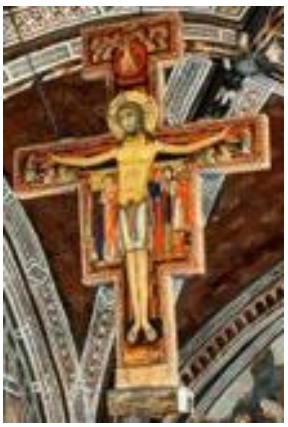
Dover Town Team Ministry
Benefice News
November 2026

Fr Seb writes…

Back in early September I had the special experience of spending a few days in Assisi. It was my second time there as I first travelled to Assisi, to experience the home of St Francis and St Clare, before my ordination to the diaconate. Having now begun in my role as Team Vicar in Dover, it felt like a good time to re-discover the spiritual charm and beauty of this holy place.

Assisi is a small medieval town where faith and rich Franciscan devotion pour out of every corner. Being so spiritually rich a pilgrim can almost feel slightly lost at first in knowing where to begin, yet during each visit I found myself captivated by that same anchor of Franciscan spirituality: the Cross of San Damiano.



The original San Damiano Cross, now housed in the Basilica of St Clare, Assisi.

The Cross of San Damiano was with me a long time before I ever knew what it was. When I was Confirmed at the age of fourteen the Vicar Fr Brett gave all the Confirmation candidates a gift of a small San Damiano Crucifix, which has remained close to me ever since. The San Damiano Cross is in the tradition of Syrian-influenced 12th century iconography, and the piercing yet serene gaze of Christ directly towards the viewer is gripping. If you gaze back at the image of the face of Christ that gazes at you it is impossible not to become utterly transfixed in love and devotion.

The original story goes something like this: Around 1205 a rather lost and searching Francis found himself entering the crumbling church of San Damiano, just outside of Assisi. Over the abandoned altar hung the famous Cross, and gazing in prayer upon the image of Christ Crucified, Francis heard the tender voice of Jesus say: 'Francis, don't you see that my house is being destroyed? Go, then, and rebuild it for me.'

This conversion experience began for Francis the lifelong task of discovering his true vocation in Christ. To commemorate the day, Francis later composed a short 'Prayer Before a Crucifix':

Most High, glorious God: enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord – that I may carry out Your holy and true command.

Perhaps this is why the Cross of San Damiano continues to speak so powerfully across the centuries. St Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians: *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Benefice Prayers

Loving God,
we thank you that Jesus Christ is the true Shepherd of our church, faithful in every season. Grant wisdom and strength to our churchwardens, PCCs, ministers and leaders during this interregnum. Keep us united in heart and mind, faithfully shining your light in our community. In your perfect timing, bring us a shepherd after your own heart – to minister alongside us with wisdom and grace. Prepare their heart as you prepare ours for the journey ahead. Amen.

A Prayer for our interregnum

God of life,
As we see the power of your love in creation to reconcile and restore, help us listen to your plans for us and to desire growth in numbers and faithfulness.
By the power of your Holy Spirit remove our apathy and increase our trust in you to build your church.
As a Benefice may we: come together in unity, deepen our faith, and grow in understanding of one another.
As your church may we be emboldened to reach out together, through words and actions. Help us continue to serve those around us, share the joy of knowing you and the hope of eternal life. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

Benefice Prayer for Growth

For Francis, the cross was not simply an image to admire, but an invitation to respond. Christ's words, "Go and rebuild my Church", became a calling to a life transformed by the love of God. And perhaps that same invitation is extended to each of us. We may not be called to rebuild a crumbling chapel, but we are all called to help build up Christ's Church: through kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and quiet acts of love.



Sitting before that same cross in Assisi, I was reminded that the face of Christ is not merely something to gaze upon, but someone who gazes upon us in love. The question is whether we are willing to meet that gaze, to listen for his voice, and to allow him to show us what needs rebuilding in our own lives and in the world around us.

Seb, Team Vicar

Through the week across our Churches

MONDAYS:

Morning Prayer 9.30am at **St Martin's church** meeting in the vestry.

TUESDAYS:

Meditation & Taizé Chanting 9am-10am at **St Andrew's Buckland**

Little Adventurers 9am-12noon at **St Martin's Dover** come & go whenever suits with the little ones (term time)

CAMEO 2.30-3.30pm at **St Martin's Dover C**ome **A**nd **M**eet **E**ach **O**ther! weekly except the 1st Tues of the month.

WEDNESDAYS:

Holy Communion – 10am at **St Mary's** with chat & refreshments afterwards

Paws for Thought 4-5pm at **St Andrew's Buckland,** church is open for anyone to pop in for a chat or to have a quiet moment to rest and reflect.

FRIDAYS:

Service of the Litany - 9.30am at **Charlton Church**, prayers and discussion on bible passage

Little Lambs – 9.30-11.45am (term time) at **St Mary's**– age range is from birth up to starting primary school age

Sunday Services across our Churches

	St Mary the Virgin, Dover 10.45am	**St Peter & St Paul Charlton** 8am (HC) & 9.30am	**St Martin, Dover** 10.30am	**St Andrew Buckland-in-Dover** 10.30am
1st	Holy Communion (Rev Trish)	8am & 9.30am Parish Mass (Rev Claire)	Morning Worship (Wayne & Ben) 6pm Connect (Local team)	Parish Eucharist (Rev Seb)
8th	Holy Communion (Rev Angie)	8am & 9.30am Parish Mass (Rev Graham)	Holy Communion (Rev Claire) 4pm Bubble Church (Benefice team)	Morning Prayer w Act of Remembrance (Nigel)
15th	Holy Communion (Rev Seb w Chris)	8am & 9.30am Parish Mass (Rev Seb)	Morning Worship (Ben & Malcolm)	Parish Eucharist (Rev Graham)
22nd	Family Communion (Rev Seb) 6pm Evensong (Rev Seb)	8am & 9.30am Parish Mass (Rev Claire)	Holy Communion (Rev Graham) 4pm Bubble Church (Benefice team)	Morning Prayer (Anne & Nigel)
29th	Holy Communion (Rev Seb)	8am Parish Mass (Rev Seb) The Journey (Alistair, Chris, & Richard)	Morning Worship (Malcolm & Wayne)	Parish Eucharist (Rev Claire)

REMINDER for parish contacts to send any events for inclusion to nigelcollins60@gmail.com by the 2nd Sunday of the month.



The Farwell service for Revd Melissa on Sunday 25th October was a joyful celebration of her ministry alongside us despite the sadness of her leaving. Charlton church was packed with friends and well-wishers. Melissa is to be licensed as Priest in Charge of Renhold Parish on 25th November (this is the date that we officially become vacant). This phot is of Melissa celebrating at her final Eucharist.

We wish Rev Angie Stupple a happy retirement from her role at the Pilgrim's Hospice; she has joined the clergy team, so we'll be seeing more of her.

Contacts (Team clergy & parishes) Clergy day off: Monday (Seb) Friday (Claire)
VACANT Team Rector (Buckland & Charlton)
Revd Claire Coleman Team Vicar (St Martins, Mission) 07530 719517 revclcoleman@gmail.com
Revd Seb Lundberg Team Vicar (St Marys, Civic) 07593 327218 fr.seb1230@protonmail.com
Revd Graham Snellin Benefice curate
Parish Point of Contact (Communications)
Buckland – Nigel Collins bucklandchurch@gmail.com **Charlton – Camilla Otaki** charltonchurchwarden@gmail.com
St Martins – Malcolm Gavin malcolm.gavin@talktalk.net OR **Joeanne Terry** joeanneterry@yahoo.co.uk
St Marys – Lindsay Powell-Williams lindsaypowellwilliams@btinternet.com

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION: SUNDAY 15th NOVEMBER