



St Mary
Magdalene's

PARISH MAGAZINE

CROSS TALK



**Read about our
Pet Service on
page 4...**

September 2026

From the Vicar...

Dear Friends,

September always feels like a fresh beginning. The holidays begin to draw to a close, schools return, routines re-establish themselves and many of us find ourselves asking what the next season of life might hold.



For us as a church family it will be a particularly important month. On Saturday 5th September we shall be holding our Church Day In. Some churches go away together or organise an outside speaker but on the 5th we will spend the day reflecting together on one of Jesus' best-loved stories – the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Our theme is simply "Home".

Home is much more than a place. It is where we belong, where we are known, loved and welcomed. Yet all of us, in one way or another, know what it is to wander into the "far country". Sometimes we drift through disappointment, failure or grief. Sometimes life simply becomes so busy that we lose sight of what matters most.

Jesus' remarkable story reminds us that, however far we have travelled, the Father never stops watching the road. His welcome is always greater than our failure, his grace always larger than our regrets.

The day is intended for everyone. There will be three short sessions, opportunities to reflect and discuss, activities for all ages, lunch together and, we hope, plenty of laughter along the way. Whether you have been part of the church for decades or are simply curious about the Christian faith, you will be very welcome.

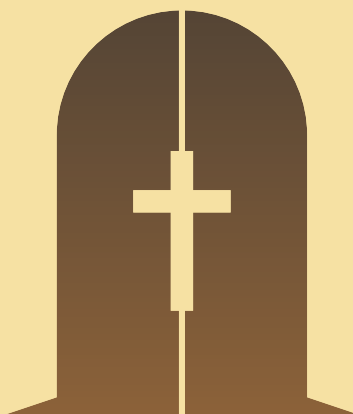
During September we shall also begin our Stewardship Programme. Whenever stewardship is mentioned, people naturally think of money. Money certainly has its place, but Christian stewardship has always been much bigger than that. It begins with recognising that everything we have is a gift from God: our lives, our abilities, our time, our homes, our friendships and, yes, our possessions too.

Our hope over these weeks is not simply to balance a budget, but to reflect together on how God has blessed us and how we, in turn, can be a blessing to others. The church exists because previous generations invested sacrificially in the worship, ministry and mission that we now enjoy. We have inherited a beautiful building and a living community of faith because others made room for us. Now it becomes our privilege to make room for those who will come after us. That, perhaps, is where these two September events meet.

The Father in Jesus' story throws open the doors of home. Stewardship asks how we can help keep those doors open for future generations. I do hope you will join us during September. Whether for the Church Day In, our Sunday services or the stewardship conversations that follow, my prayer is that together we might discover afresh what it means to come home to God - and then help others find their way home too.

With Every Blessing,

William





Pets Service



On Sunday 12th July, animal lovers gathered to celebrate a menagerie of wonderful pets by bringing them into church for a special service.

The pets service was a huge success, with participants including several dogs; 2 Guinea pigs... and a tortoise named Audrey.

Rev William blessed the pets and managed to keep 'relative order' throughout.

Watch this space for another pets service at our inclusive church.

Sara Snatt





Save the Date...

Saturday 5th September 2026

Church Day In

We look forward to having a whole church day together to receive teaching, socialise and spend time with one another across the 3 services.

**We would love for you to come. There will be a limit to places, but we want as many people as possible to attend therefore please contact Hester (event coordinating) to reserve your place:
cfprojectworker@gmail.com**

There will be a small charge required to cover catering, but this will be kept as minimal as possible and more information will be provided ASAP; support for those who cannot fund themselves is available.



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Cerys's Licensing

On Sunday 26th July, a coach filled with St Mary Mag's parishioners nipped off to Merthyr Tydfil for a special trip to see our ex-curate the Reverend Cerys Smith licensed as a vicar practising in the Church in Wales.

The ceremony took place in St David's, Merthyr, which despite being a huge church, was filled with parishioners.

Well-wishers from Lillington were warmly welcomed and treated to refreshments including Welsh cakes and bara brith.

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

John 15:16a



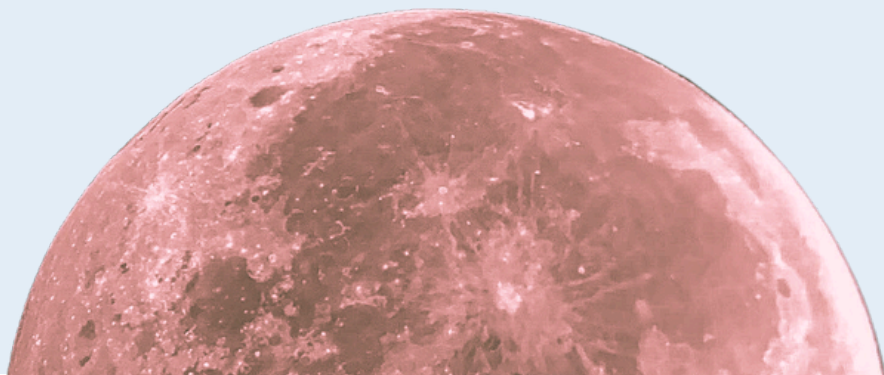
Sara Snatt

When the World is not Enough

It was the perfect summer late evening - the scent of the roses and honeysuckle filled the warm air; the full moon shone like a silver orb suspended in the clear dark blue sky. It did make me wonder though: what do astronauts, who have travelled to that distant world, think when they look out and see the Earth? Does it lose its magic? Does wonderment turn to hard facts; all thoughts concerned with the technical practicalities of their journey? Or is Earth even more beautiful when seen from space?

Space exploration is an amazing concept and human beings are forever wanting to explore, understand and discover every aspect of life on Earth and beyond. It is only through exploration that we know so much about our world. To venture into outer space and remotely take photographs and samples of the planets way beyond our Earth is exciting and will provide so much more knowledge about the solar system of which we are a part.

However, I do fear for that journey of knowledge. Not content with learning about the moon, the intention is to eventually build a space station on it and mine for minerals. Planet Earth is already in a perilous state due to power and greed - must we really take this mindset to another world, where nations will stake a claim to 'their' areas and all the abundance of alleged resources therein?



There is plenty on Earth to meet our needs; it is humanity that is unwilling to provide for and share with all nations. My prayer is that we set this world right before creating further inevitable conflict by staking claims on the Moon. This is God's creation; God's infinite universe - the beauty, the balance and the very essence of life are given freely to us. Let us accept that and be eternally grateful and not, in the name of exploration, research or wanton power, upset the equilibrium of His creation.

Jan Talbot

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A Lovely Summer Walk

As a result of illness and bad weather, this was only our second walk this year, but it was one of our loveliest. Six walkers set off from Combrook village (near Compton Verney) on a beautiful sunny, calm evening. The walk took us through the village and up to a footpath alongside the Compton Verney south lake which looked lovely in the evening sunlight. The path led us across a field where the grass had almost completely dried up; there were a few sheep grazing, though what they found to eat was a mystery!

We then joined a path leading to and along the Kineton road between the upper and lower lakes with a view towards Compton Verney House, before turning into another field and then a small wood which took us to an open field above the village with a wonderful view of Ilmington Downs and the surrounding countryside. After descending into the village again back to our cars, we drove to Moreton Morrell for a welcome drink at The Black Horse pub.

Caroline & Godfrey Carr



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Taking Things in his Stride

Back in June, Benedict Smith ran the Two Castles 10k race. He raised £238 for Myton Hospice and as you can see got a rather good time - well done!

Benedict would like to thank everyone who supported him.

Tricia Smith



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HIRE THE OCTAGON AT ST MARY MAG'S

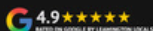
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Birds Birds Birds

I can remember a time when there were so many different birds in our back garden that I had trouble identifying them all and needed to buy a bird book as a guide. Fast forward twenty-five or so years and we are now lucky to spot any birds at all in the garden apart from pigeons, magpies and the occasional sparrow or blackbird. Gone are the starlings, robins, blue tits and thrushes to name only some of the songbirds that we used to take for granted. This, despite the fact that we have plenty of berry bearing bushes and trees such as hawthorn, ivy and holly to provide birds with natural food and a safe place for them to hide and nest.

We have a lawn with easy access to worms; thick hedges at the front, and we never use insecticide. We also used to have house martins that would nest under the eaves at the front of our house. Although they would make a bit of a mess we never cared. They had come a long way and it was good to see them every year. Then, like the birds in our back garden, they stopped coming too.

The reasons for the decline in the bird population are well known and easy to research from reputable sources on the internet. We can play our part in reversing this decline by making our gardens and balconies as bird friendly as possible. There are also organisations that campaign to protect the natural world with a particular emphasis on birds.

Along with three others from this church, I went on a coach trip to the London Wetland Centre in late March. The reserve, in Barnes, is owned by The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust which was founded by the famous bird enthusiast Sir Peter Scott in 1946, and opened in 2000 on the site of four disused Victorian reservoirs. The site was originally intended to be exclusively for housing, but thanks to intense lobbying from the Trust, some National Lottery funding and a partnership drawn up between the Trust and a housing developer, a large nature reserve was also created.

It is now a home to many species of birds and other wildlife. On a tour of the reserve, we learned that water is pumped from a modern water treatment centre at Hampton Court a few miles away directly to the Centre and that the London Wetland Centre is the only place in London in which certain kinds of wild birds are found. We were able to see some of the wildfowl close up with our binoculars from hides, including barnacle geese, sand martin and Eurasian bittern. The London Wetland Centre is an oasis of biodiversity just a stone's throw from a busy London suburb, and the story of its origin is inspiring.

Amanda Stevens



Farewell Maestra

For the past eight years, Rachael Jefferies has led the choir and Stargazers, our church band; guiding and encouraging them while bringing joy and cheer to parishioners of all ages. Rachael has now stepped down as musical director to spend more time pursuing other interests, though she will still appear at St Mary Mag's from time to time.

Looking back

I caught up with Rachael to ask what she had most enjoyed during her time at the church. She spoke warmly about the joy of working with such a range of lovely people.

'I have enjoyed it all. Being with the band has allowed me to grow as a musician and has taught me skills I didn't have before. I have loved working with the choir – we perform such lovely music and it always comes right in the performance.'

Highlights and memories

Among the highlights of Rachael's time with us was expanding the choir by bringing in additional singers for concerts. This gave everyone the chance to enjoy larger works and allowed the choir to achieve so much more. For many of us, however, our fondest memories will be of Rachael leading the choir in singing the anthem each Sunday.



With thanks

Thank you, Rachael, for your commitment to quality, for always choosing such beautiful music, and for nurturing so many budding singers and musicians over the years. Your enthusiasm and love of music have been infectious, and we will miss you.

Sara Snatt





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PROGRAMME TO INCLUDE BACH, RHEINBERGER,
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cheese and wine interval

20

From The Church Records –		
Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals & Memorial Services
Bayleigh Rebecca Greenway		Jean Elizabeth Larkin Daphne Wheeler

Sunday Worship in Sept		
6th Sept - 14th after Trinity	9.30am 11.15am 6.00pm	Holy Communion (in church & online) All Age Communion (in church) Evening Service (in church)
13th Sept - 15th after Trinity	9.30am 11.15am	Holy Communion (in church & online) Worship for All (in church)
20th Sept - 16th after Trinity	9.30am 11.15am	Holy Communion (in church & online) Worship for All (in church)
27th Sept - 17th after Trinity	9.30am/ 11.15am	Holy Communion in church & online Worship for all (Sunday Club with Shared Lunch)

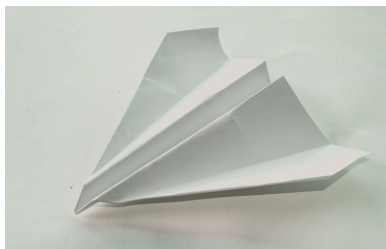
Weekday Services in September - Holy Communion in church & online at 10am on Wednesday 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

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

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

Isabella@lillingtonparishchurch.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

music@lillingtonparishchurch.org

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Christine Butler 07963229756

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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

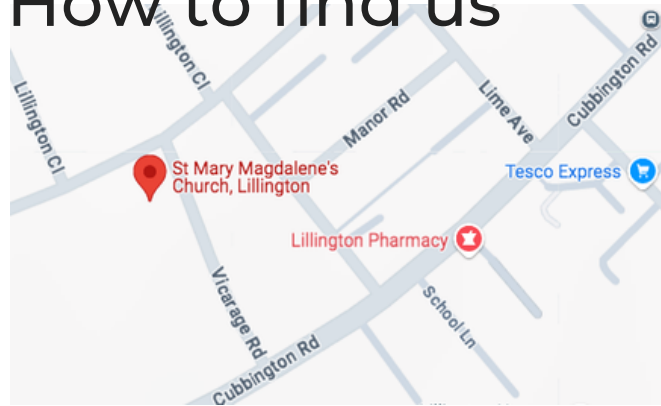
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How to find us



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