

FELLOWSHIP & FUNDRAISING: –

All your friends in the churches of Western Downland wish you a blessed Christmas and a Joyful, Peaceful New Year.

All Saints PCC Nominated Charity. The final date for donations to UK-Med, the Parish of Martin's Nominated Charity, is December 31st. Donations can be given at any service or through the letterbox at Bridge Cottage. Nominated Charity Gift Envelopes are available in All Saints Church. You can find out more about the charity on its website uk-med.org.

Thank you from Cueibet! Many thanks to all who sent contributions out to Cueibet. They were very gratefully received.

St George's Church Council needs your Help.

We are seeking a voluntary PCC Secretary to prepare Agendas and Minutes and attend four meetings a year. A limited amount of associated correspondence is required. Basic computer literacy, including email is necessary. Contact the Rector for more information.
Role commences April 2020

Advance notice of Snowdrop Weekend at St. George's Church, Damerham.

8th/9th February 2020. From 12noon – 4pm each day there will be refreshments and stalls inside the Church to add to your enjoyment of the wonderful display of snowdrops in the ancient churchyard.

FROM THE REGISTERS:

Funerals	St. George, Damerham	
	10 th October	Charlie Lee
	All Saints, Martin	
	7 th October	Philippa Craig
Baptisms	St George, Damerham	
	27 th October	Wilfred Armitage

We also remember with thanksgiving, The Rev'd John Hathaway, former Rector of Western Downland, Betty Ayling, former Headteacher of Rockbourne School, Harry Brockway, who supported us on many occasions as a visiting organist, and Veronica Wolesley, long-time resident of Martin parish.

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	Michael Rhodes (01725) 519715	Fran Eardley (01725) 519423
Rockbourne	Patrick Thompson (01725) 518246	
Whitsbury	Chris Harper (01725) 518324	

THE COURIER

Please send contributions for the next Courier to the Editor, Midge Connell meconnell53@gmail.com.
The deadline is 7th January 2020.

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

THE COURIER

DECEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

A WORD FROM THE RECTOR

Satnavs are useful...but there are apocryphal tales of cars arriving in muddy fields as the Satnav blandly declares 'You have reached your destination'. These stories have some basis in fact; one national Church website placed St George's Church in the middle of a field on the far side of Damerham a mile away from its actual location. Whilst we have route maps and satnavs for road travel, much of life is lived without a clear path, and with the immediate destination obscure. From before our birth a mystery is woven into us. Who shall we be? What joys and sorrows shall we face? What advantages and disadvantages, what circumstances will challenge us? We'll face a plethora of choices, the outcome of which will affect the path we travel individually and together. Press headlines and the soundbites of politicians and pulpit preachers can make it seem like life's choices are black and white. The truth is that complexity is written into us, our relationships, our society, our world. The story of the Virgin Birth and of a Babe laid in a Manger, of angels and shepherds, the gifts of the Wise Men, and the Flight into Egypt, is often told as a comforting bedtime story. It's anything but. The story of Mary and Joseph is the story of two individuals facing the most difficult circumstances and the most perilous of journeys, with uncertain outcomes for themselves and for a baby still forming in the womb. Their predicament was driven by the will of human powers (Emperor Augustus, King Herod) and by divine intervention (via angels and dreams). Individually and together Mary and Joseph can't avoid the issue. They must choose whether to travel together, or to break apart. Whether to trust and obey or look for a way out. To surrender to fear or take their courage in their hands. To risk staying in the familiar, or step into the unknown. Their choices are a template for us, to trust that God travels with us, and that - for love of us - God will never step away from our side, wherever our road may lead. Which brings to mind the poem by Minnie Louise Haskins, made famous by King George VI in his 1939 Christmas Address, when all seemed perilous, and hope was a spark in the darkness.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night...

Rev'd Les Player



Christmas Get-Together at the Rectory



Les & Tracey would be delighted to welcome you to the Rectory in Damerham
for coffee, tea and biscuits on Monday 16th December from 10.30 am – 12 noon.