



Bruton Pitcombe Redlynch Brewham Wyke Champflower Shepton Montague



Is there anyone who does not love the arrival of Spring? While some people struggle with some of the other seasons for one reason or another, I've yet to meet anyone who does not love the arrival of Spring, with warmer, longer days and the emergence of blossom and shoots and buds.

John's Gospel tells us that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was in a garden, and that when Mary

IN THIS ISSUE

News from our Parishes

Notes from an Absent
Organist: Chapter 3

Reform of the Parish
Share

Regular Donations

Prayer Ministry

Arts Events

Stations of the Cross

The Easter Liturgy

Spring Cleaning(s)

Diary Dates

Contact



Magdalen went to the tomb and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, she was distraught. When she turned away from the tomb, she saw a man, whom she supposed was the gardener (John 20: 11–15). We tend to regard this as a mistake on Mary's part, reading this text as saying that she failed to recognise the risen Jesus and thought the man in front of her was someone else, someone other than who he was. At one level, that is correct: she did not know it was Jesus until he spoke her name, at which point Mary recognised him (v.16).

But in another way, perhaps Mary was correct: this was and is the 'gardener'. The One who lovingly cares for God's creation, the One who nurtures budding, shooting life. The One who brings dry seeds to life, who causes bare twigs to flower, cold earth to grow warm. The One who stirs new faith.

Allow your own growth to be awakened once again this Spring.



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 (www.stmarysbruton.org), 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.13 September:
Bruton PCC meeting

News from our Parishes



Elfrida Routh celebrated her 100th birthday in great style on February 10 as many well-wishers joined her at home amid a sea of flowers and generous refreshments.

St Mary's hosted a delightful concert on February 18, given by Faelan Sydenham (recorder) and Clare Sydenham (harpsichord/ piano) on the theme of 'Tapestry'.

Our Benefice Discussion Groups have been meeting and reflecting together on the passion narrative, seen from the perspective of the Beloved Disciple.

The meeting of Deanery Synod scheduled for March 19 has been postponed, due to uncertainty surrounding the Deanery Reorganisation Plan following the resignation/retirement of a number of Deanery clergy, including the Area Dean, and the ongoing proposals for reform of Parish Share.

Notes from an Absent Organist: Chapter 3

Our organist at St Mary's writes:

Back in 2016 the previous Rector, Justin Bailey, asked me to take responsibility for choosing hymns to be sung at Sunday services and Festivals. Justin was, I think, understandably fed up with my complaints about late notification of hymns, a problem that could lead to the situation I most dread: sight-reading in public!

I took on the job with some misgiving: there was, after all, a danger that, as a layman, I would choose totally inappropriate hymns or favour a limited range of my personal favourites. I knew enough not to put *Forty days and forty nights* on the list for Christmas Day, or *Jesus Christ is risen today* at Epiphany, but I still needed guidance. For this there were two main sources. At the back of most hymn books – certainly the full music editions – such as the New English Hymnal and Ancient and Modern (AM), there are short lists of hymns suitable for most Sundays and Festivals. Even more helpful is the quarterly booklet produced by the Royal School of Church Music which lists appropriate hymns for every Sunday and Festival from no less than fourteen different hymn books! Someone at the RSCM certainly does their homework. I simply have to read down the column headed AM and pick four which I know, which (probably) I like, and which – with occasional exceptions – the congregation also probably know. Easy! Job done!

But hold on. Justin thought I was too conservative in my choices, and that I should flirt with the unfamiliar. Being by my own admission

a *traditionalist, my personal preferences would exclude the most extreme modern hymns, the most infantile children's hymns, and many evangelical songs. I'd still be left with a corpus of, I guess, one hundred and fifty familiar hymns which I'm happy to play. The congregation (forgive me, readers) probably have a repertoire of only about ninety with which they are confident. The point is that there are over eight hundred hymns in Ancient and Modern. Our current edition came out in 2014. (It first came out in 1861, and re-appeared in various guises over the years: seven editions and one hundred and seventy-five million copies, in fact!) Our edition was carefully compiled and rigorously edited by people of irreproachable musicianship and ecclesiastical experience. If you and I don't know or don't like half – or more than half – of their choices, the fault probably lies with us.

So what is the way forward? I see three possibilities.

1. Continue as at present with our limited repertoire of familiar, comfortable hymns, the comfort only being occasionally disturbed when I include one or two hymns which I know and like and are appropriate to a particular Sunday, but are not known to many in the congregation, e.g. *The spacious firmament on high* and *Disposer supreme* (chosen for March 3).
2. A more adventurous selection on my part. It does seem logical to experiment with at least some of the five hundred or so hymns in AM which we never try. I'm prepared to delve into the unknown, but the congregation must expect to be jolted out of their comfort zone quite often.
3. At a service in late 2023 the Rector, in response to a request from some regular worshippers to be more actively involved in

services, invited those present to come forward and jointly put the finishing touches to the sermon. I hid behind the organ – but I do have a suggestion for congregational involvement: choose a favourite hymn for a future Sunday and let me know. Bear in mind that hymn planning is done several weeks in advance, and I would appreciate some notice in case your choice is tricky to play or unfamiliar to me. Don't come up to me at 10.50 am expecting me to fit in your favourite at 11am! Additionally, make sure your choice is in Ancient and Modern. Sorry, Alistair – we can't include *Hail thee, festival day*. Finally, don't choose something seasonally unsuitable. If your favourite is *We three Kings* (which I realise was not sung this year) don't suggest it for the tenth Sunday after Trinity. The Magi brought their gifts in early January (Epiphany), not in mid-summer!

With these qualifications, I look forward to receiving your suggestions.

*Which musician said: "Tradition is fanning the flames, not worshipping the ashes"?

Answers to the Rector before the end of March. The first correct answer pulled out of the hat gets a prize.

NB: *Prize provided by me!*



Reform of Parish Share

Consultations have been taking place across our Diocese in relation to the proposed reform of parish share (see previous issues of this Newsletter for details). The Benefice Council will meet on 2 March to agree the text of a written response that will be submitted. Once it has been finalised, that text will be shared with all our PCCs.

Regular Donations

Thank you to those who have recently reviewed and increased the amount of their regular standing orders to their PCCs. For those who have not yet got round to doing so: it is not too late!

It makes life much simpler for our PCC Treasurers and Gift Aid administrators if people give by standing order rather than by cash, so if you do not currently give by standing order, do please consider setting one up. Your PCC Treasurer will be only too happy to give you the necessary form to fill in.

Our personal giving should always be appropriate to our individual circumstances and reviewed regularly. As a church community, we seek to live generous lives and that should be reflected in our giving. Our giving is not about enabling the PCC to meet its costs, but about our own thankful response to God for the gifts we receive from God.



Prayer Ministry

Prayer for Our Community

Father God, we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, even the bad things. We ask that you guide our actions as believers. Give us an eagerness to be humble and gentle. Help us have hearts of patience and forbearance. Thank you for the hope we have in you; may your hope unify our thoughts and decisions and invoke peace through the Spirit. Amen.

Prayer Opportunities

Saturday March 2 at 10am in St Mary's there will be a time of Prayer for the Benefice and Deanery. Come when you can, leave when you must!

At a prayer meeting every **Wednesday morning** some of us meet to pray for our community. Anyone is welcome to join us. If you have any requests for prayer, please send them to the Rector and he will advise us on the requests.



A Prayer for **Hope**

"As the sun rises on our day, may Your light dawn on our hearts. Reveal Your character and goodness to us as we put our hope in You."

Arts Events



On Friday 8 March at 6pm The Echoing Air vocal ensemble present *BirdSong: An Evening of Music and Art*. They will perform a celebratory programme of songs on the theme of birds, and invite the audience to sketch while they listen. Artwork created by artists from Bruton Art Society will be on display during the performance and will also be for sale.



The Guardian's Chief Sketch Writer, John Crace, will be in conversation with BBC's Ritula Shah at St. Mary's Church, Bruton on March 14 at 7.30pm. From *Partygate* and Boris Johnson's farewell, to Keir Starmer taking over Labour's leadership, John will take us on a hilarious whirlwind tour of post-Brexit Britain, and speak about his book

Depraved New World: Please Hold The Government Will Be With You Shortly.

The event is hosted by Agile Rabbit. Book your tickets (£12–£15) at: www.agile-rabbit.com.



We are delighted to be involved in a collaboration with King's School Bruton for a performance of John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*, a collection of spiritual arrangements in an upbeat, jazzy style. Also involved will be the Fitzjames Consort & Singers, Bruton Primary School, and Hazlegrove Prep School choirs – so this will be a real community event. Louise Innes will be the mezzo-soprano soloist and we will all be performing under the leadership of Ashley Marshfield, Director of Music

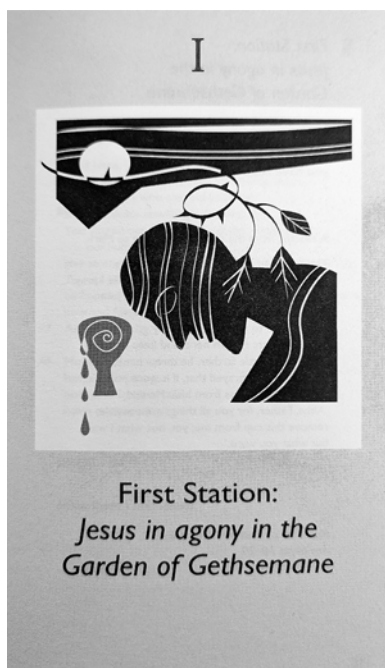
at King's. The date is Sunday 3 March in King's Memorial Hall and note the earlier than usual time of 5pm. Admission will be free but there will be a retiring collection.

A couple of other dates for your diary: on Saturday 23 March we will be holding our regular and popular coffee morning at 10am in the Community Hall. As always there will be cakes, savouries, and home produce for sale as well as a raffle – and we will also have hot cross buns to entice you in. Further ahead we are planning a Quiz Night on 26 April.

Have a look at our website www.bruntonchoralsociety.org.uk for further details about our activities or follow us on our new Instagram account or on Facebook.

Stations of the Cross

There will be the opportunity to walk and pray the Stations of the Cross during Holy Week. Short written reflections and some artwork will be provided to assist your contemplation and prayers. This quiet liturgy will take place between 6.00 and 7.00 pm on each of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Holy Week (i.e. 25 – 27 March). You are welcome to arrive and leave at any point during that time, as we will walk and pray individually, at our own pace.



(We hope that we might have a very special installation on display, created by a local artist, but this is not yet confirmed.)

The Easter Liturgy

If you have never done so before, why not discover the richness and the power of the Easter Liturgy this year, as together we recall and relive the events of Easter and the Paschal mystery:

- On Maundy Thursday - the Last Supper and Christ's Gethsemane prayer: a Eucharist and watch
- On Good Friday – the Crucifixion: an hour at the Cross
- On Holy Saturday – the story of our salvation: the Easter Vigil
- On Easter Sunday – resurrection life: the service of light and the Easter Eucharist

Details of service times and locations are published in the Dove and online.

Spring (cleaning) is in the air

Mill on the Brue is organising a Litter Pick & Bruton Spring Clean for Saturday 16 March, meeting at their lower car park at 10am. Litter pickers, gloves and bags will be provided.

St Leonard's is holding a spring clean on 16 March from 10am – all help will be very welcome.

St Mary's is also holding a spring clean day on 23 March from 10am – again, all help welcome.

Diary Dates

- 2 March: Benefice time of prayer, St Mary's at 10am–12pm
- 7 March: Roman Catholic Mass, St Mary's at 10am
- 8 March: 'Birdsong' concert, St Mary's at 6pm
- 9 March: Memorial Service for Phil and Linda Heavey, St Mary's at 11am
- 13 March: Bruton PCC meeting, Plox meeting Room at 5.30pm
- 14 March: Film Night at Shepton Montague, St Peter's at 7.30pm
- 16 March: St Mary's coffee morning, Bruton Community Hall at 10am
- 16 March: Spring Clean, St Leonard's at 10am
- 16 March: Diocesan Synod
- 20 March: Wyke Champflower annual meeting, Wyke Manor at 7pm
- 23 March: Spring clean, St Mary's at 10am

Further ahead...

- 4 April: Roman Catholic Mass, St Mary's at 10am
- 11 April: Film Night at Shepton Montague, St peter's at 7pm
- 13 April: Spring Concert, St Mary's, time tbc
- 16 April: Shepton Montague Annual Meetings, village hall at 6.30 pm
- 17 April: Bruton Annual Meetings, St Mary's at 5.30pm
- 22-26 April: Stations of the Resurrection exhibition at St Mary's
- 22 April: Brewham Annual Meetings, St John's at 7pm
- 26 April: Pitcombe Annual Meetings, St Leonard's at 6pm

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