

ARE YOU READY FOR A WARM BRITISH SUMMER?

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.

A WARM WELCOME – We have some new people who are now officially part of the Western Downland Family of Churches. The first is Rory Smith who is joining Patrick Thomson as Churchwarden again for St. Andrew's Church, Rockbourne. The other new addition is our new Benefice Team Administrator Bernice Churchill (also known as "B") who recently took up her post. She will be assisting Les with the substantial administration and communications with stakeholders, contractors and laypersons, diary management and helping everything run smoothly so Les can focus on his ministry duties. Sadly, Cathy Godber is standing down as Churchwarden for St. George's Damerham after many years in the role. We hope that you will join us in welcoming our new helpers in their new roles and give thanks to Cathy for her long service helping set up the services and refreshments at Damerham.

WANTED! – KITCHEN STAFF FOR SUNDAY AFTERNOONS IN AUGUST FOR CREAM TEAS - St George's Church holds Cream Teas by the River on every Sunday afternoon in August from 2.00p.m. to 4.30p.m. This event is a very important fundraiser for the Church and also a popular social event. Our willing band of volunteers are again a year older and fewer this year. We would appreciate some extra help. Your help for just one afternoon will go a long way for the survival of this popular event. Call 01425 65004 or email catherine.godber50@gmail.com for how you can help.

CUIEBET LINK - We have a lively link with the South Sudanese communities and churches in Cuiebet, helping to extend primary education and healthcare creating opportunities for the communities to flourish, (such as through the provision of rough terrain bicycles), funding the training clergy and lay leaders including women, and enhance security in an unstable country. Join us to hear Rory Smith deliver an update and news from the most recent visit to Cuiebet and help us help them by making a donation on Sunday 1st June (9.30a.m. from All Saints Martin, and St Andrew's Rockbourne at 11.00a.m.).

AND FINALLY - A huge thank you to the Rose & Thistle who raised £424 for St Andrew's, Rockbourne through a raffle at their recent Quiz Night!

FROM THE REGISTERS

Service of Dedication & Prayer following a Marriage

St George's Damerham	24 th May	William Prior & Thomas Shepherd
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Funerals

St George's Damerham	10 th April	Amanda Ffiske (Committal) Salisbury Crematorium
St George's Damerham	2 nd May	Amanda Ffiske (Service of Thanksgiving)
St Leonard's Whitsbury	30 th May	Georgina Hay

NB. 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 matters regarding benefice administration support, please contact the Western Downland Team Administrator (Bernice Churchill) on infowdchurches@gmail.com or (01725) 518816.

For information concerning individual parishes including matters of a general nature, please contact the Churchwarden: -

Damerham	John Godber (01425) 650044
Martin	Alistair Groom (01725) 519204 and Lizzie Fernie (01725) 519542
Rockbourne	Patrick Thompson (01725) 518246 and Rory Smith (01725) 518215
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 30th June 2025.

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

THE COURIER

JUNE – JULY 2025

A Newsletter for the Communities of the Western Downland

A Word from the Rector

The Ten Commandments are rather out of fashion these days. In a seemingly liberated society maybe we're more relaxed about sex, and perhaps in a less religious society we care less about offence caused by non-attendance at Sunday worship. But I'm pretty sure most of us still regard murder as wrong and none of us wants to be at the wrong end of theft. We can't pick and choose; the commandments come as a set. So when the Ten Commandments demand that we not 'bear false testimony against our neighbour' (Exodus 20v10) we should sit up and listen. Over the week of commemorations for the 80th anniversary of VE Day I watched the film, *Lee*, which tells the story of Vogue photographer Lee Miller, regarded as one of the most significant photographers of the Second World War, who captured its dreadful, gritty reality, including the Nazi death camps. In the film her character was asked how her generation could have allowed Nazism to rise unchallenged, and responded by saying that it was such a gradual advance that it went largely unnoticed, because people were absorbed in their own lives, treated Hitler as a something of a joke and assumed that his policies wouldn't touch their liberated 1930s lives. Many of those same people later suffered dreadfully. What's sadly true is that 80 years on we face threats to our way of life no less significant.

Authoritarian rulers have - or have attempted to - abolish democratic structures and protections around the globe, raping the earth of its natural resources, destroying eco-systems and disrupting weather patterns and threatening, invading or relentlessly attacking independent nation-states with only muted criticism from the wider international community. From Ukraine and Gaza to Darfur and the Uighur people populations face ever more brazen repressive activity against them. Indiscriminate (or perhaps deliberate) targeting of civilians, forced sterilisations, murderous persecutions, racial and tribally motivated violence all play out in our news bulletins. The same tendencies seen abroad are also present in our own communities, fuelled by irresponsible politicians and social-media misinformation. In order to combat actions which threaten the foundations of our societies - foundations which hundreds of thousands of our citizens died to defend and preserve on the battlefields of Normandy and in the blitzed centres of our cities - the very first thing we must do is name evil for what it is. There is an urgent need right now to take a stand across our differences and varieties and collectively call out, resist and debunk baseless blame and callous harm whether on the international stage or in our own locality.

Jesus said that the 10 commandments could be encapsulated in a single commandment: 'Love God with every fibre of your being'. But, without pausing for breath Jesus continued 'And love your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus knew that without earthing what it means to love God in our human interactions it would remain forever divorced from real life. The only way to demonstrate true devotion to and for God is to be committed to one another. To love our neighbour, wherever they are, whatever the colour of their skin or their creed, whatever their origin or way of life, as God loves us. To love someone is not to condone their actions or share their views. It may at times need us to speak hard truths, or even to take a stand against them. But it makes their life sacred, worthy of our best efforts. And if someone should become despotic or tyrannical, to oppose them not hatefully or carelessly, but with the clear goal - as our forbears did; as Jesus did - to safeguard liberty and justice, truth and peace.

Rev'd Les Player

<p>DAMERHAM & WESTERN DOWNLAND BRANCH – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION</p> <p>Your local branch of the RBL is always keen to attract new members and you don't have to have served in the Armed Forces - all are welcome. We hold a friendly, monthly pub social, occasional branch outings to places of interest and a number of fundraising events during the year. Come and join us in supporting serving and retired Armed Forces members and their families who are in need. Visit: www.britishlegion.org.uk for details, or email Mike Richardson at: rbl damerham.chmn@btinternet.com.</p>	<p>DATES FOR THE DIARY</p> <p>1st June 9.30a.m and 11.00a.m. 17th June 6.30.p.m. for 6.45p.m. start 21st June 12.30p.m. to 4.00p.m. 8th July 6.00p.m.</p> <p>Cuiebet Sunday (Chalke - South Sudan Partnership) Chalke Deanery Synod, Bishopstone Village Hall Martin Village Fete, Martin Recreation Ground Combined PCC Tuesday Western Downland School, Rockbourne (Junior Site). Damerham Fair & Horticultural Show, Damerham Sports Field</p> <p>26th July 2025</p>	<p>FORTHCOMING CHURCH EVENTS</p> <p>Ascension Day Service and Bacon Breakfast – This year will be held on Thursday 29th May at 9.00a.m.at Glendale (the home of Rory Smith) in Rockbourne. This will be an outdoor event (weather permitting). All are welcome where we celebrate Jesus ascending to be with his heavenly father and breakfast will be provided!</p> <p>Pentecost Sunday (also known as Whitsunday) is on Sunday 8th June and we shall be marking this special day at Rockbourne and an All-Age Worship at St George's Damerham at 11.00a.m.</p> <p>Songs of Praise - A Summer Songs of Praise is planned to take place at All Saints Church, Martin on Sunday 29th June (11.00a.m.). If you have a favourite hymn or worship song, do get in touch and we'll include as many as we can. And please do come along and join us for a great celebration.</p> <p>Thy Kingdom Come - An opportunity to pray that the message of hope at the heart of the Christian story may be shared more widely takes place each year under the title 'Thy Kingdom Come'. This year, as well as on Ascension Day itself, and at our Sunday services between Ascension and Pentecost, there will be opportunities to mark this season in our online Tuesday Prayers on Tuesday 3rd June). Other opportunities will appear in the weekly update.</p> <p>Sea Sunday – Please join us on Sunday 13th July at 11.00a.m. at St George's Church, Damerham, to mark Sea Sunday as we recognise the contribution of seafarers to our lives and recognise the dangers to those who work on the sea.</p>
<p>TUESDAY REFLECTION AND PRAYER – Can you offer God half an hour? 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: To join us: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87190762729 Meeting ID: 871 9076 2729</p>	<p>SOME FEEDBACK ON OUR HOMEGROUPS</p> <p>'I wish we'd had this when we were teenagers'.</p> <p>That was the reaction from one of the three home groups studying the recent course on the Bible. Enthusiasm for it was universal!</p> <p>I don't understand the Lord's prayer!</p> <p>We've said it thousands of times but what does it really mean? Help is at hand as the groups will be looking to find the real meaning in the prayer over the summer.</p> <p>What was it like to be in Rome at the time of St Paul?</p> <p>In September we'll be studying Paul's letter to the church there and see how its challenges reflect our own.</p> <p>If you'd like more details of home groups, please contact Michael and Isabel King (519383), Rory Smith (518215) or Nigel Cumming (518248).</p>	
<p>MARTIN VILLAGE FÊTE – Martin is having a Village Fête this year on Saturday the 21st of June on the Martin Recreation Ground from 12.30p.m. to 4.00p.m. There will be Live Music, a Fun Dog Show, Games, Stalls, Face Painting, BBQ, Bar, Refreshments and more!</p> <p>The event is cash only (so don't forget to bring some) and all proceeds will be to good causes and charities. Parking will be limited up Townsend Lane, so please be respectful if parking elsewhere in Martin Village. For information email MartinVillageFete@gmail.com.</p>		
<p>***** SERVICES DURING JUNE & JULY *****</p>		
<p>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 (***) in the service listing below.</p>		
<p>Thursday 29th May : Ascension Day 9.00a.m. Glendale - Ascension Communion & Bacon Breakfast</p> <p>1st June 9.30a.m. 7th Sunday of Easter – Cuiebet/South Sudan Martin – Parish Communion for Cuiebet Sunday***</p> <p>11.00a.m. Rockbourne – Choral Matins for Cuiebet Sunday</p> <p>8th June 9.30a.m. Day of Pentecost - Whitsunday Whitsbury – Holy Communion (1662) 11.00a.m. Damerham – All Age Worship : Pentecost***</p> <p>15th June 9.30a.m. Trinity Sunday Rockbourne – Sung Eucharist (CW1) 11.00a.m. Martin – Parish Worship***</p> <p>22nd June 9.30a.m. 1st Sunday after Trinity Damerham – Parish Communion (Contemporary)***</p> <p>11.00a.m. Rockbourne – Parish Communion and Holy Baptism</p>	<div data-bbox="969 991 1249 1201" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>A view through St Leonard's Church, Whitsbury (Photo: Arron Shutt)</p> <p>29th June 9.30a.m. 2nd Sunday after Trinity : Peter & Paul, Apostles Whitsbury - Parish Communion (CW1) 11.00a.m. Martin – Summer Songs of Praise***</p> <p>6th July 9.30a.m. 3rd Sunday after Trinity Martin – Parish Communion (CW1)*** 11.00a.m. Rockbourne – Choral Matins</p> <p>13th July 9.30a.m. 4th Sunday after Trinity Whitsbury – Holy Communion (1662) 11.00a.m. Damerham – All Age Worship : Sea Sunday***</p>	<p>20th July 9.30a.m. 5th Sunday after Trinity 11.00a.m. Rockbourne - Parish Communion (CW1) Martin – Parish Worship***</p> <p>27th July 9.30a.m. 6th Sunday of Easter 11.00a.m. Damerham – Parish Communion (CW1) Whitsbury – Parish Worship***</p> <p>3rd August 9.30a.m. 7th Sunday after Trinity 11.00a.m. Martin – Parish Communion (CW1)*** Rockbourne – Morning Prayer (CW1)</p> <p>10th August 9.30a.m. 8th Sunday after Trinity 11.00a.m. Whitsbury – Holy Communion (1662) Damerham – All Age Worship***</p> <p>17th August 9.30a.m. 9th Sunday after Trinity 11.00a.m. Rockbourne – Parish Communion (CW1) Martin – Parish Worship***</p>