



St Mary
Magdalene's

PARISH MAGAZINE

CROSS
TALK

Gospel truth?

Page 8

March 2026

From the Vicar...

Dear friends



As I sit here in my study a lorry has just pulled up outside the Vicarage and dropped off ten lightweight tables that we will soon be using in church. In a few days' time one hundred lightweight stackable chairs will be delivered to the church which we will be using on the north and south aisles and when serving refreshments. The following week, one hundred and fifteen chairs that we will be placing in the nave and the Lady Chapel will be delivered. As this is happening, some pews will be removed by private purchasers, some by a reclamation company and nine will be dismantled to be used elsewhere in the building.

The exposed pipes have all been boxed in and will soon be stained and varnished to match the floor. Radiators have been repainted and plans to smarten up the walls where paint is flaking off are in hand ahead of a major refurbishment that will need to take place in the next five years.

While this is all happening we are hosting local school children who will be engaging in the "Looking at Lillington" initiative which we run every year to explain the work of the church and its place in the heart of Lillington. Despite all the upheavals, the ministry of the church continues and we are delighted that all this has been possible without the need to close at any point.

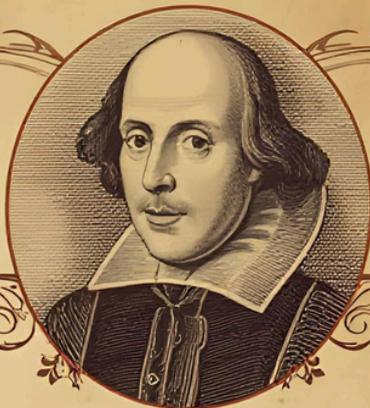
On Sunday 8th of March we expect to be half way through removals and arrivals so the seating on this occasion will be the lightweight chairs most of which would normally be in storage. On Saturday 14th of March, we will be having a big coffee morning to celebrate ten years of Love Lillington. This event will be staged both in the Octagon and the church and will be the first opportunity to enjoy the newly created flexible space designed especially for events such as this. The next day, Sunday 15th of March, we anticipate being able to use the more substantial wooden chairs which will link together.

We are reliant on delivery firms and contractors honouring promised deliveries and commitments but we are confident that the newly re-ordered space will be ready for Holy Week and Easter. I know that this process has been long and at times frustratingly slow. Work to move the font and to create a screen to separate the storage area at the back of the church will happen in the next few months. With the new seating, we believe that the resultant flexibility and ease with which we will now be able to accommodate anyone with mobility issues, and the provision of a little more comfort and creativity, will set us off in an exciting new direction as a church. Thank you for your patience and prayers.

With every blessing

William

Robin &



Carol's

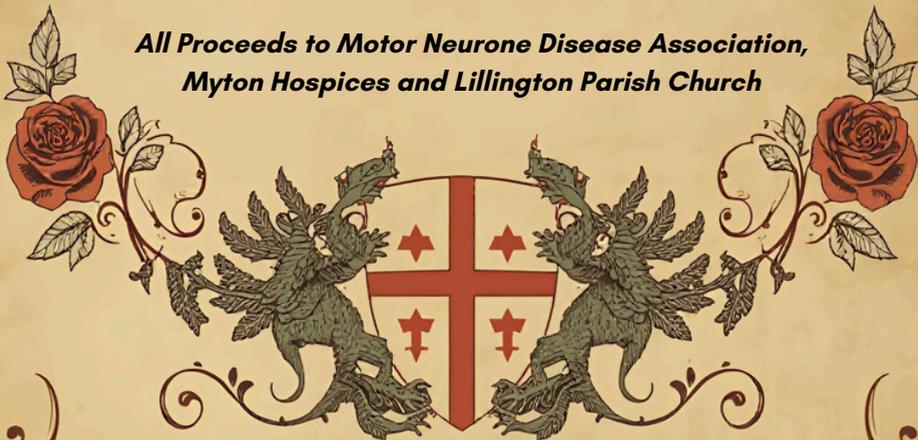
Annual Quiz

Thursday 23rd April 2026

6.45pm

at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Lillington

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WHAT IS TRUTH?

We live in a world categorized by some as 'Post Truth', where truth is no longer absolute but is relative, truth becomes fluid, shape shifting, the expedient spin, the dictator's latest Tweet.

Pilot's glib rhetorical question to Jesus at his trial: 'What is Truth?'

returns with force.

There is nothing new under the sun.

But Jesus said:

I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

God's Truth is written into the DNA of our being in our conscience and compassion, He is the Truth the ETERNAL Word that sets us FREE. God's Truth doesn't change, He is not negotiable God is the eternal I AM, the First and the last the beginning and the end

and the Gospel Truth is that God came as man and did the unthinkable:

HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT BE SET FREE FROM SIN AND DEATH AND LIVE ETERNALLY, AND HERE AND NOW LIVE A

LIFE ABUNDANTLY

Jesus is historically real,
(For sceptics read Tacitus, Josephus among others)
Jesus is the Word of God, the Good News Truth
of Humanity's being saved and loved
with a love that endures forever.
So talk to us, come and find out a little more and

You shall know Truth
and The TRUTH shall
set you

FREE!

All Creatures Great and Small

During the first lockdown in 2020 I re-read “All Creatures Great and Small” by James Herriot having watched recent repeats of the original TV serial. I had probably read it for the first time when a teenager a long time before. An abiding image of the book in many people’s minds (re-enforced by the films and two TV adaptations), would probably be of James or one his colleagues being called out in the middle of a freezing cold winter night to assist with the problematical delivery of a calf, lamb or piglet and eventually emerging covered in muck and blood. To make matters worse the farmer would occasionally be unhelpful and ungrateful throughout.

Yet the book is equally concerned with the working and domestic animals tended to by James and includes some harrowing descriptions of casual cruelty meted out to race horses and racing greyhounds. There are also recorded various episodes concerning domestic pets and their owners which suggest that Herriot as well as having cared deeply about animals was also a sympathetic observer of people.

According to James’s son Jim, also a vet, his father’s faith “was more about reverence for the natural world and the miracle of birth than church attendance”. AI notes that: “Overall Herriot’s work invites readers to explore themes of faith and spirituality through the lens of his veterinary experience”. Nowhere is this assessment more convincingly borne out than in a chapter of “All Creatures Great and Small”.

Miss Stubbs was an invalid above whose bed dangled a strip of cardboard “looped over an old gas bracket so that Miss Stubbs from where she lay could look up at it and read ‘GOD IS NEAR’ in square black capitals”. Her “family” were three dogs and two cats all over ten years of age, and a carer called Mrs Broadwith. The dogs would sit by her bedside, and the cats made themselves comfortable on the bed itself. As their vet, James was a regular visitor to Miss Stubbs and noted: “the one thing which brought some light in to the life of the brave old woman was the transparent devotion of this shaggy bunch whose eyes were never far from her face”.

Following the death of one of the dogs, Miss Stubbs confides in James that she has a short time to live too and that although she is certain she will be reunited with her parents and brothers, she is less sure about her animals because “religious people say animals have no souls”. James reassures her that “if having a soul means being able to feel love and loyalty and gratitude then animals are better off than a lot of humans” and “wherever you are going they are going too”. She dies shortly afterwards and the animals are taken on by Mrs Broadwith.

Orthodox Christian doctrine reflects the views of the medieval theologian St Thomas Aquinas that, for a number of reasons, animals cannot have immortal souls. Some people feel, like Miss Stubbs, the need to believe otherwise. Our lurcher bitch died recently and is much missed. Whether or not animals have souls there can be no doubt that they are a gift from God and that they enrich and enhance the lives of those who love and care for them.

Amanda Stevens



James Herriot with his beloved BorderTerrier, Bodie.



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Saturday 14th March 10 - 12



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Chairs Update

Exciting things are happening here at St Mary Mag's. Plans to update our seating in church have been afoot for some time and are now set to become reality.

A team of volunteers has been busy dismantling pews in readiness for the imminent arrival of chairs. This will enable us to create a flexible, open space as well as being more comfortable, welcoming and accessible to all, including wheelchair users.

Chairs in the central, 'nave' area of church will be linked together to form 'bench like' seating which will remain in place for much of the time. On either side, lighter weight, stackable chairs will be used for larger services, leaving us with space to set out tables, serve refreshments and utilise in any way we like. Watch this space, or better still, come in to see and enjoy the changes!

Sara Snatt



Hire our Octagon!



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STAR CHURCH

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EMERGENCE

I have been reading about the life of dragonflies - of their life beginning under water, developing on the submerged reeds, and feeding on worms or even small fish. But, at an allotted time, they make their way to the surface and emerge with bodies a magnificent colour and large filigree wings; they can now feel the warmth of the sun and have the freedom to fly.

They cannot return under the water and so the growing nymphs that are left behind have no idea of what awaits them when they too finally leave the water. I wonder if it is the same for twins waiting to emerge into this world - they have no choice but to leave all that they have known since conception: warmth, safety and nourishment. Then they have to begin their journey separately into a big noisy world, feeling our air on their fragile bodies for the very first time as they leave the second twin behind for a short while.



We all have that special moment set aside for us too, when we finally have to leave this world that we have grown up in. None of us knows exactly when that will be; we know not the day or the hour. But I believe that once we leave this place that has been our home, then we too are met with the loving open arms of our Lord. We too will emerge in light, safe in His unconditional love, warmth and peace. Loved ones who have gone before us are unable, as with the dragonfly and the firstborn twin, to return to tell us, who are left behind, what awaits and what wonders we shall experience. But I truly believe that it will be our new beginning and not our end, full of wonderment that we can't begin to imagine.

Jan Talbot

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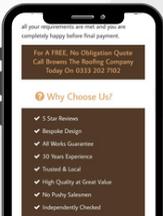
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From The Church Records – January

Baptisms

Weddings

Funerals & Memorial
Services

John O'Farrell
Linda Stearn

Sunday Worship in March

1 March
2nd of Lent

9.30am
11.15am
6.00pm

Holy Communion (in church
& online)
STAR CHURCH All Age
Communion (in church)
Evening Service (in church)

8 March
3rd of Lent

9.30am
11.15am

Holy Communion (in
church & online)
Worship for All (in
church)

15 March
Mothering Sunday

9.30am
11.15am

Holy Communion (in
church & online)
STAR CHURCH Worship
for All (in church)

22 March
5th of Lent

9.30am
11.15am

Holy Communion (in church &
online)
STAR CHURCH Sunday Club
followed by
Community Lunch (in church)

29th March
Palm Sunday

9.30am
11.15am

Holy Communion (in
church & online)
STAR CHURCH Worship
for All (in church)

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

Colour me in!



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!

facebook.com/LillingtonParishChurch

VICAR: William Smith 01926 316475

vicar@lillingtonparishchurch.org

CURATE: Cerys Smith 07813782512

curate@lillingtonparishchurch.org

GENERAL enquiries & office:

Wendy Driscoll 01926 470449

office@lillingtonparishchurch.org

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: Hester Meacock

cfprojectworker@gmail.com

WARDENS:

Sarah Boad 07850 050238

sarah@lillingtonparishchurch.org

Isabella Moore 07801 108720

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

music@lillingtonparishchurch.org

LOVE LILLINGTON

Christine Butler 07963229756

lovelillingtonaction@lillingtonparishchurch.org

CROSSTALK:

crosstalk@lillingtonparishchurch.org



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

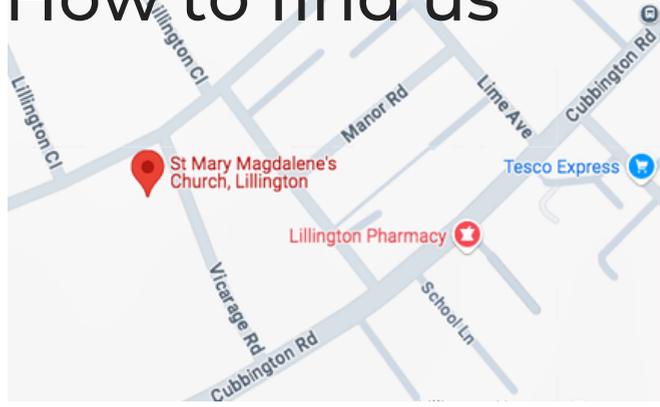
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How to find us



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