St Mary Magdalene's PARISH MAGAZINE

CROSS TALK



Feb 2026

Read about Home Groups on Page 5...

From the Vicar...



Dear friends

Lent, Generosity,
and the Life We Share

February brings us to the threshold of Lent,
beginning this year with Ash Wednesday
on 18 February. Lent is often described as a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal – a time when we take stock of our lives and ask again what really matters, what needs to be let go of, and what God may be calling us towards.

At its heart, Lent is not about guilt or deprivation for its own sake. It is about making space - space for God, for prayer, for generosity of spirit, and for a renewed sense of trust. We remember again that everything we have is gift: our lives, our relationships, our abilities, our resources. Before we think about what we give, we are invited to dwell on what we have received.

It is in that spirit that, as Lent begins, we will be inviting the congregation to reflect again on stewardship from the First Sunday of Lent. Stewardship is not a single event, nor simply about one aspect of church life, but part of our ongoing response to God's generosity. It invites us to consider how we live thankfully and faithfully with all that has been entrusted to us – our time, our abilities, and our resources – for the flourishing of the church and the wider community.

Of course, there is a practical reality to church life. Keeping our buildings safe, warm, and open; supporting ministry, mission, and pastoral care; paying for insurance, utilities, and diocesan contributions – all of this costs money. These are not abstract concerns, but the quiet, often unseen work that enables the church to be a place of welcome, prayer, and service for the whole community.

Yet stewardship is not driven by anxiety or pressure. It grows out of gratitude. We give not because we are coerced, but because generosity reflects the character of God we see revealed in Jesus. When we give thoughtfully and prayerfully, we participate in God's work of sustaining and renewing the life we share together.

During Lent there will be opportunities to reflect on stewardship in worship, prayer, and practical information about the church's finances and future plans. This is not about comparison or judgement, but about each person discerning what a faithful response looks like for them at this moment in their lives.

As we mark Ash Wednesday and step into Lent, perhaps we might hold this simple question before God: How is God inviting me to live generously – with my time, my gifts, and my resources – for the good of others and the glory of God?

With every blessing

William

Home Groups

Home groups are a great way of getting to know people better and developing a wider friendship group at church. They provide the opportunity to discuss things in depth and ask questions about issues that matter to us.

Home groups at St Mary Magdalene's are autonomous; varying in character, frequency and day/time of meeting. Meetings often include an element of worship; a discussion, prayer and of course a chance to catch up with each other's news. Our front cover this month shows Khoda, resident of the Cromer Road Home Group - we get together most weeks to talk about scripture or discuss other texts. We're currently enjoying 'The Lost Message of Paul' by Steve Chalke.



If you'd like to find out more about Home Groups contact Rev William Smith or the church office on 01926 470449.

Diana Taulbut and Sara Snatt

JOIN US FOR

COFFEE MORNING PLUS CRAFTS

SATURDAY 14TH FEBRUARY
10 - 12





St Mary Magdalene's
Vicarage Road CV32 7RH

ST MARY MAGDALENE
PRESENTS

ASH WEDNESDAY

18th February 2026

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the Lenten journey towards the cross and eventually Easter.

This year there will be two services:

10.00am Holy Communion Service
This will last for 30 minutes and be followed by coffee

7.00pm Holy Communion Service
This will be a sung Eucharist with an invitation to those who wish to receive the imposition of ashes as a mark of the season of penitence that begins on the first day of Lent.

ALL WELCOME

Come and Join in

St Mary Mag's Yarn Cafe

Sew Knit Crochet Chat

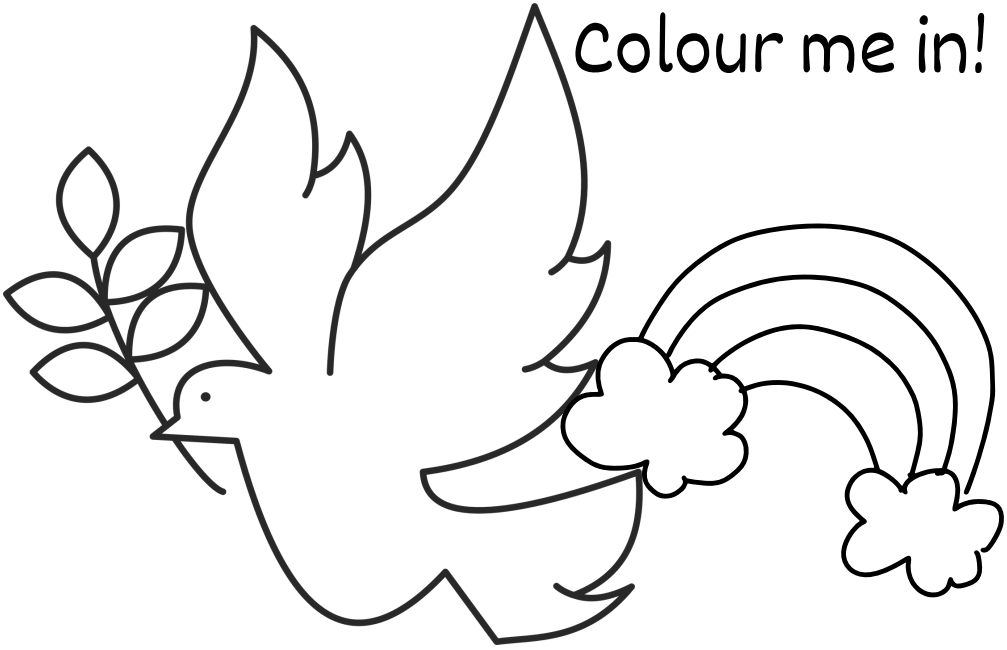
Beginners are Welcome

2ND & 4TH TUESDAYS 2-4

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GOLDEN CHARTER FUNERAL PLANS

Love Lillington is 10 Years Old!





It is time to celebrate! Ten years ago in February 2016, our church launched Love Lillington which offers support to our community, within the Parish Boundary, under three headings of Prayer, Money and Action.

Setting everything up was hard work and challenging at the start but much has been achieved in ten years and there is still much to achieve. Stories are probably too long to tell here and client confidentiality prevents us from sharing too much, but the most important thing is that through the Love Lillington Grant Fund we are able to continue our work. The fund has remained healthy with thanks to regular donations from our generous congregations, successful grant application funding and other donations, not forgetting our fund-raising events – coffee mornings and concerts.

My personal thanks go to my colleagues Charlotte Sanders and Delia Button (Money/Grants Administrators) Caroline Carr (Prayer Administrator) Revd Charlotte Gale, Revd William Smith and Revd Cerys Smith for their unwavering support.

LOVE LILLINGTON
Loving our community with
Prayer • Money • Action

Love Lillington Action could not survive without the volunteers so thanks must also go to the team of 22 people who give of their time to go out into the community and do what they can with decorating, gardening, delivering donations and many more things.

The Love Lillington Planning Team are meeting to work out a programme of events for 2026 so watch this space and see how you can celebrate with us and perhaps get a bit more involved.

Our 10th Anniversary Love Lillington Coffee Morning will take place on Saturday 14th March 10.00am to 12.00noon in church and the Octagon. See you there!

Christine Butler (Action) Delia Button (Grants) Caroline Carr (Prayer)

lovelillingtonaction@lillingtonparishchurch.org
lovelillingtongrants@lillingtonparishchurch.org
lovelillingtonprayers@lillingtonparishchurch.org



Love Lillington Volunteers Hard at Work

LOVE LILLINGTON IS 10!

WE ARE CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF LOVE LILLINGTON PROVIDING HELP FOR PEOPLE IN OUR PARISH THROUGH PRAYER, MONEY AND ACTION



SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY WITH PRAYER REQUESTS

A TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS ABLE TO OFFER HELP WITH PRACTICAL TASKS

PROVIDING NEW ITEMS FOR THE HOME ON RECEIPT OF PROFESSIONAL REFERRALS

LOVE LILLINGTON
Loving our community with
Prayer • Money • Action

St Mary Magdalene's Community Initiative


Colour me in!

Hire our Octagon!



Are you looking for a venue? The Octagon is a modern room built adjacent to the church. It can be hired at very competitive rates for small groups, meetings or parties. Please contact the church office on 01926 470449 for details.



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A Trip to Remember

Some time ago, I was visiting Norway for a few days and did the usual tourist thing of going on a boat trip up one of the fjords. The weather was not the best, with low cloud over the glaciers and the spray from the boat on the windows made it quite difficult to see the scenery.

One of my fellow travellers suggested I go out on the rear of the boat to take in the view. It was partly covered by a canopy and there were others doing the same, so we all got chatting. It was bracing to say the least with the low temperature and spray from the boat, but it was an experience. However, as we chatted to one another some folk went back inside to get a hot drink. What came next literally took my breath away!

What I didn't realise was that the boat was about to make a u-turn to return to dock; I had been so engrossed watching the tracks of the boat at the rear as it sped along. Suddenly all the gallons of water that had gathered in the canopy flowed to one corner and the whole lot came down on me! A deluge of cold water, missing the others. I gasped as I couldn't take in what had happened for a few seconds - I was literally soaked to the skin. After recovering, I could only imagine what a sight I must look and just burst out laughing. A very kind gentleman took a neatly pressed handkerchief from his breast pocket and handed it to me to at least allow me to mop my face.

It was certainly the talking point of the return journey, with lots of offers to get me hot drinks. One passenger said I looked as though I had been swimming and promptly showed me the moment it was captured on his phone! The whole episode made it a very memorable trip indeed.

But, I do believe there is a moral to this story. If we stand still and just look at what is past, concentrating only on the things that are behind us, then when life does throw something unexpected at us, we can often be overwhelmed and totally unprepared for it. I know we don't know what is ahead of us, but by looking forward and having faith, we can be better prepared for the times when we get our breath taken away and are stunned in to silence. Look ahead, not back is the lesson that I learned from my experience. Those times when I find myself dwelling on the past, I tell myself, 'Get up and go to the front of the boat. Keep looking forward to face the sun and the positives in life; difficulties and sorrow will fade into the background.

Turn your face to the sun and let the shadows fall behind you.'

Jan Talbot



Coffee Mornings

We love a coffee morning here at St Mary Mag's and enjoy the lovely coming together of community which they bring.



Our December coffee morning raised over £1,600 and brought a smile to a good few people's faces.

Join us for more coffee mornings . They're on Saturday from 10 - 12.



February 14th
March 14th
April 11th

Coffee Mornings include kids' crafting stalls





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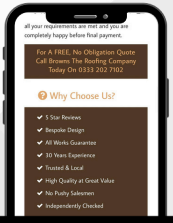

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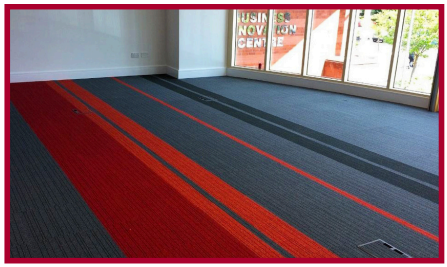
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St Mary Magdalene, Lillington Parish Magazine

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From The Church Records - December		
Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals & Memorial Services

Sunday Worship in February

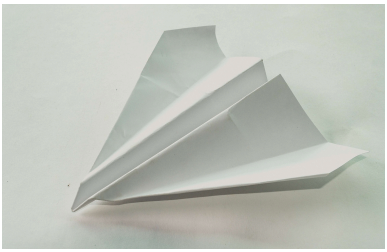
1 Feb Candlemas	9.30am 11.15am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (in church & online) All Age Communion + Community Lunch (in church) Evening Service (in church)
8 Feb 2nd Before Lent	9.30am 11.15am	Holy Communion (in church & online) Worship for All and Baptism (in church)
15 Feb 1st before Lent	9.30am 11.15am	Holy Communion (in church & online) Worship for All (in church)
22 Feb 1st of Lent	9.30am 11.15am	Holy Communion (in church & online) Worship for All (in church)

Weekday Services in February - Holy Communion in church & online at 10am on Wednesday 4, 11, 18, 25 February

Services are streamed Live and are available afterwards on our website: https://www.lillingtonparishchurch.org

For Funeral, Baptism and Wedding enquiries, please contact Revd. William Smith on 01926 316475 or email vicar@lillingtonparishchurch.org

For general enquiries please contact the church office by telephone on 01926 470449 or email office@lillingtonparishchurch.org. Outside of office hours, please leave a message on the answer phone and we will return your call.



CONTACT US!

VICAR: William Smith 01926 316475
vicar@lillingtonparishchurch.org
CURATE: Cerys Smith 07813782512
curate@lillingtonparishchurch.org
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cfprojectworker@gmail.com
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LOVE LILLINGTON
Christine Butler 07963229756
lovelillingtonaction@lillingtonparishchurch.org
CROSSTALK:
crosstalk@lillingtonparishchurch.org

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Church Services

Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion Service

(1 hour service with robed choir)

11.15am All Age Service

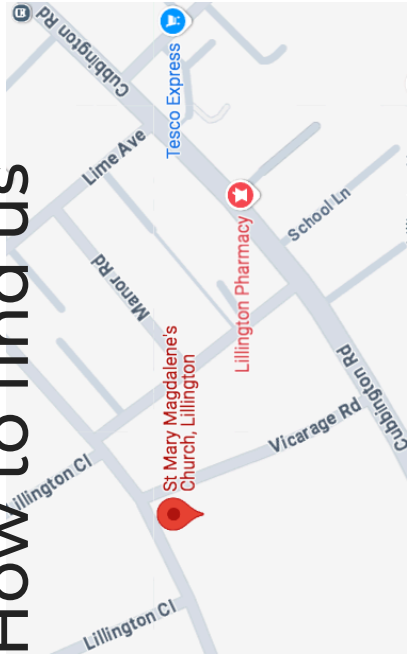
(40 minute service with children at its heart)

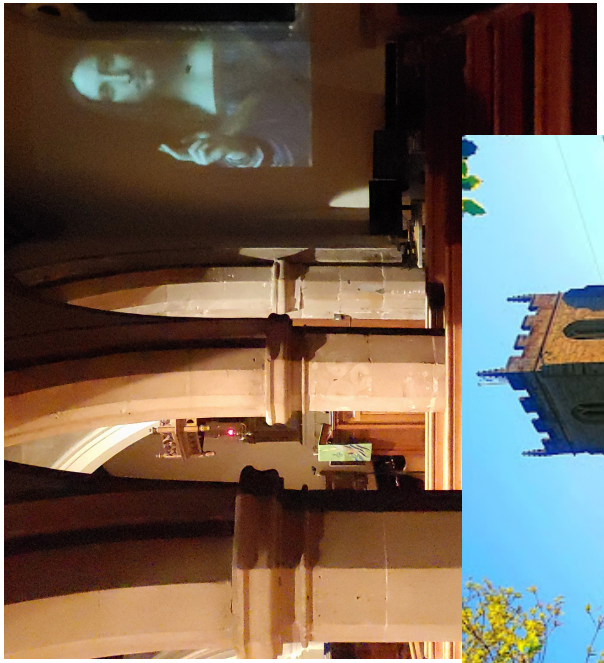
Wednesday

10.00am Holy Communion Service

OR you can now join us via our website:
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How to find us







Vicarage Rd, Lillington
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