

The Benefice of Martock, Ash, Kingsbury Episcopi and Muchelney



BENEFICE NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened for you”.

(Luke 11: 9)

I find it hard to believe that we are already nearing the middle of the year, and I hope we can all manage to take a break of some sort during the Summer. Wherever you go, and whatever you do, I pray that it will be a time of refreshing and renewal for you. As ever, a lot has happened in the Benefice over the past few months and there is so much to be thankful to God for as I reflect upon our journey together. This year is one in which Bishop Michael has urged us to pray as a Diocese, hence the reason I have quoted the above verse. It will be familiar to many, and comes just after Jesus has taught the disciples the Lord's Prayer. I was particularly struck by the last phrase - 'knock and the door will be opened for you'. To me, this little phrase is different in focus from asking and seeking. Knocking implies a stance of waiting prayerfully and expectantly for an opportunity to open-up before us. Once you have knocked on someone's door, or rang the bell, all you can do is wait for them to open the door to you. Jesus' promise is that God is more than willing to open doors of opportunity to us.

To that end, I believe such a door is opening before us, and it will be our united prayers **as a Benefice** that will see it swing wide open. On **Friday 4th September at 7.00pm** this year we will be staging a presentation called **I Am Mark** in All Saints' Church. This event is for the whole Benefice to embrace and enjoy. Stefan Smart is an actor and drama teacher who has memorised the whole of Mark's Gospel and simply acts it out as a drama with minimal props (a kitchen chair is all he needs) and occasional background music. He has performed **I Am Mark** in churches, cathedrals, halls and in the open-air right across the nation. At the Edinburgh Fringe in 2019 he was the sell-out show! We will stage the slightly abridged version which takes about an hour and a half, with an interval in the middle. Stefan's performance has had great reviews, and I have spoken to a church in Walton-Upon-Thames that has staged it recently, and they reported that they had a really great evening. The audience included teenagers, along with several senior citizens - all enjoyed it immensely.

This is an opportunity for us to invite our communities to something that on its own is fascinating drama, but is also the word of God being opened-up in an accessible way before people's eyes. This is for all and we will be making it known and advertised by as many means as we can. To that end, I invite you all to be thinking and praying NOW for who you

might invite along on the night. To start that process, we will hold a time of prayer at All Saints' Church on **Friday 19th June at 7.00pm**; during that time, we will share more about **I Am Mark** and spend some time praying for the event together. The needs of our nation are huge and in our various communities here in the Benefice there are many hidden and desperate lives that need to hear the Good News of God's love for them in Jesus Christ.

As an event this could just end up being good entertainment, but I believe it will be our prayers that will see God move through this presentation to touch many lives in our Benefice. Please do give this your prayers and support, put the date Friday 4th September in your diaries, and come along on Friday 19th June at 7.00pm to pray and share together.

Let me re-iterate once more that although this is being staged in All Saints' Church this is an event for the **whole Benefice** to embrace as ours. We will explore other ways in the days ahead in which we can continue to pray for **I Am Mark** and for other needs we are aware of.

Finally, on a different subject, can I draw your attention to a special evening of worship and reflection that we are holding in **St Martin's Church on Sunday 12th July at 6.30pm**. I will be co-leading that time with Rev. Simon Taylor and Andy Handcock, and we will have a time of contemporary worship, prayer and a short reflection in which we will seek to be open to the Holy Spirit's ministry amongst us as we worship and wait upon God together. Do come from across the Benefice to that time – all are welcome.

Every blessing

Your friend

Paul