

HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR 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.

ST GEORGE'S, DAMERHAM SNOWDROP WEEKEND – The 11th and 12th of

February is our Snowdrop Weekend, with its offering of bargains, craft stalls, homemade refreshments and tasty cakes, and of course our wonderful snowdrop display (with a little help from the weather). This all takes place on the weekend of 11th -12th February from 12 noon to 4.00p.m.

WARM SPACES, GOOD FOOD – A reminder that several of our villages are hosting winter lunches and other community gatherings over the winter period to bring people together in warm spaces, for food and friendship. Through sponsorship of Damerham, Village Hall and Damerham Fair, a warming free winter Soup & Crumble Lunch is being offered to Damerham residents on Wednesday 15th February and Wednesday 15th March from 12 noon – 2.00p.m. In Martin Tea@3 has been extended to be offered on the 1st, 15th and 22nd February from 2.00p.m - 4.30p.m. in the Blandford Hall. In Whitsbury, the Winter Lunches continue in the Village Hall on the 13th of February and 13th of March (12.30p.m. - 2.00p.m.). Please contact Juliette Knibbs in advance to let her know you are hoping to come. Rockbourne also continues with its usual Winter Lunches in the Village Hall.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH MARTIN SPRING CLEAN will be happening on March 25th from 9.00a.m. to 11.30a.m. If you are interested in helping - Please contact Lizzie Fernie on (01725) 519542 or via email to lizziefernie@aol.com.

OUR NEXT EDITION OF THE COURIER – will contain details of plans for the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

All Saints, Martin	13 th December	The Reverend Rob Eardley
	13 th December	Marilyn Taylor (Interment of Ashes)

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 28th February 2023.

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

THE COURIER

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2023

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

A Word from the Rector

Most of us are shaped by what we see with our eyes. Knowing this, advertising agencies are expert at dressing, editing and lighting products in such a way that they look desirable to the eye. They can also look very different to the product you end up with. Jesus wanted people to look beyond what was apparent to the naked eye. For example, to see beyond the ugliness of the Cross, or the differences that caused people to discount others. There's a vast amount we can't see with the naked eye; things which are nonetheless vital to our thriving, from the air we breathe to the bonds of identity we share. There's much that we do not and may never understand but which we rely on. I'm fascinated by the technology which can map out the root system of a tree, and even how it functions and telescopes which reveal a density of stars invisible to the unaided eye. Many things appear unchanging and rigid, but are in reality - dynamic and delicate, sensitive to even small variations. The film 'Avatar' enlarges on this theme. In it tree root connects to tree root, and life form to life form so that everything is interdependent, and damage done to one wounds all. There's a sense in which we're all interconnected. We can see that the removal of a species, or its introduction, can radically alter an ecosystem and the removal of a tree from a canopy makes other trees vulnerable. Of course, the removal of a tree from a canopy also lets in light and space to encourage new life which is otherwise choked out. It's a complex picture. Much of our own culture has been founded on a Christian narrative which has long since been set aside by many of us or is not our inherited story. Yet its impact continues to shape our lives, our healthcare and education systems, forms of justice and agencies for charity, concepts of human dignity and collective accountabilities. Apparently rigid and unchanging, I would argue that the Church is in fact dynamic and vitally alive, and that it has largely been a force for good (with some very visible and hugely painful exceptions). The Church has grown to provide a common framework to celebrate our personal and collective joys, to mark our achievements and to comfort our sorrows; to treasure, challenge, interpret and retell our local and global stories and to effect profound change in our society. Today our churches continue to engage, nourish, support, safeguard, comfort. Much of this is unseen by most of us. And it's coming under pressure as fewer people play their part. Perhaps there's a case for saying that some things should die in order that new things flourish. But as fewer people participate the system we rely on - that we assume will always be there - is under threat. Although they give generously of time and talent, our small congregations of regular attenders are more limited by age and health circumstances. What unforeseen impacts might the absence of these congregations have on our wider community life? Would it expose other parts of our communities to increased pressure and leave some, perhaps many, more vulnerable? Will we wake up one day to discover a collective loss because we failed to play our part to help sustain living churches, with unforeseen ramifications for us all? I'll write more about this later in the year, but for now - whilst thanking the many of you who already play apart - I simply ask whether YOU are willing to invest time and talent to ensure a thriving, continuing Church presence in our communities for the long-term?

Rev'd Les Player

HUMBLE LUNCH 2023 – For over 50 years churches across the Diocese of Salisbury have raised funds to support communities in the Islamic Republic of Sudan and in South Sudan with vital medical supplies. Our aim in Western Downland is to raise at least £100 through this simple soup meal. Please join us on Wednesday 22nd February 12.00p.m. - 1.30p.m. at Damerham Village Hall to make your donation and enjoy a delicious bowl or two of soup. Or have your own version of a Humble Lunch and donate the money you might have spent - and any additional donation you wish to give - to this important cause via: Lloyds Bank (Salisbury Branch) sort code 30-97-41, Account no.00007237 (name: Salisbury DBF), marking your donation: 'Medical Link Fund'.

SERVICE OF ASHING FOR BEGINNING OF LENT

This traditional act to mark the beginning of the season of Lent takes place on Wednesday 22nd February in All Saints Church, Martin and will take the form of a shortened half-hour liturgy beginning at 7.00p.m.

YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU! - Elections will take place in our parishes in April and early May for church council posts. Check the next Courier or your church or village noticeboard in late March for details of vacancies and dates for meetings. To find out more about how you can participate (including qualifying criteria) or if you would like to join the Church electoral roll - Please speak to a member of your Church Council or the Rector. All members of the church electoral roll who meet the qualifying criteria can vote and stand for office. Vacancies exist.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- 1st February 2023 2.00p.m.** Rockbourne PCC, Town End Gate, Rockbourne.
- 7th February 2023 7.00p.m.** Damerham PCC, Damerham Village Hall.
- 15th February 2023 7.00p.m.** Deanery Synod, Wilton Community Centre
- 28th February 2023 6.30p.m.** Whitsbury PCC, Whitsbury Village Hall, Whitsbury.
- 8th March 2023 7.30p.m.** Royal British Legion Spring Meeting.

Please watch out for Annual Church Meeting dates, which are likely to fall in April or early May.

TUESDAY REFLECTION AND PRAYER

We meet each Tuesday at 9.30a.m. using a simple structure, offering a 25-minute space for reflection and prayer, based around the daily scripture reading, a little liturgy and a brief thought.

To join us click here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87190762729>
 Meeting ID: 871 9076 2729 Passcode: 325626

FORTHCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

Night Prayers also known as Compline, take place weekly on Zoom throughout the season of Lent. All are welcome to any or all these 30-minute framework of quiet music for reflection, and simple times of prayer and readings. Join us on any of the following dates at 7.00p.m. Please note that days vary week by week - Thursday 2nd, Tuesday 7th, Tuesday 14th, Wednesday 22nd and Wednesday 29th March. To join click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84096333866> Meeting ID: 840 9633 3866 Passcode: 415463

FUTURE DATES - Our Holy Week and Easter Services will include services on Palm Sunday (Sunday 2nd April), Maundy Thursday (6th April), Good Friday (7th April) and Easter Day (Sunday 9th April). Full details will be in the next edition of the Courier.

ALL SAINTS PCC NOMINATED CHARITY 2023

If you would like to propose a charity or charitable good cause which you would like considered for selection as All Saints Martin's Nominated Charity for 2023 - Please provide the organisation's name and preferably some information about it to any member of the PCC before the Annual Meeting or come in person to propose it. The PCC will consider all candidates and make a final selection at its early summer meeting.

***** **SERVICES DURING FEBRUARY & MARCH** *****

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.**

- 29th January** **4th Sunday of Epiphany**
 9.30am Martin - Holy Communion (1662)
 11.00a.m. Whitsbury - Parish Worship***
- Thursday 2nd February**
 9.30a.m. A short Liturgy to mark Candlemas (on Zoom)
- 5th February** **3rd Sunday before Lent - Septuagesima**
 9.30a.m. Damerham - Parish Communion***
 11.00a.m. Rockbourne – Choral Matins
- 12th February** **2nd Sunday before Lent - Sexagesima**
 9.30a.m. Whitsbury - Holy Communion (1662)
 11.00am Martin – All Age Worship***
- 19th February** **Sunday next before Lent - Quinquagesima**
 9.30a.m. Rockbourne - Sung Eucharist
 11.00am Damerham – Parish Worship***
- Wednesday 22nd February**
 12p.m.-1.30p.m. Damerham Village Hall – Humble Lunch (Sudan)
 7.00p.m. Martin – Ash Wednesday Service of Ashing
- 26th February** **1st Sunday in Lent**
 9.30a.m. Damerham – Parish Communion
 11.00a.m. Whitsbury – Parish Worship***



Swans & Flood, St. George's Church, Damerham (Photo: Arron Shutt)

- Thursday 2nd March**
 7.00p.m. Zoom – Night Prayers (Compline)
- 5th March** **2nd Sunday in Lent**
 9.30a.m. Martin - Parish Communion***
 11.00a.m. Rockbourne - Choral Matins
- Tuesday 7th March**
 7.00p.m. Zoom – Night Prayers (Compline)
- 12th March** **3rd Sunday in Lent**
 9.30a.m. Whitsbury - Holy Communion (1662)
 11.00a.m. Damerham - Parish Worship***

- Tuesday 14th March**
 7.00p.m. Zoom – Night Prayers (Compline)
- 19th March** **4th Sunday in Lent - Mothering Sunday**
 9.30a.m. Rockbourne - Parish Communion
 11.00a.m. Martin - All Age Worship for Mothering Sunday***
- Wednesday 22nd March**
 7.00p.m. Zoom – Night Prayers (Compline)
- 26th March** **5th Sunday in Lent - Passiontide Begins**
 9.30a.m. Damerham - Parish Communion***
 11.00a.m. Whitsbury - Parish Worship
 5.00p.m. Martin - Spring Evensong
- Wednesday 29th March**
 7.00p.m. Zoom – Night Prayers (Compline)
- 2nd April** **Palm Sunday - Holy Week Begins**
 9.30a.m. Martin – All Age Worship***
 11.00am Rockbourne – Choral Matins