

HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR 2025!

You can find contact details/information on our website <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/34-370BX/>. We also circulate the Courier digitally; if you would like a digital copy, please contact the Editor. Since January 1st, we have returned to the common cup during parish communion. We will continue to offer opportunities to join services via livestream (for the vulnerable) for the foreseeable future.

ST GEORGE'S, DAMERHAM SNOWDROP WEEKEND – Our popular Snowdrop Weekend Event is on the 8th and 9th of February 2025. The event will run from 10.00a.m. to 4.00p.m. with refreshments being served from 10.30a.m to 15.30p.m. each day. We also have our usual offering of bargains, craft stalls, homemade refreshments and tasty cakes, and of course our wonderful snowdrop display (with a little help from the weather). Toilet facilities are also available. We would like to request donations of items for sale such as books, good quality bric-a-brac (i.e. not unsaleable) plus cakes (not buns) and produce (preserves etc). We are looking for volunteers to help out in the kitchen in each of the two shifts each day. If people could spare some time, it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact John/Cathy on catherine.godber50@gmail.com.

CONGRATULATIONS... to the Parishes of the Knowlton Circle (which includes Cranborne, Gussage All Saints, Woodlands, Wimborne St Giles and Edmonsham) and to the Mayhew family, as Angus (formerly a member of Martin Parish) is licensed as their Rector on Wednesday the 12th March. **ALL SAINTS NOMINATED CHARITY 2025** - Thank you to all who donated to the work of Salisbury Street Pastors as part of our Nominated Charity in 2024. If you would like to propose a charity or charitable good cause for the All Saints Nominated Charity 2025 please provide the organisation's name and some BRIEF information to a member of the PCC before its Annual Meeting on 29th April, or come in person to propose it. The PCC will consider candidates and make a final selection at its summer meeting. A local link or a connection through someone local can be valuable.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms

All Saints, Martin	1 st December 2024	George Mullens
St George's, Damerham	8 th December 2024	Harry Murphy

Marriages

St George's, Damerham	14 th December 2024	Tamara Giles & Graeme Robinson
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Funerals

All Saints, Martin	2 nd January 2025	Fred Symes
	10 th January 2025	Reg Clough
St Andrew's, Rockbourne	11 th December 2024	Sarah Morgan
In Memoriam	10 th December 2024	David Shutt

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 (Martin Alt. contact) 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 2025.

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

THE COURIER


FEBRUARY – MARCH 2025

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few...”

This is my 22nd year in Western Downland and the 30th anniversary of my ordination. A funeral director recently told me there are very few priests today who've been in parishes as long. But historically I'm not the longest serving rector. Each of our churches has a record of past Rectors; some served over 40 years. Yet any Rector understands that their ministry eventually comes to an end. Whilst I'm not at that stage it's important for churches and communities to be aware of the shifting patterns which affect Church and society. In the early 20th century there were 24,000 priests in the Church of England and each of our parishes had its own. Today there are around 7,000 priests and it's estimated that by 2030 that number may be as low as 5,500. Yet the Church still does so much. I had my busiest Christmas for years, as nearly 1,500 worshippers and visitors attended services, funerals, weddings, baptisms and other seasonal events. That probably compares well with attendances in 1911. But the hard reality is that congregations on any 'normal' Sunday are smaller than they were and are made up largely of older people. Without fresh engagement - your engagement - the future of our Churches is uncertain. Churches do close (the United Reformed Church in Fordingbridge recently shut its doors). I know many of you care deeply about your local church. But at present it is mainly the same people who read Bible lessons on a Sunday who also run fundraising events, oversee care for our church buildings and churchyards and make up our Church Councils. Despite this our Churches play a powerful role in our communities and in wider society from Remembrance Sunday to Harvest Festival, from Christmas to Easter, as well providing a place for marriage and a place to be laid to rest; support to those who grieve and who celebrate new life. We play an active role in our local School, and care for beautiful, historically significant Church buildings. We try to work in partnership in the community and raise charitable awareness and funds for a diverse range of organisations. We seek to offer sensitive care including visiting the sick and those in hospital. Even in something as basic as house prices I'm told that open and active churches add value. Please play a part in your local Church and safeguard it. Commit to coming one extra Sunday a year. Or to going on the coffee rota, or joining a churchyard working party. Consider making a regular contribution to meet the rising costs of keeping our churches open (in our parishes annual costs range between £19,000 & £27,000, besides the many tens of thousands of pounds it costs to repair and renew church buildings). Or apply to come on your local Church Council. There's much that can be achieved with willing hands and hearts. And no good thing goes unseen by the One who calls us to give a cup of cold water to the thirsty; a shoulder to ease the burden of others. The shape of ministry is very likely to change when my time here ends. A new ministry will be shaped by the person who follows (who will perhaps have additional duties) and more importantly by the people of our communities and congregations. We all have a part to play. As St Paul writes: 'We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: in prophecy, in faith; in ministering; in teaching; in encouraging; in giving, in generosity; in leading, in energy, in compassion, in cheerfulness. (Romans, ch.12 v.5 onwards; paraphrased) Please invest in your local Church which seeks to invest in you. And safeguard our shared future.

Rev'd Les Player

<p>COMPLINE - This Lent Night Prayers also known as Compline will be online. All are welcome to any or all of these 30-minute opportunities for quiet reflection shaped by simple prayers, music and readings. Join us on any of the dates (Tuesday 11th March, Thursday 20th and Wednesday 26th March, Thursday 3rd April and Wednesday 9th April) at 7.00p.m. Please note that days vary week by week.</p>	<p>DATES FOR THE DIARY</p>		<p>FORTHCOMING CHURCH EVENTS</p>	
<p>ELECTORAL ROLL - All existing members of the Church Electoral Roll and all who would like to join the Electoral roll of their local Church need to complete an Application Form available from their electoral roll officer. These are: (1) Rosemary Nicklen in Damerham, (2) Jenny Gaillard in Martin and (3) Kathy Smith in Rockbourne. For Whitsbury, the officer responsible is TBC. Please speak to a churchwarden who can direct you to your local Electoral Roll Officer.</p>	<p>12th February 2025 6.30p.m. Chalke Deanery Synod (venue TBC) 4th March 2025 7.30p.m. Royal British Legion Spring Meeting, Committee Room, Damerham Village Hall 2nd April 2025 7.30p.m. (7.00p.m. for PCC members) Rockbourne Church Annual Meeting, Rockbourne Village Hall 7th April 2025 7.30p.m. (7.00p.m. for PCC members) Whitsbury Church Annual Meeting Whitsbury Village Hall 29th April 2025 7.30p.m. (7.00p.m. for PCC members) Martin Church Annual Meeting, in All Saints Church, Martin 30th April 2025 7.30p.m. (7.00p.m. for PCC members) Damerham Church Annual Meeting, Damerham Village Hall</p>		<p>Service of Ashing at the Start of Lent - This traditional act to mark the beginning of the season of Lent this year falls on Wednesday 5th March 10.00a.m at St. George's Church, Damerham. Do join us. Spring Evensong - For those who value the rhythm and richness of the Book of Common Prayer, there is a Spring Evensong at St Leonard's Church, Whitsbury on Sunday 30th March at 5.00p.m. Humble Lunch 2025 - There is a Humble Lunch run by St George's Church on the 5th March at 12.00p.m. for the Sudan Medical link. This lunch is at Damerham Village Hall. Lenten lunches will also be held in Rockbourne. These will commence at The Old Rectory on the 12th March and the dates/times for subsequent lunches are TBA.</p>	
<p>DAMERHAM & WESTERN DOWNLAND BRANCH - ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  Your flourishing local RBL branch is keen to attract new members from Damerham and beyond, and you are invited to join us. Our purpose is to contribute to the RBL's invaluable work of supporting servicepersons, veterans and their families when they are in need, throughout their lives. Our branch not only fundraises, but also enjoys a good social programme with monthly pub gatherings and occasional away-day visits. You don't have to be ex-Services to join us - anyone can. For more detail visit www.britishlegion.org.uk or email Branch Chairman Mike Richardson at: rbdamerham.chmn@btinternet.com.</p>	<p>THE LENT BIBLE COURSE – Have you ever wished you understood the Bible better? The Bible Society's Bible Course is being offered in homes by our four Western Downland churches during Lent bringing fresh understanding and insights. It covers topics ranging from subjects such as 'The covenant with Abraham' to 'Are the Gospels reliable?' and is accompanied by a study booklet. HOMEGROUP REGROUPS! – Home Group comes together again on 30th January (7.00p.m.-9.00p.m.) meeting at Rory Smith's house (Glendale, SP6 1QB). We shall begin studying the gospel according to John and looking how it takes a very different approach from the other three gospel writers to the life of Jesus. Everyone welcome, do come and join us! For more information on both these items contact nigelpcumming@gmail.com or (01725) 518248</p>		<p>JOB VACANCY - We are seeking a part-time administration assistant to provide excellent support to our Rector, the priest in charge of the parish churches of Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and Whitsbury – known as the Benefice of Western Downland. The role includes a variety of administrative tasks, including dealing with emails and telephone calls, diary management, and liaison with a number of stakeholders including parish residents, church personnel and local contractors. Hours are expected to be 7-10 hours per week, but this may vary from week to week. The role would chiefly be home-based, but some local travel will be needed, so the successful applicant would preferably be a driver with car living within a five-mile radius of the four villages. For further information or to apply, please contact: Harriet Roe (01725) 519220 / harriet_tazzi@hotmail.com. We would appreciate applications or expressions of interest by Friday 14 February.</p>	
<p>***** SERVICES DURING FEBRUARY & MARCH *****</p> <p>Sunday services continue based largely in person in our parish Churches. We are livestreaming some physical services on Zoom denoted by three asterisks (***) in the service listing below.</p>				
<p>26th January 9.30a.m. 11.00am 2nd February 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 9th February 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 16th February 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 23rd February 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m.</p>	<p>3rd Sunday of Epiphany Damerham - Parish Communion Whitsbury- Parish Worship***</p> <p>The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) Martin – Parish Communion (CW1)*** Rockbourne – Choral Matins</p> <p>4th Sunday before Lent Whitsbury – Holy Communion (1662) Martin – All Age Worship***</p> <p>3rd Sunday before Lent (Septuagesima) Rockbourne – Sung Eucharist (CW1) Damerham – Parish Worship***</p> <p>2nd Sunday before Lent (Sexagesima) Damerham – Parish Communion (CW1) Whitsbury – Parish Worship***</p>	<p>9th March 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 16th March 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 23rd March 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m. 30th March 11.00a.m. 5.00p.m. 6th April 9.30a.m. 11.00a.m.</p> <p>1st Sunday of Lent Whitsbury – Holy Communion (1662) Damerham – All Age Service: Lead us not into temptation***</p> <p>2nd Sunday of Lent Rockbourne – Sung Eucharist (CW1) Martin – Parish Worship***</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Lent Martin – Parish Communion (CW1) Whitsbury – Parish Worship***</p> <p>4th Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday) Rockbourne – All Age Worship & Shortened Communion*** Whitsbury – Spring Evensong</p> <p>5th Sunday of Lent (Passiontide begins) Damerham – Parish Communion (CW1)*** Rockbourne – Choral Matins</p>		