

Newsletter

Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Shepton Montague Wyke Champflower



**Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

So says the Easter Acclamation that we use in our liturgy during the season of Easter. What do you think about the statement? Put to one side for a moment the exuberance of the 'Alleluia!'; what about the resurrection? What does it mean to you that Christ is risen? This is, after all, the corner stone of the Christian faith. As St. Paul puts it in chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians, our faith is in vain and is futile if there is no resurrection, and we are of all people most to be pitied (1 Cor 15: 12-19).

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If we deny the resurrection, we are not proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus.

So what is the resurrection? The resurrection is no mere resuscitation of a Jewish preacher; it is transformative. But transformative of what? We have not ceased to live in a world of injustice and violence, as is all too clear to see. So wherein does the transformation lie? That is our Easter challenge – to see and to know what it is that has been changed by the resurrection. Easter lasts for 50 days, which should give us enough time to at least begin to consider the question. If you don't mind having to think while you read, try Rowan Williams' classic book 'The Resurrection'.

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 gave to the 'Lent Larder', supporting the work of the Brue Larder. As fuel and other household expenses rise, we may need to be ready to respond to an increase in demand locally. Thanks to Chris Rolls for co-ordinating this.

St Mary's PCC is still waiting for an informal visit from the Diocesan Advisory Council (which oversees and has input into the Faculty process) in relation to the toilets and servery project. Once that has happened, we can begin to work up some more detailed proposals, prepare a consultation and start the necessary fundraising campaign. The delay is frustrating.

Huge thanks to all who helped serve and/or attended the Lent Lunches in the Bruton Community Hall. These were very enjoyable (with delicious soups and flawless admin) and raised valuable funds for Christian Aid's Ukraine appeal. It would be good to find a way of sustainably continuing a regular, sociable lunch like this, but that would require a wider team of volunteers.

St Leonard's hosted the Easter service for Sunny Hill prep school on 1 April, while the senior school held their service at St Mary's. Sexey's school had their first full-school end of term service for a long time at St Mary's on 8 April and it was good to see the church so full.

We had a lovely wedding at Holy Trinity, Wyke Champflower on 8 April, and thanks to the kindness of Mrs Winkley the guests were able to enjoy a drink in the churchyard after the service.

Prebendary Mike Vockins, a retired priest who lives in Charlton Musgrove, has very kindly agreed to offer occasional ministry when required in this benefice, in addition to the regular ministry he exercises in Charlton Musgrove. We look forward to receiving from Mike and welcoming him.

Rev'd Roger Burt, chaplain at Sexey's Hospital, will be leaving the hospital at the start of June and moving to a new parish. We hope to have the opportunity to say a fond farewell to Roger before he leaves.

The Book Discussion Group met during Lent and enjoyed some generous hospitality and engaged discussion around the idea that God is Love. We hope to repeat something similar soon.

We are planning to host an art exhibition at St Peter's Chapel, Redlynch from 19 May to 11 June. The exhibition will be the work of a new local gallery: Bo Lee Gallery. You will be able to find out more from the St Mary's website in due course.

Heartedge is a church revitalisation movement that has been mentioned in this newsletter previously. There is a (much delayed) day conference taking place on Tuesday 17 May at Christchurch Priory (the Rector's training parish). Tickets are free – see Christchurch Priory's website for more details. Heartedge is a hugely important movement for the church and attendance could be an real eye opener as we think of ways of trying to maintain Christian ministry in challenging times. Please speak to the Rector if you are interested in attending.

Bruton Choral Society are holding a concert for Peace and Hope at St Mary's on Saturday 21 May, at 7.30 pm. The choir will perform various pieces in uplifting and reflective moods, some written for specific events or injustices. The programme will include the Buxtehude Alleluia, the famous chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Verdi's Nabucco, David Fanshawe's Lord's Prayer, a piece written for the Tsunami of 2004 by Eliza Gillkyson, spirituals and other songs. All proceeds will go to the Disasters and Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

Thank you



COMMUNITY MATTERS

- 'Bruton Supports Ukraine' is a community-wide initiative intended to establish support networks across the local area, so that we are well-prepared to welcome and support any Ukrainian refugees who may be hosted here. There is now a co-ordinating group that meets regularly and information and links to advice from external agencies are provided on a page on St Mary's website and on a dedicated Facebook page: 'Bruton Supports Ukraine'.
- Regular Saturday morning Coffee mornings are continuing at the Community Hall, with a range of charities and community groups taking turns to run them. Do please support them when you can.
- Planning continues for events across the town and local area to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the special holiday from 2-5 June. We hope to hold some form of community event (fete style) on Abbey Field on 2 June, so please make a note of that and stand by for requests for help.

ASCENSION DAY

Ascension Day is on 26 May. In this Deanery, we hold a single service for all in the Deanery and this year we are hosting it at St Mary's. It will be a Sung Eucharist at 7.00 pm. Please come and support this. Here are some reasons to come:

- It is a Principal Holy Day. If that does not persuade you, ...
- The St. Mary's choir will be singing. If that does not persuade you, ...
- The Archdeacon of Wells will be presiding and preaching. If that does not persuade you, ...
- With the current Diocesan proposals for reform of both ministry and finance impacting very heavily on rural parishes (see further below), we need to demonstrate that we are still here and alive and faithful. If that does not persuade you, ...
- There will be refreshments afterwards in the Community Hall. If that does not persuade you, ...
- It is most unlikely that there is anything worth watching on TV that night, and your hair does not need a wash.

We need some volunteers to help with refreshments after the service – both preparing them and serving them. We will be reimbursed the cost out of Deanery funds. Please contact Juliet Bowell with offers of help. This is very much a Benefice event, rather than a St Mary's event.

NEW BENEFICE ADMINISTRATOR

We were in the happy position of receiving 6 strong applications for the post of Benefice Administrator. We reduced this to a shortlist of 3 candidates, who were all interviewed. It was a difficult decision as all the candidates had much to offer, and we are delighted to have appointed Sarah Mills to the role. Sarah will work up to 8 hours per week. At the moment, there is no intention to have fixed office hours (as has been the case in the past) but to work more flexibly across the whole week, with Sarah working largely from home, but using the office at Plox on occasion as may be necessary. Anyone who needs to contact Sarah should continue to use the benefice office contact details:

E-mail: benefice@stmarysbruton.org

Telephone: 01749 813080

Diocesan Financial Strategy and the Shape of Local Community

The latest proposals coming from the Diocesan Finance Department include a possible change to the way in which Parish Share is calculated. It is understood that there are, as yet, no firm plans, but the proposals that have been aired for discussion signal a move away from an approach which (very broadly, and subject to several adjustments) seeks to spread the costs of ministry across the parishes based on how many people attend church in each parish (a per capita approach) to a formula that focuses on the costs of the ministry that each parish receives (a 'pay for what you get' approach). It is said that there would again be various adjustments made, for example for parishes in financially deprived areas. But the essential idea is that (before any such adjustment is applied) each Benefice would be asked to pay for the costs of the stipendiary ministry it receives, plus a contribution to other costs. At present, a majority (62%) of parishes pay parish share in an amount that is lower than the direct cost of the stipendiary ministry they receive – the other parishes, the ones with more people attending, pay parish share in excess of the direct costs of the stipendiary ministry they receive. As a Benefice, we

pay less than the direct costs of the stipendiary ministry we receive, so we are currently being financially supported by other parishes. It appears to be probable, therefore, that if these proposals were implemented, our parish share would increase, perhaps substantially.

The Benefice Council will be asked to consider these proposals, and to consider making representations to the Diocesan Finance Department.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- Following the decision of our long-serving office volunteers to hang up their staplers and photocopying cards, there is a need for occasional help copying and assembling documents. This is not regular work, but occasionally we have a need to produce service booklets or other printed material on a one-off basis and it would be good to be able to draw on some volunteers to help with this, working in the offices at Plox.
- If anyone knows of anyone who might be able and willing to learn the ropes of operating the livestreaming equipment at St Mary's, it would be great to have another volunteer to spread the work around more broadly.

DIARY DATES

- 20 April – Bruton APCM, St Mary's at 6.00 pm
- 25 April – Brewham APCM, Colinshayes at 7.30pm
- 27 April – Shepton Montague APCM, Shepton Montague Village Hall at 6.30 pm
- 4 May – Shepton Montague PCC, Shepton Montague Village Hall at 6.30 pm
- 13 May – Pitcombe PCC, venue tbc at 2.30 pm
- 14 May – Shepton Montague Spring Tea and sale, church and village hall at 10.00 am
- 17 May – Heartedge Wessex conference, Christchurch Priory at 10.00 am
- 18 May – Bruton PCC, Town Library at 6.00 pm
- 19 May – Bo Lee gallery's exhibition opens at St Peter's, Redlynch
- 21 May – Bruton Choral Society concert, St Mary's at 7.30 pm
- 26 May – Deanery Ascension Day Eucharist, St Mary's at 7.00 pm
- 2 – 4 June – Platinum Jubilee celebrations

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