

THE CHURCH FROM ADVENT AND INTO THE NEW YEAR IN 2023

You can always find a digital copy of our latest Courier, as well as contact details, resources and information on our benefice website westerndownlandchurches.org. We now also circulate the Courier digitally; if you would like a digital copy, please contact the Editor. Arron has solved the technical issues with the Courier mailing list so subscribers should now be receiving digital copies. We continue to offer the choice of common cup and dipped wafers during parish communion. Although COVID is lessening, the church is attended by the elderly and vulnerable so one should still try to minimise risk. One can still wear an optional face covering in gatherings and maintain a social distance from others at services. We would also urge you not to attend if you feel unwell. We will continue to offer opportunities to join services via livestream (for the vulnerable) for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

COFFEES AND TEAS AT THE RECTORY – Tracey and Les are delighted to invite you to a Christmas coffee morning at the Rectory on Monday 12th December from 10.30a.m. to 12.00p.m.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2023 - Every year Christian Churches take the opportunity to affirm those things which create a bond between them. This is emphasised with a shared service together in January. Details of the united service at the Burgate School are in the list of services. Children's activities and refreshments will be provided.

ADVANCE NOTICE –The popular Spring event Snowdrop Weekend will be on 11th and 12th February 2023 at St George's Church, Damerham.

CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR IN WESTERN DOWNLAND - It's our great joy to once again offer the celebration of Jesus' birth in our parish churches. Services for the lead up to Christmas and for the New Year are listed here and we will also continue to offer opportunities to join our services via livestream. Thank you for your support over this past year. All your friends in the churches of Western Downland wish you a blessed Christmas and a Joyful and Peaceful New Year.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

St Georges, Damerham	25 th October	Graham Dampney (Salisbury Crematorium)
All Saints, Martin	4 th November	Marilyn Taylor
St Leonards, Whitsbury	6 th November	Ian Elton (Interment of Ashes)
	17 th November	Minnie Lindsell

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 and Cathy Godber (01425) 650044)
Martin	Alistair Groom (01725) 519204 and Lizzie Fernie 01725 519542
Rockbourne	Patrick Thompson (01725) 518246
Whitsbury	Chris Harper (01725) 518324 and Chris Cobb-Smith (01725) 518313

Please send contributions for the next Courier to the Editor Arron Shutt (arron@ashutt.myzen.co.uk). The deadline is 31st December 2022.

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

THE COURIER

DECEMBER 2022 – JANUARY 2023

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

A Word from the Rector



Mistletoe at All Saint's Church, Martin

Photo: Arron Shutt

As many of you will now know, we received the sad news recently of the sudden and unexpected death of the Reverend Rob Eardley; a dear friend and welcome neighbour to so many of us across our churches and communities. Rob and Fran moved into Martin three years after I became Rector and he was a godsend; an answer to prayer and a much valued colleague to myself and later also to Nigel in our shared ministry here in Western Downland. Not only was Rob a wise head in so many ways, but he was also generous with his time and wholly dedicated to the life of our congregations and villages, and most especially to the community of Martin. Together with Fran he worked tirelessly and sacrificially for the good of all, and always with the greatest respect, good humour and concern for people's wellbeing. The news of his sudden death was deeply shocking to us, as I know it was even more so to Fran, to his children and grandchildren and to the wider family and his many friends in other parts. I can only say how profoundly grateful I am to have had one final opportunity to share with Rob in leading an act of prayer the Friday before he died. I know that your best wishes and prayers will be with Fran and her family in these difficult days. Of course, they are not the only ones to have suffered loss. There are others dealing with sorrows as our Registers reflect (see From the Registers) and our love and sympathy is extended to all those passing through times of bereavement, as it is with those who are going through periods of ill health, times of transition, or a move to new pastures, all of whom are experiencing different kinds of loss and adjustment. Life is a continuing journey, as God's people knew well. Whilst we may be rooted in ancient communities, in ancient church buildings and in liturgies born of ancient texts, we're all pilgrims of a sort, just passing through; custodians for a time, moving on in life to new and as yet undiscovered country. Through it all God promises that if we look with opened eyes, we will find that presence and peace which is born of God close at hand. Though Joseph and Mary suffered much anguish in the journey they made to Bethlehem, it was a journey ultimately made toward hope and joy, towards life born of God bursting from the womb; life generously offered on a cross and bursting once more with life for all out of a borrowed tomb. In a world where so many suffer pain through conflict, hunger and disease, it's an encouragement to know that God works to bless us, not to harm; to heal us and love us into eternity. It was this sure hope which inspired Rob in his extraordinary life, as it has been the hope of so many whose stories are written into the fabric of these communities, so many who have journeyed on from this life to the next. May he and they rest in peace and rise in glory. And on your own continuing journey wherever it is ultimately leading may you encounter a profoundly moving Christmas and a peaceful and hope-filled New Year.

Rev'd Les Player

NOT WHISKEY GALORE!, BUT MULLED WINE & CAROLS GALORE! – This year's Carols on the Green in Martin begins at 6.00p.m. on Thursday 15th December. If you haven't been to this event before, it's one for the Diary. Martin has long had the tradition of 'Carols on the Green' with mulled wine, hot dogs and mince pies (sometimes even roasted marshmallows on the brazier!). Wrap up warm, bring a torch and something to shake or rattle for a bit of musical percussion if the urge takes you. It'll be dark so no one will see who is singing and who isn't. It's a free event but donations to charity will be gratefully received.		DAMERHAM VILLAGE GET-TOGETHER - is on Saturday 10th December in Damerham Village Hall from noon until 3.00p.m. Good quality raffle prizes would be welcomed, and the lunch is a buffet-style Bring & Share. There will be soft drinks and tea and coffee, and mulled wine available. The Village photo albums will be available to peruse and bring back fond memories (or photos you might rather forget!)	
DAMERHAM CAROLS - Thursday 15th December from 5.00p.m. – 7.00p.m. There will be sausage rolls, mince pies and mulled wine, and Carols at Crossways Farm. Donations will be for St George's Church.		TAKE CARE - There are many other events in our communities leading up to Christmas. Please look out for advertising for opportunities to get together and mark this special season. And please take those simple steps which can help protect us all from ill health or accidents.	

DATES FOR THE DIARY	
25th January 2023 7.00p.m.	Martin PCC, Reads Farmhouse .
1st February 2023 2.00p.m.	Rockbourne PCC, Town End Gate, Rockbourne.
7th February 2023 7.00p.m.	Damerham PCC, Damerham Village Hall.
28th February 2023 6.30p.m.	Whitsbury PCC, Whitsbury Village Hall, Whitsbury.

CHRISTMAS EVE CHRISTINGLE – This year's Christingle celebration will be at 3p.m. at St. George's Church, in Damerham. However, there is even more than usual to do for services this year. So we are asking if you could please prepare and bring your ready-made Christingle(s) (as many as (as many as you need), and one spare to share. You can find details of how to make a Christingle here or use the QR code to the right.	
WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ABOUT? Interested in learning more? A group meets every other week to explore the Christian story more deeply together. You are most welcome to join them. Contact Nigel Cumming (01725) 518248 for more details.	

	
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FORTHCOMING CHURCH EVENTS	
Cancellation of Online Service – There will be no 30-minute Prayer & Reflection on Tuesday the 27th of December.	
On Christmas Morning - This year the Christmas morning services (at 9.45a.m. and 11a.m.) will be similar in form, being a simple All Age Service. However, the earlier service in Martin will be only around 30 minutes in length (whilst the one in Rockbourne will be its usual 45 minutes). There will be an opportunity for communion for anyone who wishes to remain immediately after each service has finished. Please choose the service which best suits your circumstances.	
Rockbourne Service of Lessons and Carols - Come and sing Christmas carols at St Andrew's Service of Lessons & Carols on Sunday 18 December at 6pm, followed by mulled wine and nibbles.	
	

ALL SAINTS PCC NOMINATED GOOD CAUSE	
For 2022, the All Saints Church PCC has selected to raise funds to assist Martin Club in the repair of its roof. You can find out how to donate to this good cause by contacting the church wardens Alistair Groom (01725) 519204 and Lizzie Fernie (01725) 519542. The Martin Club Roof Repair Appeal donations should be given within the collection at any service up to 31st December <u>at the latest</u> in the specially labelled envelopes available at All Saints.	

***** SERVICES DURING DECEMBER & JANUARY *****			
Post COVID - We are continuing Sunday services based largely in our parish Churches. We are livestreaming some physical services on Zoom denoted by three asterisks (***). These will be recorded and uploaded onto the Western Downland Churches YouTube channel so that those who cannot attend physical services can either watch live or the recorded programme later.			

4th December 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m.	2nd Sunday of Advent Martin - Parish Communion (CW1)*** Rockbourne - Sung Matins
11th December 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m.	3rd Sunday of Advent Whitsbury - Holy Communion (1662) Damerham - Parish Worship for Advent***
18th December 9.30a.m. 3.00p.m. 3.00p.m. 6.00p.m.	4th Sunday of Advent Damerham - Parish Communion Whitsbury - Nativity & Carol Service Martin - Nativity & Carol Service*** Rockbourne - A Service of Lessons & Carols
Tuesday 21st December 7.00p.m.	Damerham - Carol Service***

A QUICK HEALTH CHECK At Christmas more people are likely to come to some of our services, including some who are vulnerable. More people are also likely to catch bugs. Please help protect yourself and others by taking simple precautions, such as using hand gel. If you feel unwell, please consider staying at home.	
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2021 Nativity Scene in All Saints Church, Martin (Photo: Arron Shutt)	
24th December 3.00p.m. 11.15p.m. 11.15p.m.	CHRISTMAS EVE Damerham - Christingle*** Damerham - Christmas Eve Midnight Communion (Contemporary Language)*** Whitsbury- Christmas Eve Communion (Traditional Language)
25th December 9.45a.m. 11.00a.m.	CHRISTMAS DAY Martin - Holy Worship on Christmas Day Rockbourne - Holy Worship on Christmas Day***

1st January 11.00a.m.	1st Sunday of Christmas Rockbourne - Benefice Communion (Contemporary Language)***
Friday 6th January 9.30a.m.-10a.m.	The Epiphany (on Zoom) A short Liturgy for The Feast of the Epiphany
8th January 9.30a.m. 11.00am	The Baptism of Christ Whitsbury - Holy Communion (1662) Damerham- Parish Worship: The Baptism of Jesus***
15th January 9.30a.m. 11.00am	2nd Sunday of Epiphany Rockbourne - Sung Eucharist Martin - Parish Worship***
22nd January 9.30a.m. 10.30a.m.	3rd Sunday of Epiphany Damerham - Parish Communion (Contemporary) Burgate School - Local 'Churches Together' Unity Service
29th January 9.30am 11.00a.m.	4th Sunday of Epiphany Martin - Holy Communion (1662) Whitsbury - Parish Worship***