

All Saints PCC Nominated Charity

Final donations for the 2020 Nominated Charity in Martin, Martin Play Park, should be placed in the postbox of Bridge Cottage, in Gift Aid envelopes in possible, by 31st December. Nominated Charity Gift Aid envelopes are available in Martin.

Christmas Unwrapped - Presents for children are being collected by the Salvation Army at Roundhill, Fordingbridge as part of their Annual National Appeal. All contributions are most welcome.

An important note from the Rector about Carol and Christmas Services

Sadly, we cannot hope to accommodate anywhere close to the numbers we would usually welcome to many of our Carol and Christmas services. In any case, we would not be permitted to sing carols together, and anyone attending would be required to socially distance, and to wear a face mask. This would make those services have a very different feel. And the risks of transmission would be increased due to the likelihood of colder weather. At present, we are restricted in not being able to gather in large groups, and so some possible solutions (like outdoor services in churchyards) are not open to us. Nor, as we go to print, can we be certain that the government will not restrict the opening of church buildings over the Christmas period to reduce the risk of transmission. We have had to plan accordingly. This year our main Carol Services, Christingle Celebration and Christmas Day services will be online. We will also look at pre-recording a Christmas Day service to be uploaded to YouTube, where those who cannot join our Zoom services can still share in a Christmas Day service, at a time that suits them. Our rota does have details of some in the lead up to, and following Christmas, including Midnight Services on Christmas Eve, but these are provisional, and may have to be cancelled at short notice, so keep a careful watch on the latest government guidance, village noticeboards and our church webpages. Unfortunately, we shall have to limit numbers attending our midnight services (if they can take place), so please be aware that we may not be able to accommodate you if we reach capacity.

FROM THE REGISTERS:

Marriages

St George, Damerham	3rd October	Pennie Hudson-Ward & George Wilson
	10th October	Debs Scott-Dennis & Mark Davis

Funerals

St George, Damerham	21st October	Barbara Wiggins (Interment of Ashes)
	13th November	Sheila Williams
All Saints, Martin	2nd October	Gerald Poore
	26th October	Kenneth Shearing (Interment of Ashes)
St. Andrew, Rockbourne	30th October	John Conlan (Interment of Ashes)

NB. For general enquiries please contact, in the first instance, the Benefice Team Administrator for the four parishes of Western Downland, Harriet Roe. Tel. (01725) 519220. Email: harriet_tazzi@hotmail.com

For all pastoral enquiries including baptisms, marriages, funerals and other related matters, please contact the Rector, Rev'd Les Player, The Rectory, Mill End, Damerham, SP6 3HU (01725) 518642.

For information concerning individual parishes including matters of a general nature, please contact the Churchwarden: -

Damerham	John Godber (01425 650044)	Cathy Godber (01425 650044)
Martin	Fran Eardley (01725) 519423	
Rockbourne	Patrick Thompson (01725) 518246	
Whitsbury	Chris Harper (01725) 518324	Chris Cobb-Smith (01725) 518313

THE COURIER

Please send contributions for the next Courier to the Editor, Midge Connell meconnell53@gmail.com. The deadline is 7th January 2021.

News and Views from the Church of England
in Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and Whitsbury

THE COURIER

DECEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

All your friends in the churches of Western Downland wish you a Christmas filled with wonder and renewed hope as you enter the New Year.



A Word from the Rector

Looking at last year's Courier Christmas edition, the article dealt with the uncertainty of life. Few of us could have imagined how resonant that theme would become to our shared experience in 2020. What can we offer one another this Christmas when so many have suffered from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic? Certainly, no cheap words; no cold comfort.

Much of the Old Testament is written to people whose lived experience was anything but peaceful or stable; it addressed people pressed-down, ill-used, stretched to breaking point.

Many of the readings we hold dear at Christmas are drawn from this context, like the promise of a Saviour: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel', meaning, 'God is with us', (written 700 years before Christ, as the nation faced the dual threat of external invasion and economic collapse through corruption.)

One of the strongest themes in the Bible is that of longing - for change, freedom, restoration.

Our world looks very different to that of those ancient people. For many of us God inhabits the margins of our lives, glimpsed only occasionally, like at Christmas, somewhere between the sleigh bells and the holly. But the message of hope remains compelling. The Bible does not offer cheap solutions to the real challenges we face, nor is it escapist, offering false hope. Its message is hard-hitting, honest and challenging. But it speaks with the unyielding conviction that, wherever we mirror God's values in compassion and care for one another, hope is born. This is revealed most perfectly in God's Christmas gift, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger. This last year we have seen such compassion and care in the faces of emergency workers, hospital and care home staff, key workers and in one another. And so, hope is born in our midst.

Rev'd Les Player

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IN THE BENEFICE

Provisional and confirmed plans in this time of Covid

In Martin

Advent Windows – promoted by the Community Association

On 11th and 12th December for viewing between 4.30 – 7.30pm

Figures from the Darkness into Light Service on November 29th will be given to homes in the Village for Advent and then brought to the Carol Service at a location to be announced.

A Tree of Hope on the Green for decorations, messages of hope and prayer requests to encourage and support each other at this season.

***** CHRISTINGLE ON ZOOM *****

This year's Christingle celebration will be home-based. You can join us online on Christmas Eve at 3pm in making your own Christingle (with instructions to help you), and then share with us as we listen to the Christmas reading and sing carols together. You will need: an orange, some red tape or ribbon, and sticky tape, some silver foil, a small candle, some cocktail sticks, a knife, and some scissors, some sweets and/or fruits. Please have an adult with you to help keep you safe.

To access the service, use the following:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/88233352136>

Meeting ID: 882 3335 2136. Passcode: 532945

6th December 2nd Sunday of Advent

8.30am Whitsbury: Holy Communion (Traditional) *

10.30am On Zoom - All Age Worship – Getting Ready
co-hosted by St George's, Damerham

13th December 3rd Sunday of Advent

9.30am Damerham: Parish Communion (Contemporary)*

10.30am On Zoom - Advent Carols

Thursday 17th December

7.00pm On Zoom – Carols and Seasonal Community Singing
co-hosted by St. George's, Damerham

20th December 4th Sunday in Advent

9.00am Rockbourne: Parish Communion (Contemporary)*

10.30am On Zoom – Advent Communion

4.00pm On Zoom – A Christmas Tale: All Age Nativity Service
co-hosted by All Saints, Martin

Tuesday 22nd December

7.00pm On Zoom – Service of Lessons & Carols

Co-hosted by St Andrew's, Rockbourne

***** DATES FOR THE DIARY *****

BENEFICE MEETINGS

Whitsbury PCC date TBC 6.30pm on Zoom

Martin PCC 18th January 7.00pm on Zoom

Damerham PCC 26th January 7.00pm on Zoom

Rockbourne PCC 3rd February 10.00am on Zoom

ANNUAL WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

This year's Celebration Service falls on Sunday 24th January and is likely to be on Zoom at 10.30am

PRAYING, GROWING & LEARNING ON ZOOM

Every Tuesday (except Tuesday 29th December) at 9.30am

20-Minute Prayer & Reflection

Faith Room @ 2pm (space for Bible discussion prayer and fellowship)

Thursday 3rd December; 14th, 28th January.

SERVICES DURING DECEMBER & JANUARY

Please note that physical services (which all have an asterisk next to them) are subject to cancellation at short notice, dependent on the latest Covid regulations. Codes to access the Services on Zoom will be on the Weekly Update and the Western Downland Website

www.westerndownlandchurches.org

For further notes from the Rector on services, please see Page 4.



Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve

3.00pm Zoom at Home for Christingle (joining code in box above)

11.15pm Whitsbury St Leonard's Midnight Eucharist (Traditional)*

11.15pm Martin, All Saints' Midnight Eucharist (Contemporary)*

Friday 25th December Christmas Day

9.30am On Zoom – Family Communion on Christmas Day

11.00am On Zoom – Holy Worship on Christmas Day

27th December 1st Sunday of Christmas

10.30am On Zoom – Benefice Communion: Old Year; New Year
co-hosted by St Leonard's, Whitsbury

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IN THE BENEFICE

Provisional and confirmed plans in this time of Covid

In Damerham

Carols in Crossways Farmyard. The date will be publicised on the Village Notice Board. Numbers may have to be limited but join in from nearby too.

A Tree of Hope. A beautiful and accessible tree in the Village Hall carpark has been chosen to which can be added decorations, messages of hope and prayer requests over the Festive Season.

In Rockbourne

Carols & Readings through the Village. Rockbourne Choir and friends proposed a carol singing expedition stopping at various properties along the way to tell the Christmas Story in Lessons & Carols with the opportunity to join in from your doorstep. Date to be confirmed to suit restrictions and the weather.

In Whitsbury.

Where are Mary & Joseph?

A wit once said that you only go to Whitsbury if you live there or if you are lost! However, if you happen to be in Whitsbury in the weeks leading up to Christmas you may be surprised to see, in different parts of the Village, a 6ft Joseph, a 4ft Mary and later a crib with baby Jesus in the Churchyard. We hope many people will 'lose themselves' in Whitsbury as we get ready to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

3rd January Epiphany

9.30am Damerham: Parish Communion (Contemporary)*

10.30am On Zoom – Epiphany Morning Prayer
co-hosted by St Andrew's, Rockbourne

10th January The Baptism of Christ

9.30am Martin: Parish Communion (Contemporary)*

10.30am On Zoom – All Age Worship: The Baptism of Jesus
co-hosted by St Leonard's, Whitsbury

17th January 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

9.30am Rockbourne: Parish Communion (Contemporary)*

10.30am On Zoom – Parish Communion
co-hosted by St George's, Damerham

24th January 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

8.30am Whitsbury: Holy Communion (Traditional)*

10.30am On Zoom – Churches Together United Service

31st January Candlemas: Presentation of Christ in the Temple

10.30am On Zoom – Benefice Candlemas Service
co-hosted by All Saints', Martin