



Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Wyke Champflower Shepton Montague



In our current series of Benefice discussion groups we are looking together at some of the parables that Jesus told. The parables are one of the ways in which Jesus made the Kingdom of God relevant to the daily lives of those who came to listen to him speak. The parables were about the life of God's Kingdom outside contemporary religious

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practices – they were not about Temple worship.

We need to hear some parables of our own time, so that our faith is connected with our everyday. Even more importantly, we need to be telling parables ourselves – telling stories and presenting images of how faith is found in everyday life and not just within our times of ritualised worship. God is an everyday God and an everywhere God, as Jesus showed us.

A major risk for the Church locally and nationally is that God is seen and understood as a God of Sunday mornings in the church building, or of grand occasions in cathedrals, but as having little to no relevance to the rest of the week and the rest of life. To confine God to the box of ‘church on Sunday’ is to turn God into an idol of our own making: controlled, restricted and boundaried; whereas God is of course none of those things.

Fewer than 1% of our population attends church. Within that small number, only around 5 -10% of our own local congregations attends our own church events other than Sunday worship. If we are to live and tell the story of Jesus, we need to explore and be part of the everyday; we need to hear and tell some good parables – to each other and to the wider community.



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 from our Parishes

The annual plant sale at Shepton Montague was a resounding success – glorious weather, amazing produce and teas, lots of people and very good profits. People stayed and chatted in the beautiful setting of the churchyard and it was a very healing occasion for a community that had just suffered terrible flooding, along with many other villages locally. The profits are divided between the village hall and St Peter's and do much to enable St Peter's to meet its regular expenses.



St John the Baptist in Brewham had a beautiful red, white and blue flower display for the King's Coronation (pictured on the left).

St John's will be hosting a 'Wilder Churchyards' meeting on the morning of 27 June –in the churchyard.

There will be an outdoor performance of Purcell's opera 'The Fairy Queen' on 1 July at Wyke House, Wyke Champflower:

'Join us for a production of The Fairy Queen with a live orchestral ensemble in the picturesque gardens of Wyke House. The performance is staged entirely outdoors, and will move between two different areas of the garden with a picnic interval. It is a chance to enjoy opera in an intimate, relaxed and informal setting surrounded by the beautiful Somerset countryside. Please bring a picnic, a blanket and a chair if you'd like one. Some straw bale seating will be provided.'



Tickets cost £35 and are available from Eventbrite: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-fairy-queen-tickets-579123362567 (or search 'The Fairy Queen' on Eventbrite.co.uk).

St Mary's has been given a beautiful pair of churchyard gates - generously made and given by the Hooper family - in memory of Gloria Hooper.





Last Summer one of the yew trees in Brewham churchyard suffered two major branch breakages, and urgently needed a tree surgeon to make it safe. As there is a Tree Preservation Order, this took months of expert visits and negotiations with the authorities and the Parish Council. At last a date was fixed and the men and equipment arrived, only to find rooks nesting in the tree. No tree can work can be done now until

the end of the nesting season in August, and so the saga continues.

(Do please feed through to us your parish news for inclusion in the newsletter. What are you doing to demonstrate the love of God in Christ to your neighbours and friends? How are you proclaiming the Gospel in this generation? What's going on with your buildings, your churchyards, your worship and prayer? What ideas do you have for the future? It is good to share what we are doing as together we try to build a sustainable future for the Church in this place.)

Confirmation Classes

This summer, we are planning to run some confirmation classes, preparing candidates for confirmation in the Autumn. Although principally aimed at adult candidates for baptism and/or confirmation, the course would also be suitable for anyone wanting to learn, or refresh their knowledge, about the basics of the Christian

faith, whether they are baptised/confirmed or not and whether they are a candidate for baptism/confirmation or not.

The course covers: The Lord's Prayer, the Creeds, Jesus, The Trinity, the Eucharist, the Bible, salvation and then finally the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. If you might be interested (whatever your age and whatever your relationship to the Christian faith might be), please contact the Rector so we can plan some dates. Contact details are at the end of the newsletter.

PCC Teams at St Mary's

St Mary's is looking to reintroduce some ministry 'teams', working with the Rector and the PCC in our shared ministry. Teams will have a defined area of responsibility, reporting to the PCC. We envisage the following: Fabric Team, Prayer & Worship Team, Events & Activities Team, Hospitality & Pastoral Team. If you (or anyone you know) is supportive of the work of St Mary's and would like to join or lead one of these teams, please get in touch (they do not need to be a member of the congregation).

Deanery Reorganisation

At its meeting on 5 July, Deanery Synod will be asked to consider a proposal for the reorganisation of our Deanery. The objective is to reduce the number of stipendiary clergy in the Deanery, due to the fall in giving by our parishes to the Common Fund out of which stipends are paid. For as long as we retain the current model of 1 stipendiary priest per Benefice, this necessarily means that the Benefices across

the Deanery need to reduce in number and therefore increase in size, with some Benefices ceasing to exist and others expanding to take on those parishes. Details of the proposal will be announced and explained in advance of the meeting of Synod. We hope this will happen in the week beginning 18 June. There will then be a further opportunity for comment as the consultation process continues.

Diocesan Finances

In this Benefice, all our parishes have paid their parish share in full. These payments go into our Diocese's 'Common Fund', from which the costs of stipendiary ministry in this Diocese are paid. Unfortunately, across the Dioceses as a whole, there is a shortfall in parish share contributions – some parishes are paying less than their full share and some are not paying at all. As a result, the Common Fund continues to run an annual deficit. It was £2.1m in 2022 and it is forecast to be £1.7m in 2023, despite cost saving measures that have already been implemented. It is this shortfall in the Common Fund that has resulted in the current round of reductions in numbers of stipendiary clergy. As a Diocese, we need to find ways of fully meeting the costs of ministry and ensuring that each parish pays a reasonable amount towards the cost of the paid ministry it receives from our Diocese.

If you would like to see more detail about this financial situation, church wardens have been sent an information sheet: you could ask them for a copy.

Brue Larder



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St Mary's is now an additional donation point for Brue larder (our local food bank). There is a large cupboard in the South West corner. Donations may be left there at any time.

TeXtiles Project at St Mary's

We are just about to launch a project to make some new altar frontals and vestments for St Mary's. We expect to receive the necessary faculty approval at the end of June and then work can start. Designs for the altar frontals have been submitted and approved and we have a very experienced and skilled person to lead a team of volunteers to do the making. If you, or anyone you know, might like to be part of this team, do please get in touch via the Benefice office. Making these pieces together as a team could be a fun and very rewarding experience.

Arts Events

Remember that the Aurin Girls' Choir from Hungary are giving a concert at St Mary's, Bruton as part of their 2023 tour. The concert is on Monday 26 June at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 in advance, £12 on the door and are available from Bruton Convenience Store, tel 01749 813161 or online at www.brutonchoralsociety.org.uk.



St Peter's, Redlynch will be hosting another art exhibition in July. This time, we welcome William Richards, whose solo show of new paintings 'Tongues of Men and Angels' brings together paintings from Williams' time working in Cornwall, alongside new work made over the last year here in Somerset. Landscape explore nature as a wild and unrelenting force, and narrative paintings tell stories from Cornwall's rich and mysterious coastline. Additionally there is a playful look at Japanese printmaking and busts

from Greek and Roman sculpture. 14 July 6-8pm, and 15 July 11am-4pm.

We hope that funds can be raise through artistic projects which will go towards the upkeep of the church and help to retain this wonderful space for the community.

Diary Dates

- **8 June:** Eucharist for Corpus Christi, St Mary's at 6.30 pm
- **8 June:** Film Night at Shepton Montague, St Peter's at 7.30 pm
- **21 June:** Bruton PCC meeting, Plox meeting room, 5.30pm
- **26 June:** Aurin Girls' Choir concert, St Mary's at 7.30 pm
- **26 June:** Diocesan Synod

Further ahead:

- **1 July:** The Fairy Queen, Wyke House, Wyke Champflower, at 6.00 pm
- **5 July:** Deanery Synod
- **12 July:** Diocesan Synod
- **13 July:** Film Night at Shepton Montague, 7.30 pm
- **14-15 July:** art exhibition featuring Richard Williams at St Peter's, Redlynch

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