

# OCTAVO



**The Voice of  
The Stour Vale Benefice  
£1 June 2026 Vol. 24 Issue 9**



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.



The next meeting is on **Monday 15th June**  
**2:30-4:30pm** in **East Stour village hall**.

## Keeping in Touch

### To Receive our weekly newsletter by email

just send your email address to: [admins vb@gmail.com](mailto:admins vb@gmail.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](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748)

And don't forget to check out our new website:

<https://stourvalebenefice.org.uk/>



Seven Churches,  
One Body,  
One Benefice

## 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!



**Benefice Service for Trinity Sunday**

**Sunday 31st May**

Service of Holy Communion—10:30am—Todber



**SUNDAY 21ST JUNE**

**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](mailto:fjhedges1@gmail.com); 01747 838 942

**Regular Mid-Week Services / Benefice events June**

**Every Wednesday**

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

*Healing Communion service 2nd Wednesday of the month*

**Monday 15th June**

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

**Friday 26th June**

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

*Please note: **no** Benefice lunch this month,  
as Clare will be away.*

## From the Vicar

Dear Friends,

I haven't yet managed to finish my Easter egg, and the fifty-day season of Easter is nearly over. We celebrate Pentecost Sunday on 24<sup>th</sup> May and then begin the season known as "Ordinary Time" on Trinity Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> May. Do join us for our Benefice Service at St Andrew's, Todber.



I have been reflecting on the ordinary in recent days and how God loves and works through the ordinary. After Jesus has ascended into heaven, the disciples, together with Mary, return to Jerusalem, gather in the Upper Room, and devote themselves to prayer.

That detail matters.

They do not immediately rush out with grand strategies or five-year mission plans. They pray. They wait. They remain together. And then the Holy Spirit comes and empowers this unlikely collection of very ordinary people to become the beginnings of the Christian Church.

It is rather comforting, really, because the disciples often seem gloriously unqualified. They misunderstand things, panic regularly, argue with each other, and frequently get things wrong. In other words, they are reassuringly human. Yet God still works through them.

And perhaps that is the message for us too.

Sometimes life can feel overwhelming. Sometimes the work of keeping our churches going can feel huge. So many people work tirelessly to keep the Benefice functioning, and perhaps sometimes we are all — including the vicar — guilty of trying to do this in our own strength, not praying enough for the intervention of the Holy Spirit, and forgetting that God is concerned with the details.

St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, taught that God is active in every aspect of our ordinary everyday lives. He is interested in the minutiae. Our daily decisions should be discerned through an active prayer life, through regular communication with God, so that we grow in relationship with him.

It is very easy to have a narrow view of God's interest in us and to forget that God is the creator of all things, including each one of us. Psalm 139 explains how he formed us and knew us in our mothers' wombs. As his creation, he delights in each one of us as his children.

*Continued page 8*

## From the Vicar—continued

God's interest in each one of us stems from his desire for all people to flourish and live life in all its fullness, and to help build his kingdom here on earth. This means each of us contributing to building a society which reflects God's goodness. Jesus died for the reconciliation and renewal of all things, which means the whole cosmos and everything and everyone in it.

Worship and prayer are not just for Sundays, but about how we live our whole lives. God is not only the God of church, but the God of all things, even the most ordinary. This means he wants to speak into every area of our lives. We present ourselves as a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship" (Romans 12.1).

God is interested in our families and relationships, how we do business, how we use money and resources, how we manage our working and leisure lives, and how we look after our communities, especially those who may be more vulnerable.

Perhaps we can use "Ordinary Time", which now continues until the beginning of Advent, as a season to reflect upon and develop our spiritual practice. Maybe the liturgical colour of green can act as a prompt to spiritual growth and help us develop good habits which invite God into our everyday lives.

Perhaps one of the simplest ways we can do this is by rediscovering the importance of prayer in ordinary daily life. Prayer need not always be lengthy or complicated. Sometimes it is simply pausing for a moment of stillness before the day begins, saying grace with intention at a meal, noticing beauty in creation, or bringing a worry quietly before God whilst walking the dog or washing up. God meets us in these small moments just as surely as in the great celebrations of the Church year.

Many people find it helpful to use daily resources or apps which offer structure and encouragement in prayer. The Church of England's Daily Prayer app provides Morning and Evening Prayer and follows the rhythm of the Church year. "Pray As You Go" offers short reflective prayers and meditations, while Lectio 365 and Everyday Faith provide gentle daily reflections and practical encouragement for living faith in everyday life. These can be helpful companions for those wishing to grow in prayer but unsure where to begin.

Perhaps during this long green season of Ordinary Time, we might each choose one small spiritual habit to nurture. It may be reading a short passage of Scripture each day, setting aside five minutes for silence, praying regularly for our families and communities, or simply asking the Holy Spirit each morning: "Lord, guide me today." Small, faithful steps often matter more than grand gestures.

## From the Vicar—continued

And perhaps we might also remember to pray for one another: for our churches, villages, Stower Provost School, farmers and businesses; for those who are lonely, grieving, or anxious; for those who care for others; and for all who feel weary or burdened at this time. You may also find the prayers suggested in our weekly newsletter helpful in giving structure to your own prayers.

The extraordinary thing about the Christian faith is that God delights in working through ordinary people living ordinary lives with faithfulness, kindness, and love. May this Ordinary Time be a season in which we grow quietly but deeply in faith, and may we become ever more aware of God's presence with us in all the ordinary moments of life.

Blessings,

*Clare*

Coming up this summer



### **Benefice Pet Service** **Sunday 23rd August**

3pm in Todber Church Yard  
Pet and Family Friendly service  
to bless our pets from across the  
Benefice.

### **Benefice Songs of Praise** **Sunday 30th August**

We will be having a Songs of Praise service for our  
5th Sunday Service in August.

*Send in your favourite hymns via your Churchwarden,  
or Jill Perry, by 2<sup>nd</sup> August.*



## Thought for the Month

Ben celebrated his tenth birthday in April! We've been amazed at how well he's coped following the death of his brother, Syd. They were inseparable, but Ben seems to have stoically accepted life as an only dog (and relishes some of the advantages, like not having to share treats or cuddles!)

He's remained a very joyful dog. He will try to play with almost every dog he meets on his walks, and rushes up to anyone with his tail wagging in the hopes they will give him a pat. His birthday present was a new toy, which was a source of delight for him, and for us, as he runs around the house with it, or asks us to play fetch, or tug-of-war. Even without a toy, he's always making us laugh with his goofy ways and happy, optimistic outlook. Ben assumes everything is going to be great and makes the most of every walk, meal and game.



Over the summer, I'm going to try to be more like Ben. To assume new things will be good things, and to look for opportunities to have fun, relax and be thankful. I hope you, too, will find plenty of opportunities for fun, relaxation and reasons for thankfulness as the summer progresses.

*With Love, Fiona*

## Prayer for June

Dear Lord,

For all that has been, THANKS, for all that is to be, YES!

Amen



*Dag Hammarskjöld*



# Stour Vale Benefice

Seven Churches, One Body, One Benefice

**New Benefice Website—<https://stourvalebenefice.org.uk/>**

We will be keeping this regularly updated with service information (including specific service rotas for each parish) as well as other useful information. Do have a look and remember it is a resource for everyone in the Benefice, not just for visitors.

**And please remember to use our new email addresses—thank you**

**For Revd Clare please use: [vicarsvb@gmail.com](mailto:vicarsvb@gmail.com)**

**For all Admin related emails for Jill Perry please use: [adminsrb@gmail.com](mailto:adminsrb@gmail.com)**

### **Please note:**

Jill will continue to use the octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com address for anything relating to Octavo.



*Rogation at Middle Farm—10th May  
Many thanks to the Trevor Family*



Services for the  
Stour Vale Benefice  
June 2026



Sunday	7 <sup>th</sup> June 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Trinity	14 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 2	21 <sup>st</sup> June Trinity 3	28 <sup>th</sup> June Trinity 4
Buckhorn Weston		9:30am Parish Communion	8:45am Breakfast Church In the Village Hall	10:30am Morning Worship CW
East Stour	11:00am Parish Communion		6:00pm Evensong BCP	
Fifehead Magdalen		6:30pm Parish Communion		6:30pm Evensong BCP
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 Family Service	
West Stour	10:00am Morning Worship CW		10:30am Parish Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May – Benefice Fifth Sunday Service**  
**Trinity Sunday - 10:30am at Todber**

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

# Readings for June 2026

## 31<sup>st</sup> May

Isaiah 40.12–17, 27–end  
2 Corinthians 13.11–end

*Trinity Sunday (Gold or White)*

Psalm 8  
Matthew 28.16–end

## 7<sup>th</sup> June

Hosea 5.15—6.6  
Romans 4.13–end

*Trinity 1 (Green)*

Psalm 50.7–15  
Matthew 9.9–13, 18–26

## 14<sup>th</sup> June

Exodus 19.2–8a  
Romans 5.1–8

*Trinity 2 (Green)*

Psalm 100  
Matthew 9.35—10.8 [9–23]

## 21<sup>st</sup> June

Jeremiah 20.7–13

*Trinity 3 (Green)*

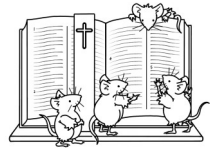
Psalm 69.8–11 18–20

## 28<sup>th</sup> June

Jeremiah 28.5–9  
Romans 6.12–end

*Trinity 4 (Green)*

Psalm 89.1–4, 15–18  
Matthew 10.40–end



## *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](mailto:dagrierson@hotmail.com))*

*David*

## Octavo Subscriptions

### Now Due

The annual subscriptions to Octavo were due at the end of May. The subs remain the same: £10 for a paper copy and £2 for the digital version and your distributor will let you know who to pay.

Thank you for your ongoing support!