creation.

One of my former parishioners from my curacy days gave me a plaque with the following inscription as a leaving gift:

“The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.”

Is that true, we might wonder? Perhaps the Bible itself invites us to think so. The great story of God and humanity begins in a garden — the Garden of Eden — a place of beauty, abundance and harmony where human beings walked in fellowship with God. Yet that garden tells us of humanity's tragic tendency to turn away from God's wisdom.

Later, in the darkness of the Garden of Gethsemane, we find Jesus praying on the night before his crucifixion. Faced with betrayal, suffering and death, he wrestles in prayer and ultimately chooses obedience to his Father's will:

Continued page 8

From the Vicar—continued

“Not my will, but yours be done.” In that garden he is arrested, and the events begin which lead him to the cross.

But that garden is not the end of the story, as we know well.

Early on Easter morning, another garden becomes the setting for the most extraordinary moment in history. In the garden near the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Christ. At first she thinks he is the gardener — a lovely misunderstanding, perhaps, because in a sense he is. The risen Jesus is the one who tends and restores the whole of creation, bringing new life where there was death.

From the first garden of Eden to the garden of the resurrection, the Bible tells the story of God patiently restoring what was broken. And the story ends, in the final book of the Bible, with another garden-like vision in which the Tree of Life grows again, its leaves bringing healing to the nations in the Book of Revelation.

Gardens and gardening have a remarkable ability to restore our spirits. After the long, wet months of winter, stepping outside into spring sunshine, hearing birdsong, or seeing blossom shining against a blue sky can fill us with quiet joy and peace. In such moments we sense that the world is still held in God’s loving hands.

And we need that reminder. As we look at our world today — at the terrible suffering and uncertainty caused by wars in our world, especially Ukraine and the Middle East, and the painful evidence of human leaders lacking wisdom, humility and compassion — it can sometimes feel as though darkness is gaining ground. Yet the Easter story tells us something very different. It tells us that self-giving love is stronger than hatred, that sacrifice is stronger than violence, and that life ultimately triumphs over death.

The love shown by Jesus is not the grasping, self-protective love that so often shapes human power, but the self-emptying love that pours itself out for others and calls us to “love our neighbours as ourselves.” In the cross and resurrection of Christ we see that God has already confronted the worst that human evil can do — and overcome it.

So, as we walk through our gardens this spring, perhaps we might pause and remember these garden moments in the story of faith: Eden, Gethsemane, and the garden of resurrection. Each one reminds us that God has not abandoned his creation, and that new life can spring up even in the most unlikely places.

May the joy and hope of Easter fill your hearts and homes (*and gardens*) this season.

Clare

Thought for the Month

Lo, Jesus meets us,
Risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness
Hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth,
Death has lost its sting.

Edmond Louis Budry, trans. Richard Birch Hoyle

The season of Eastertide, starting on Easter Day, lasts for fifty days right up until Pentecost. In contrast to the solemn season of Lent, with its fasting, self-denial and penitence, Eastertide is the most joyful of seasons, celebrating Jesus' resurrection, and the freedom and forgiveness we gained as a result.

Giving up something for Lent often feels like a chore, but why not taking up something for Eastertide that feels like a joy? Perhaps think of something you are thankful for each day, or sing a verse of your favourite hymn, or look for opportunities to do a kind deed, daily? Let's celebrate the joy of Easter, and the blessings we have received, not just on Easter Day but right through the season!

With Love, Fiona

Prayer for April

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father. Amen.



A Church of England Collect from Eastertide

Important update

Revd Clare has a new email address

vicarsvb@gmail.com

Please update your address books—thank you.

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

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

Cave, Refectory, Road

A Seasons of Sanctuary Quiet Day

led by **Barbara Priest**

Licensed Lay Minister in Salisbury and Bath & Wells Dioceses, & Oblate of Douai Abbey

Grove Farmhouse, Melbury Abbas SP7 ODE

Saturday 24th April: 10am – 4.00pm

A gentle day of exploring our pilgrimage path, focusing on three monastic elements: the solitude of our cave, the hospitality of our refectory, and the journey on our road of faith.



£25.00 per person.

Tea & Coffee provided but please bring a packed lunch.

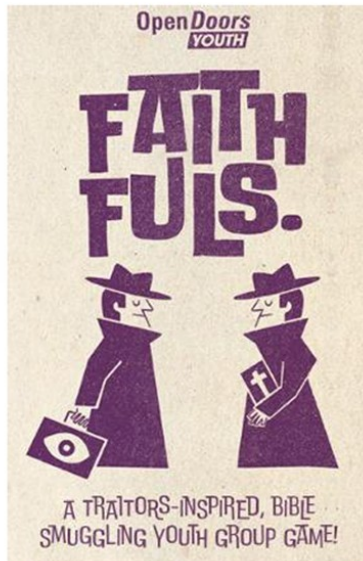
Numbers are limited to ten people so book early to avoid disappointment.

Contact: barbara@allegro.co.uk or 07717 133899

Stour Vale Churches

EASTER ESCAPE ROOM

Puzzles
available
to suit all
ages!



Fun for
all the
family!

**TUES 7TH APRIL
3PM-4PM**

KINGTON MAGNA VILLAGE HALL, SP8 5EW

Any questions? Email Fiona:
stourvalemessychurch@gmail.com

Keeping in Touch

To Receive our weekly newsletter by email

just send your email address to: octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com with
the subject title "Newsletter"

Or follow us on Facebook

search 'The Church of England in the Stour Vale' in Facebook or
use this link

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

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 April

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.

*Stour Vale Benefice
Service
in the
Pub*



The Ship Inn, West Stour, SP8 5RP

For more details, please contact Fiona Hedges on
01747 838942 or stourvalemessychurch@gmail.com



SUNDAY 19TH APRIL

Breakfast served from 8.45am
Worship 9.00am - 9.30am

Buckhorn Weston Village Hall (SP8 5HF)



Scan the QR code for more information,
Or contact Fiona Hedges: fjhedges1@gmail.com; 01747 838 942

Stour Vale Benefice Benefice Lunch

Tuesday 28th April—12:30pm

at **Lakeside Kitchen Todber**—do join us for a relaxed chat over a meal in pleasant surroundings. For bookings: please contact Jill by Tuesday 21st April.

Please note: we need to pre-order food—see website for menus
Lakeside Kitchen, Manor Farm, Todber, DT10 1JB

<https://www.lakesidekitchen.co.uk/>

Stour Vale Benefice

Regular Mid-Week Services / Benefice events April

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church
Healing Communion service 2nd Wednesday of the month

Monday 20th April

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

Friday 24th April

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

Tuesday 28th April

Benefice Lunch 12:30pm Lakeside Kitchen
Please remember to pre-book your food

Octavo Subscriptions

Advanced Notice:

the annual subscriptions to Octavo will be due at the end of May.

The subs will remain the same: £10 for a paper copy and £2 for the digital version—thank you.

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01 April 2020 Vol. 24 Issue 7

Stour Vale Benefice

Lay Worship Leader Training

We currently have a wonderful team of Lay Worship Leaders (LWLs), who are an essential part of the Benefice Ministry team. Their role is to help plan and lead worship services, enabling worship to happen in all our churches. Without them most of our Benefice churches would have only one service a month!

However, as an overall ministry team, we sometimes struggle to meet the needs of all the churches each month, and we don't have the capacity to try anything new, so we are looking for people who might feel this is a role they could do.

Fiona is going to run the Lay Worship Leader Training Course, starting early June. The course lasts ten sessions, once a fortnight. It provides guidance on understanding worship, different types and styles of worship, and the role of the worship leader. LWLs don't write sermons, or preach, but the course covers ways they can choose and use existing resources as part of the service to help the congregation interpret and apply the Bible readings.

At the end of the training there is a final session, where the trainees prayerfully consider if they believe God is calling them to be an LWL, and if they would like to go forward to be Licenced. So starting the training is not a commitment to be an LWL, it's an opportunity to explore the role and discern if it's something you are called to do.

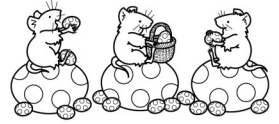
There are no exams or tests to pass, but you will need to meet the church's safeguarding requirements by having a DBS check and undertaking the online safeguarding training.

If you are interested in joining the training course, or have any questions, please contact Fiona on fjhedges1@gmail.com or 01747 838 924.

Prayer and Intercession Training

One of the sessions in the course is specifically focused on prayer and intercessions, so if you are interested in leading the intercessions as part of the service, but not in leading the worship, you may like to join us for that specific session only. Again, if you are interested in doing that please contact Fiona on fjhedges1@gmail.com or 01747 838 924.

Services for the
Stour Vale Benefice
April 2026



Sunday	5 th April Easter Day	12 th April 2 nd of Easter	19 th April 3 rd of Easter	26 th April 4 th of Easter
Buckhorn Weston	9:30am Family Easter Service	9:30am Parish Communion	8:45am Breakfast Church In the Village Hall	10:30am Morning Worship CW
East Stour			6:00pm Evensong	
Fifehead Magdalen	6:30am Sunrise Service	6:30pm Parish Communion BCP		6:30pm Evensong BCP
Kington Magna	11:00am Easter Communion	11:00am Morning Worship CW		11:00am Parish Communion
Stour Provost		10:30am Morning Worship CW		9:15am Parish Communion
Todber			10:00am Family Service	
West Stour			10:30am Parish Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

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

Holy Week Services

Monday 30th March – Taizé Service – 2:30pm in West Stour Village Hall

Tuesday 31st March – online Compline for Lent – 7:30pm

Wednesday 1st April – Holy Communion – 10:30am at East Stour

Thursday 2nd April – Maundy Thursday – Agape Meal– 6:30pm at East Stour

Good Friday – Hot Cross Bun service –10:30am at Todber

Reflections at the Cross – 2pm Stour Provost

Readings for April 2026

Thursday 2nd April

Exodus 12.1–4 11–14
1 Corinthians 11.23–26

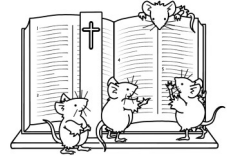
Maundy Thursday (White)

Psalm 116.1, 10–end
John 13.1–17, 31b –35

Good Friday

Morning Prayer

Psalm 69 Genesis 22.1–18 John 18.1—end of 19



5th April

Acts 10.34–43 †
Colossians 3.1–4

Easter Day (Gold or White)

Psalm 118.1–2, 14–24
John 20.1–18

† The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

12th April

Acts 2.14a, 22–32 †
1 Peter 1.3–9

2nd Sunday of Easter (White)

Psalm 16
John 20.19–end

† The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

19th April

Acts 2.14a, 36–41 †
1 Peter 1.17–23

3rd Sunday of Easter White

Psalm 116.1–3, 10–end
Luke 24.13–35

† The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

26th April

Acts 2.42–end †
1 Peter 2.19–end

4th Sunday of Easter (White)

Psalm 23
John 10.1–10

† The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

Additional Services

Sunday 29th March – Benefice Fifth Sunday Service – Palm Sunday
10:30am at Stour Provost – followed by Tea & Coffee in the village hall

Service in a Pub

Friday 17th April—11am at The Ship Inn, West Stour