

OCTAVO



The Voice of
The Stour Vale Benefice



£1 September 2026 Vol. 25 Issue 1

Benefice Songs of Praise
Sunday 30th August 11am at West Stour

Benefice 5th Sunday Service
All Welcome!

Please Note:

There will also be a Holy Communion Service at 9:15am at Todber .



Harvest Festivals in September

Friday 18th September – Buckhorn Weston 7:00pm

Saturday 19th September – Stour Provost 6:30pm

Sunday 20th September – Todber 3pm

Friday 25th September – Kington Magna 6:30pm



SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER

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

From the Vicar

Dear Friends,

The hosepipe ban has finally reached us. Other parts of the country have been living with one for months, so perhaps we've simply been fortunate — but looking at the brown, parched grass around the village, that good fortune feels fragile. It's easy to take our water supply for granted until the state of the fields and countryside around us remind us otherwise and we have little choice.



Nature has certainly noticed the lack of rainfall. Early last month, four hoglets turned up in our garden in broad daylight — a sure sign something was wrong, since hedgehogs are creatures of the night. It seems likely their mother, weakened by the lack of water, wasn't producing enough milk to feed them.



Thanks to some quick and caring help, all four were taken to the Wildlife Hospital, nursed back to health, and are now thriving and ready to be released back here in Kington Magna.

It's a small story, but a hopeful one. Like many of you, we've taken to leaving shallow dishes of water around the Vicarage garden — a

simple gesture that helps hedgehogs, birds, and all sorts of other creatures not just cope with the heat, but survive.

It feels fitting, then, that this drought coincides with the run-up to Creationtide, which begins on 1st September and runs through to 4th October. This is the season when Christians around the world unite in prayer and action for our common home, celebrating God as Creator and recommitting ourselves to caring for all that has been made. We are, after all, co-creatures with the hedgehogs and the birds and the parched fields — our wellbeing bound up with theirs.

Continued page 8

From the Vicar—continued

Archbishop Sarah puts it beautifully: in Creationtide we turn again to Christ, "through whom all things were made and in whom all things hold together." Caring for creation isn't an optional extra to our faith — it's an essential expression of discipleship, woven into the Church's very mission to safeguard and renew the life of the earth.

This year's theme could hardly be more timely: **Living Water**. It draws on a striking vision from the prophet Ezekiel, of a river flowing from God's sanctuary — a trickle at first, but deepening as it goes, bringing life wherever it reaches:

"Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows... Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail... their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing." (Ezekiel 47:9, 12)



IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

Ezekiel 47:9, 12

Set against a backdrop of exile and loss, Ezekiel's vision is one of extraordinary hope — dead ground restored, barren places made fertile again. But healing isn't just something we watch from the riverbank. The invitation is to step into the water ourselves, to become part of that flow of restoration. It's an image that naturally calls to mind our own baptism, where we die and rise again with Christ. Jesus promises living water to all who follow him — water that means we will never be thirsty again.

There's something in us that's drawn to water, isn't there? Whether it's a childhood holiday by the sea, a walk beside a river, or simply the sound of a stream, being near water tends to restore us — body and soul alike. I love swimming and find it really renewing, physically and mentally. Perhaps that's no accident.

So, as we've watched the ground crack and the reservoirs drop this summer, and as we enter this season of Creationtide, it seems the right moment to ask: how is God calling us to be part of his river of life?

That might begin with prayer — simply holding before God our thirsty gardens, our struggling wildlife, our worried farmers and the wider ecological pressures our world is under. Many of us have already been praying for rain this Summer. But it might also lead somewhere more practical. Could this be the year your household looks again at how it uses water? Perhaps installing more water butts to collect rainwater?

From the Vicar—continued

Could it mean championing Eco Church <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>, and thinking together about how our buildings, land, and daily habits might better reflect our calling to care for creation? Or perhaps it means lending a hand closer to home — there are local groups campaigning to protect and clean up our own River Stour, work that could use more willing volunteers.

However we respond, my hope is that this Creationtide finds us not just talking about Living Water but stepping into it — playing our own small part in God's ongoing work of healing and renewal.

With love and blessings,

Clare

Regular Mid-Week Services / Benefice events September

Every Wednesday

Holy Communion 10:30am East Stour Church

Healing Communion service 2nd Wednesday of the month

Monday 21st

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

Friday 25th

Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

Tuesday 29th

Benefice Lunch at Udder Farm East Stour 12:30pm

Don't forget to pre-order your food by Tuesday 22nd—thank you

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!



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 21st September**
2:30-4:30pm in East Stour village hall.

Benefice Lunch Tuesday 29th September—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 22nd September—thank you.

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/>

From the Registers—in August

Baptism: Albie Peter Hawtree at West Stour on Sunday 16th August

We welcome him into God's family

Wedding: Chris Rhodes and Eve Mason at East Stour on Saturday 22nd August

We pray for your life together

Keeping in Touch

To Receive our weekly newsletter by email

Contact Jill: adminsrb@gmail.com with the subject title "Newsletter"



Or follow us on Facebook



search 'The Church of England in the Stour Vale', or use this link
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748

Or visit the website: <https://stourvalebenefice.org.uk/>

Thought for the Month

Isn't it funny how, no matter how old we are, we always want to be a different age? Children long to be grown-ups, but once grown up we miss the innocence of childhood, the freedom to play, the lack of responsibilities. People of working age often look forward to retirement, but many retired people miss the structure and purpose that work gave them, as well as the enthusiasm and vitality of their youth.

In the *New Living Translation Bible*, Proverbs 20 verse 29 is translated as:

'The glory of the young is their strength; the grey hair of experience is the splendour of the old.'

Hopefully this reminds us that every age of life has its own benefits to be enjoyed (and for Christians, to be used for God's glory, and the benefit of others). There's no point wishing our life away; looking forward in the hope of something better, or backwards with nostalgia. When we do that we risk missing out on all the amazing things available to us right now.

As Kate Morton wrote:

May your past be a pleasant memory,
Your future filled with delight and mystery,
Your now a glorious moment,
That fills your life with deep contentment.

With Love, Fiona

Prayer for September

God ahead, God behind,
God be on the path I wind.
God above, God below,
God be everywhere I go.
God in the steep,
God in the shade,
God me safe keep,
Come to my aid.
Amen



Traditional Celtic Prayer

End of an Era—retirement of Pat Fowler as West Stour Churchwarden

At our recent APCM Pat Fowler stood down as churchwarden. Of course, we all wished it could be otherwise but Pat felt that after nearly 30 years and in view of her other commitments this is the right time to pass on the baton. We are delighted that Peter Goodman has become churchwarden in her place. We also welcomed Rose McCready onto the PCC.

We are very pleased that Pat will remain on the PCC and will be a great help to Peter as he finds his feet in his new ministry. And we're grateful that Pat will continue to share her knowledge and years of experience.

It is impossible to sum up in a few words Pat's contribution and service to the life of the church and parish of West Stour and the wider benefice. She has steered us through 6 vicars, changes in liturgy from ASB to Common Worship and acted as sacristan. She is always behind the scenes for baptisms, weddings and funerals; negotiated reserved grave plots for parishioners, dealt with the many and changing diocesan demands as well as the challenges of IT and supported other churchwardens with all this. In the village Pat keeps an eye on those in trouble and her nursing skills have come to the rescue many times.

This truly is an end of an era for West Stour and time will show how easy it has been to take Pat's quiet, efficient, organisational skills for granted.

'Pat how are we going to do without you? You step down with our love and thanks'.

Carol



more photos on page 35



A busy summer for the Kington Magna and Buckhorn Weston Bellringers

The newest recruit—Lucas

The team rang for the Baptism of Eddie Eden and also for Fifehead Magdalen's Happy Hour Songs of Praise.

Tim, Jan and Jenny running the bottle stall at the Kington Magna Country Fayre



Church Tea Tent at the Shaftesbury and Gillingham Show

I am very grateful to everyone who made cakes for the Church Tea Tent. As those of you who had tea there will know they were very much enjoyed.

Jenny Sledge

Services for the Stour Vale Benefice September 2026



Sunday	6 th September Festival of Creation in Christ	13 th September Trinity 15	20 th September Trinity 16	27 th September Trinity 17
Buckhorn Weston		9:30am Parish Communion	8:45am Breakfast Church In the Village Hall	10:30am Morning Worship CW
East Stour	11:00am Parish Commu- ion		6:00pm Evensong BCP	
Fifehead Magdalen		6:30pm Evensong BCP		6:30pm Parish Communion
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		3:00pm Harvest Festival	
West Stour	10:00am Morning Worship CW		10:30am Parish Communion	

CW – Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer

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

PLEASE NOTE: for this month only, Fifehead Magdalen's services have been swapped over and the Parish Communion will be on Sunday 27th September.

Readings for September 2026

30th August

Jeremiah 15.15–21
Romans 12.9–end

Trinity 13 (Green)
Psalm 26.1–8
Matthew 16.21–end

Harvest Thanksgiving Services

Deuteronomy 8.7–18
2 Corinthians 9.6–end

Psalm 65
Luke 12.16–30

6th September

Isaiah 55.12–end
Colossians 1.15–20

Creation in Christ (Festival)
Psalm 96
John 1.1–14

13th September

Genesis 50.15–21
Romans 14.1–12

Trinity 15 (Green)
Psalm 103.1–13
Matthew 18.21–35

20th September

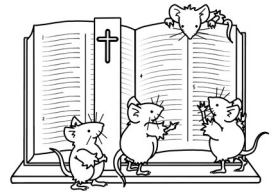
Jonah 3.10—end of 4
Philippians 1.21–end

Trinity 16 (Green)
Psalm 145.1–8
Matthew 20.1–16

27th September

Ezekiel 18.1–4, 25–end
Philippians 2.1–13

Trinity 17 (Green)
Psalm 25.1–8
Matthew 21.23–32



Fifth Sunday Services for Sunday 30th August

9:15am Communion service at Todber

11am Benefice Songs of Praise at West Stour

Harvest Festivals

Friday 18th September – Buckhorn Weston 7:00pm (followed by Harvest Supper)

Saturday 19th September – Stour Provost 6:30pm (followed by Harvest Supper)

Sunday 20th September – Todber 3pm

Friday 25th September – Kington Magna 6:30pm (followed by Harvest Supper)