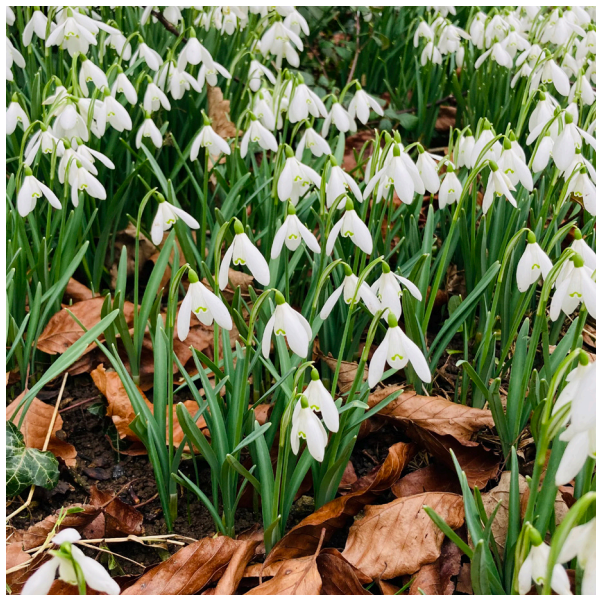


Newsletter

Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Shepton Montague Wyke Champflower



A number of people have identified the desirability of developing a social space where we can both gather informally as members of the church to get to know one another better and enjoy one another's company, and can also meet with people from the wider community for the same purposes.

In a Benefice such as ours, comprised of a number of discrete church communities, it can be difficult to develop any sense that we are working and sharing in the same common life in Christ. At one level, we know that we are all one Body, but the fact is we scarcely know each other, and are therefore not very well placed to support and encourage each other.

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Now that Bruton Surgery has ceased to operate a vaccination centre from the Community Hall opposite St Mary's, there is the potential for developing a regular event there, which could perhaps be just such a social space. The regular Saturday morning coffee mornings are due to resume (see below) and it may be that these could become just such a social space for us to meet one another and those whom we don't know, giving us an opportunity to be church together, outside our buildings and beyond Sundays.

If anyone has any ideas or suggestions, please get in touch with the Rector.

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If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, do please send it to the Rector at the benefice office address.

Easy-to-follow details of how to receive this newsletter by email can be found on the St Mary's website, or email **benefice@stmarysbruton.org**. If you are aware of someone who might like to receive it but does not use email, please consider printing a copy yourself and delivering it to them.

NEWS

Thank you to all who responded to 'Generous January' with the gift of food for the Brue Larder. It is likely that demand for help with food and basics will increase this year when fuel costs rise and other household expenses also increase. We intend to run a similar appeal during Lent. Thanks to Chris Rolls for co-ordinating this.

St Mary's PCC has commissioned an options appraisal from its retained church architect to advise on the possible locations for toilets and a servery. The next step will be to seek some informal guidance from the Diocesan Advisory Council (which oversees and has input into the Faculty process) before working up some more detailed proposals. Once that has been done, we can begin to consult and start the necessary fundraising campaign.

This month, St Peter's, Shepton Montague begins its experiment with a regular (monthly) service of Evening Prayer. The hope is that some people who find Sunday morning an inconvenient time to worship might find it easier to come in the early evening.

Confirmation at Bath Abbey – there will be a confirmation service at Eastertide (date yet to be decided). If you have not been confirmed and are interested, or know of someone else who might be interested, please speak to the Rector. Confirmation can happen at any age...

The Rector has begun a regular midweek Eucharist at Sexey's School.

St John the Baptist, Brewham has received an extremely generous donation from the parish magazine – Brewham, Batcombe & Upton Noble 'Parish News'. We are most grateful for such help from our communities.

All Age Worship will resume at St Mary's on 20 February (and thereafter regularly on the 3rd Sunday of each month), with – we hope – the junior choir leading our worship.

St Mary's has again benefitted from some help from students at Sexey's school as part of their community service programme – we did a bit of tidying up.

LENT LUNCHES



During Lent, we are planning to host simple lunches in the community hall in Bruton (soup, roll & cheese) as has been done in the past. We hope that this will be organised by members of the various churches represented in Bruton. The lunches will be on Wednesdays from 9th March to 13th April at 12.30 pm. We will ask those who come for a voluntary donation to support the work of Christian Aid, with a suggested minimum of £5 per person.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

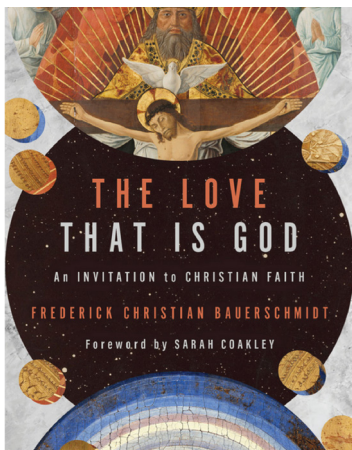
- Men's shed: there is going to be a consultation meeting to explore the possibility of starting a 'men's shed' locally. The meeting will hear from Patrick Abrahams from the Frome Shed. Patrick is a UK Men Sheds Ambassador. The consultation meeting will take place at the Unionist Club on 16th March at 7.30 pm. The meeting is open to all – those who could volunteer or otherwise contribute to it and those who might like to use it.

- Since Christmas, we have been supporting a family in Bruton by providing a hot, home-cooked meal for them, once a fortnight. If anyone is willing to help with this on a regular basis (i.e. to do the cooking and delivery), please speak to the Rector. The cost of the food ingredients will be met from a discretionary fund.
- Free sofa: a two seater sofa is available, free but collection required



- Coffee mornings: we hope these will continue at the Community Hall, but more help (and more attendance) is required. Please speak to Eve, the Rector or Jocelyn Crawford if you are able to help. And please spread the word.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



A group will meet to discuss 'The Love that is God', by Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, mentioned in the previous edition of the Newsletter. We will meet on Monday evenings during Lent, starting on Monday 7th March. We will have five sessions. We will meet at Jill and Alistair Pearce's house at 6.00 pm. All are welcome, but please let Jill and Alistair (or the Rector) know if you are planning to come so that we know how many to expect.

Cover Art: Meg Schmidt

BLOSSOMING & BLOOMING



Photo: www.dsairambulance.org.uk

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance are launching an open gardens initiative, asking people to open their gardens to raise money in support of the air ambulance. The programme will run from June to September. If you are interested in taking part or visiting the open gardens, please see their website for details:

www.dsairambulance.org.uk/open-gardens

BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR

We are seeking someone to work as a part-time Benefice Administrator to provide some administrative support to the Rector. There is some flexibility around the scope and content of the role and the number of hours to be worked, not exceeding 8 hours per week. A detailed role description is available on request from benefice@stmarysbruton.org. This is a paid role, with pay dependent on experience but in the range £12.50 - £14.50 per hour. Please speak to the Rector if you are interested or know anyone who might be.

ECO CHURCH

Part of the churchyard at St John the Baptist, Brewham has been managed as a wilder churchyard, under a scheme called 'caring for God's Acre' for some time. We have recently been approached to see whether the churchyard might feature in the publicity associated with a Diocesan programme for encouraging 'wilder churchyards'.

DEVELOPING OUR DISCIPLESHIP

There were only a few responses to the offer of some sort of study group or discipleship course. We will run the book discussion group in Lent (see above) and try again after Easter to run something with a focus on the Bible or exploring the basics of our faith, probably from the Pilgrim series. If you are potentially interested, please do let the Rector know now.

Diocesan financial strategy and the shape of local ministry

Previous editions of the Newsletter have drawn attention to the financial difficulties facing this Diocese as a direct result of parishes failing to pay their full contribution to the Common Fund (Parish Share). As previously explained, the Diocesan Board of Finance has planned to reduce the number of stipendiary clergy posts and stipendiary curate posts as part of the measures they are taking to balance the budget, over a period of 5 years. This will have an impact on the shape of ministry at parish level, as there will be fewer paid posts and hence more will need to be done by volunteers (lay or ordained) if we are to continue to maintain a Christian presence in every community.

Hopefully, all those who are concerned about these proposals will have signed up and participated in the Diocesan course running from 6-12 February ('God calls everyone, everywhere') which will explore the opportunities and challenges around our shared ministry. We need to understand what is planned if we are to know how to respond.

PLATINUM JUBILEE PLANS

As you will know, there are plans for celebrations across the United Kingdom to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June this year. A 2-day bank holiday has been declared on Thursday 2nd – Friday 3rd June (in place of the late May bank holiday), making a 4-day break for many people.

It would be good if all our parishes started planning now with other groups in each community to discuss and co-ordinate plans for our celebrations, so that we can avoid any clashes or competing events. Where possible, it would be good if each parish across the Benefice also kept an eye on what neighbouring parishes are planning, for the same reason. With that in mind, as and when plans are formed in each parish, please pass on details (however tentative and provisional at this stage) to the Benefice Office so that we can maintain an overview.

HOLY WEEK & BEYOND



The Rector is beginning to plan services for Holy Week and would love to hear from people to understand what they might find helpful. Ideas include a quiet, contemplative and informal evening gathering, the possibility of observing the liturgy of the Stations of the Cross, as well as the important services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

The idea of a quiet, less formal and less 'wordy' evening service is something that could be continued beyond Holy Week as a regular feature of our schedule of services – a chance to reflect on the week that has gone and prepare for the week that is to come.

Do please contact the Rector with any thoughts or offers of help.

DIARY DATES

- **6-12 February:** 'God calls everyone, everywhere' online course – see Diocesan Website for details
- **14 February:** Brewham PCC meeting, 7.30pm at Colinshayes
- **18 February:** Memorial service for Neville George at St John Baptist, Brewham at 12.30 pm
- **23 February:** Shepton Montague PCC meeting, 6.30pm at Presscombe

- **6 February:** Pitcombe PCC meeting, 10.30 am at Hadspen Farm.
- **2 March:** Ash Wednesday Eucharist with imposition of ashes, St Mary's, Bruton at 6.00 pm
- **12 March:** Memorial service for Vic Butler at St Mary's, at 2.30 pm
- **16 March:** Bruton PCC meeting, 6.00 pm at the Bruton Library
- **16 March:** Men's Shed consultation meeting, 7.30 pm at the Unionist Club

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