

OCTAVO



The Voice of
The Stour Vale Benefice
£1 May 2026 Vol. 24 Issue 8



Sunday 10th May—Rogation Sunday

9:15am Holy Communion Service

At Buckhorn Weston Church



Benefice Rogation Service—11am

Kindly Hosted by the Trevor Family

At Middle Farm,

Fifehead Magdalen, SP8 5RR

*Please join us to celebrate and bless the work
of our farming communities.*

Regular Mid-Week Services / Benefice events May

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

Healing Communion service 2nd Wednesday of the month

Monday 18th May

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

Tuesday 19th May

Benefice Lunch 12:30pm Lakeside Kitchen

Please remember to pre-book your food

Friday 29th May

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

Benefice Fifth Sunday Service for Trinity Sunday

Sunday 31st May

Service of Holy Communion—10:30am—Todber Church

All Welcome.

From the Vicar

Dear Friends

One of the many lovely things about rural life is the peace and quiet. It is wonderful to wake in the morning to the sound of birdsong and simply enjoy the sounds of nature around us. We are truly blessed to live in such a beautiful part of the world, which in many ways feels idyllic.



Obviously, we do occasionally get interrupted by the odd helicopter passing over, the sound of farm machinery, or the more joyous sound of church bells on a Sunday morning, but generally we enjoy quite low levels of extraneous noise.

How do you cope with silence? Is it something that you enjoy, or do you feel the need to fill it in some way?

Silence has long been a tradition both in spiritual life and in worship, but it may be something we have lost in our twenty-first-century world. For many, silence feels like a waste of time; others—perhaps those we might nowadays describe as neuro-diverse—crave constant stimuli. For others, there is too much in the world demanding our attention, and we long for peace. Silence has a habit of slowing us down, but many people feel really uncomfortable, wanting to “get on with things” and desperately trying to fill the void with activity or sound.

Silence, however, is an important way of encountering God. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah experiences God not in dramatic wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a “sound of sheer silence” or a “gentle whisper” at Mount Horeb. This quiet encounter follows Elijah’s exhaustion and fear, demonstrating that God reveals himself through quiet intimacy, stillness, and comfort rather than only through displays of immense power.

Furthermore, Jesus often went off up a mountain alone to spend time quietly and silently in prayer with his Father, and he invites us to do the same:

“Come with me to a quiet place and get some rest.” (Mark 6:31)

Prayer is not always about asking God for help, but about being in his company, just as we enjoy spending time with anyone we love. Silence allows us to focus on God. Silence may feel somewhat intimidating initially; however, we can train ourselves to become used to it. As an extrovert, I remember feeling particularly out of my comfort zone when I first went away for a weekend silent retreat at a Benedictine abbey in Worcestershire. The kindly and welcoming monks encouraged me to relax and not worry, and I left the retreat feeling both relaxed and energised by this new way, for me, of spending time with God, having learned to enjoy and love the silence.

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From the Vicar—continued

This time between Easter and Pentecost seems to me to be a period of waiting, expectation, and listening—perhaps a time when we can incorporate some habits of silence into our worship and our prayer lives. These do not necessarily need to be long periods of quiet—perhaps just a few minutes in the garden, or in the bath, or any time of day when you find yourself alone. This could be first thing in the morning or late at night. It is important, too, to cultivate some inner silence and to push aside those nagging items from your mental “to-do” list that pop up in your head.

Rowan Williams once compared prayer to sunbathing: “When you're lying on the beach, something is happening—something that has nothing to do with how you feel or how hard you're trying. You're not going to get a better tan by screwing up your eyes and concentrating. You give the time, and that's it. All you have to do is turn up. And then things change, at their own pace. You simply have to be there where the light can get at you.”

So perhaps you might like to imagine that God's particular attention is focused on you. Sense the warmth of his love as he gazes on you as his beloved child. God loved you into existence and continues to breathe life into us, just as the risen Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into his disciples. God invites you into deeper intimacy, so just bask in the warmth of his love as if you were sunbathing. As your breathing slows, become aware of what God might be communicating to you—it may not be words, but feelings or even pictures. It may even surprise you. You may want to respond to God in the silence of your heart.

In a world that so often urges us to hurry, to speak, and to fill every moment, silence can feel unfamiliar—even unsettling. Yet it is in that very stillness that we may begin to notice God's gentle presence more clearly. We do not need to strive or perform; we are simply invited to be—to sit quietly, to breathe, and to allow ourselves to be known and loved by God just as we are.

As we continue through this season of waiting and hope, perhaps we might each find small ways to welcome silence into our daily lives. In those quiet moments, may we discover rest for our souls, renewal for our spirits, and a deeper awareness of God walking beside us. And may that peace, gently received, shape the way we live and love in the days ahead.

Blessings,

Clare

Prayer for May

Prayer for Pentecost 2026

Loving Father and giver of all gifts,

This month we thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit which You promise to all who call on Your name, turn away from self-centred living and put their trust in Jesus.

Help us to do that, Lord.



Then, when events in the world and the circumstances of our own lives are difficult to understand, we have Your Holy Spirit who brings life and power.

He is faithful and constant. He will lead us into all truth and give us the words and thoughts we need to experience Your peace in the midst of turmoil.

At this time when we remember the birth of Your church, may we open our hearts to receive Your Spirit afresh and move into each new day confident that we are yours and that in You is our true security.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



Sudans Day 2026 **St. Francis' Church, Salisbury SP1 3PN** **Saturday 16 May** **10.00 am to 4.00 pm**

Updates on current development, political and security initiatives in Sudan and South Sudan and the work of our medical, educational and deanery partnerships.

Our emphasis this year will be on humanitarian needs, and our keynote speaker will be Patrick Watt, CEO of Christian Aid. Other contributors will be drawn from international organisations and from within the Diocese.

Attendance is free but donations would be gratefully received on the day. Free tea and coffee will be available, and do bring a packed lunch.

Please email us if you plan to come:
sudan.secretary@salisbury.anglican.org
salisburysudanspartnership.co.uk

Stour Vale Benefice
BREAKFAST
CHURCH



SUNDAY 17TH MAY

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 19th May—12:30pm

at **Udder Farm** —do join us for a relaxed chat over a meal in pleasant surroundings. For bookings: please contact Jill by Tuesday 12th May.

Please note: we need to pre-order food—see website for menus

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

<https://www.theudderfarmshop.co.uk/restaurant/restaurant-menus/>

Octavo Subscriptions

Now Due

The annual subscriptions to Octavo are due at the end of May.

The subs will 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!

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 18th May**
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 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

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

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



Seven Churches,
One Body,
One Benefice

Stour Vale Prayer Group

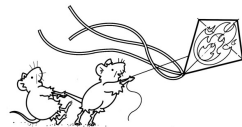
We meet once a month for a short prayer meeting in which we bring our own concerns and the needs of the world in these troubled times.

Please join us on the Last Friday of the Month—
2pm at East Stour Church

All welcome!



Services for the
Stour Vale Benefice
May 2026



Sunday	3 rd May 5 th of Easter	10 th May Rogation Sunday	17 th May 7 th of Easter	24 th May Pentecost	
Buckhorn Weston		9:30am Holy 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		Benefice Rogation Service 11:00am		6:30pm Evensong BCP	
Kington Magna				11:00am Parish Communion	
Stour Provost				9:15am Parish Communion	
Todber	9:15am Parish Communion			10:00am Morning Prayer BCP	
West Stour	10:00am Morning Worship CW			10:30am Bell Sunday Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

The **Benefice Rogation Service** (10th May) will be hosted at Middle Farm,
Fifehead Magdalen (SP8 5RR)

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

Sunday 31st May – Benefice Fifth Sunday Service
Trinity Sunday - 10:30am at Todber

Readings for May 2026

3rd May

Acts 7.55–end †
1 Peter 2.2–10

5th Sunday of Easter (White)

Psalm 31.1–5, 15–16
John 14.1–14

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

10th May

Acts 17.22–31 †
1 Peter 3.13–end

6th Sunday of Easter (White)

Psalm 66.7–end
John 14.15–21

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

Thursday 14th May

Acts 1.1–11
Ephesians 1.15–end

Ascension Day (Gold or White)

Psalm 47 or Psalm 93
Luke 24.44–end

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

17th May

Acts 1.6–14 †
1 Peter 4.12–14; 5.6–11

7th Sunday of Easter (White)

Psalm 68.1–10, 32–end
John 17.1–11

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

24th May

Acts 2.1–21 †
1 Corinthians 12.3b–13

Pentecost (Red)

Psalm 104.26–36, 37b
John 20.19–23

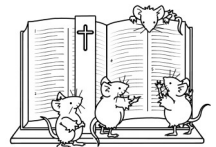
† The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

31st May

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

Trinity Sunday (Gold or White)

Psalm 8
Matthew 28.16–end



Additional Services in May

Ascension Day – Thursday 14th May – 10:30am East Stour (Please note this will replace the usual Wednesday mid-week Communion.)

Bell Sunday – Sunday 17th May – to coincide with Bell Sunday this will be a special communion service to celebrated the return of West Stour's bells.

2026

For Your Diary



For Holy Week and Easter see page 5.

For full details of all these events look under the appropriate village news section.

April

Saturday 25th	APCM 10am	East Stour
	Jumble Sale 2:30pm	Buckhorn Weston
Thursday 30th	APCM 7pm	Fifehead Magdalen

May

Saturday 2nd	Plant Sale 10am-4pm	West Stour
Wednesday 6th	Community Café 10:30am	Stour Provost
	Art & Craft group 7pm	West Stour
Thursday 7th	APCM 7:30pm	West Stour
Friday 8th	Friday night Takeaway*	Fifehead Magdalen
Saturday 9th	Plant Sale 10am-1pm	Kington Magna
	Christ Church Café 10am	East Stour
Monday 11th	Coffee Morning 10:30am	Buckhorn Weston
Tuesday 12th	Ladies Group 2:30pm	Buckhorn Weston
Thursday 14th	Ladies Group 2:15pm	Kington Magna
Saturday 16th	APCM 10:30am	Stour Provost
Monday 18th	Knit and Natter 2:30	East Stour
Tuesday 19th	Cheese & Wine and APCM 6:30pm	Buckhorn Weston
Wednesday 20th	Reading Group 2:30pm	West Stour
Saturday 23rd	Coffee Morning & plant Sale 10am	Todber
	Garden Party 10:30am-12 noon	Buckhorn Weston
Sat 23rd/Sun 24th	Gardens Open 2-5pm	Stour Provost

*Available to anyone in the Benefice—See Fifehead Magdalen's entry for details.

June

Friday 5th	Fish & Chips Quiz —book early	West Stour
Sat 6th/Sun 7th	Open Gardens 2-5pm	Stour Row

