



St Mary
Magdalen
OXFORD

Parish Notes

May 2026

Join us on May 27th at 6pm as we celebrate the installation of our new Vicar, Fr. Jonathan Lewis-Jong by the Bishop of Oxford.

Services

Sundays

Eucharist at 8 am and 5.30 pm,
Matins 10 am High Mass at 10.30 am

Weekdays

Eucharist at 12.15 pm and 6.00 pm
Morning Prayer 8.15 am, Evening Prayer
5.40 pm

Confessions

Daily after the 12.15 pm Mass,
Wednesdays & Saturdays at 6.30 pm
Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage by
appointment with the Parish Priest

Parish Clergy

Vicar Designate: Fr. Jonathan Lewis-
Jong, being installed on May 27th at 6pm

Associate Priest

The Reverend Dr Mel Marshall
Telephone: 01865 436243
mthrmelanie@gmail.com

Administration

Parish office

Parish Administrator: Matthew Watts
admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

Phone: 01865 246143

Website

www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

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Parish: @marymagsoxford

Choir: @magschoir

Facebook

stmarymagdalen.oxford

Safeguarding

The PCC is committed to making St Mary Magdalen's a safe environment for everyone and we have two Safeguarding Officers, Henry Jestico and Francesca Holloway. If you have any questions about safeguarding matters or wish to report a concern, please email: safeguardingsmox@gmail.com

Treasurer

"Mary Mags Oxford costs £470 per day to run and is supported by your generous donations. We have to be self-funding. This means that we do not receive any funds other than the income we raise through planned giving, fundraising, etc.

We are constantly aware how the cost of living is affecting every one of us differently. We want you to know that we appreciate every penny you give and do not take your generosity for granted.

If you would like to discuss giving options, please contact the Treasurer, Oscar Riba-Thompson at marymagstreasurer@gmail.com"

Notices

PCC

The next Parochial Church Council meeting will be on **Tuesday, May 5th** at 7pm in church.

Church cleaning

We are holding a church cleaning session on **Saturday, 23rd May**, to prepare for Fr Jonathan's installation on 27th May. The session will begin at 9.30am and continue until 11.30am. Please come to help even if you only have a short time. As always, refreshments will be available and good company guaranteed.

We would love for people to support the **churchyard project** in order to preserve this wonderful green space in the heart of Oxford. We have raised a substantial amount of money, but we have a very long way to go.

www.justgiving.com/campaign/smm-churchyard

The utterly fabulous event that was **Tallis in Wonderland** was a huge success. We are just over £2,000 short of the £12,000 target. The JustGiving page is still live for people to donate: www.justgiving.com/campaign/tallisinwonderland

Events

The funeral for **Susannah Harris-Wilson** will take place at St Mary Magdalen at 11.30am on Wednesday 6th May. It will be followed by refreshments in the church, and the committal will take place at Wolvercote Cemetery at 2.30pm. All are most welcome to attend.

The funeral for **Prof Dame Averil Cameron** will take place at 12 o'clock on 8th May at Oxford Crematorium, for family and close friends. Anyone wishing to attend should please contact Sophie at: sophiecamwork@gmail.com. A memorial service will be held at Keble College in the summer, to which all will be invited.

The wedding of **Luke Vorhies and Claire Lowe** will take place at St Mary Magdalen on Saturday 16th May at 2pm. This will replace the midday mass on that day. All are very welcome, in fact encouraged, to attend, and the Mass will be followed by fizz and canapes in the church.

The Installation of **Fr Jonathan Lewis-Jong as our new Vicar** will take place at St Mary Magdalen's at 6pm on 27th May. All are very welcome to attend, and mass will be followed by fizz and canapes. Anyone who is willing to contribute a plate of finger food, some bottles, or give towards the costs are please asked to contact the wardens or the parish administrator to ensure effective coordination.

Sunday readings

Sunday 3rd May: Acts 6: 1-7. Pet 2: 1-9. John 14: 1-9.

Sunday 10th May: Acts 8: 5-8 & 14-17. 1 Pet 3:15-18. John 14: 15-21.

Sunday 17th May: Acts 1: 12-14. 1 Pet 4:13-16. John17: 1-11a.

Sunday 24th May: Acts 2: 1-11; 1 Cor 12: 3b-7 & 12-13. John 12: 19-23.

Sunday 31st May: Exod 34: 4b-6 & 8-9. 2 Cor 13. 11-13. John 3: 16-18.

Intercessions

Please pray for the long-term sick and those in special need, among them:
Beryl Dryden, Joyce Day, Vernon Porter, Sophie Brown, Eleanor Sartain,
Guy Westwood, Jill, Joanna Hickie,nRo, Ann Garfit, Alison Mundy.

If you would like any name added to this list (or removed from it, post recovery) ask admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk. Please note that unless we are advised that the illness could be protracted, names may be taken off after three months.

Our Mary Mags

Every month we highlight a feature of the Church (**Our Mary Mags**) or invite members of the community to describe how and why they hooked up with it (**My Mary Mags**). This month, our Churchwarden Charl Engela analyses ...

The Lady Chapel East Window: A Meditation on St Luke's Gospel



The stained-glass window over the altar in the Lady Chapel presents a richly ordered meditation on the opening chapters of St Luke's Gospel, tracing the mystery of the Incarnation as it unfolds through angelic annunciation, faithful obedience, and heavenly praise. Carefully structured and deeply scriptural, the window invites contemplation of God's saving purpose made known in the lives of ordinary people.

At the head of the window, set within the stone tracery, appears the Lamb of God, surrounded by figures of the heavenly host. Placed at the summit of the whole composition, the Lamb offers a Christological key to the scenes below. It is Christ himself, humble, offered, and destined for sacrifice, who is announced, presented, and proclaimed throughout the narrative. The five surrounding archangels recall the heavenly realm from which these events proceed and remind us that the story shown here belongs not only to history, but to the eternal will of God.

The upper lights begin with the Annunciation to Zacharias (Luke 1:8–20). The aged priest is shown offering incense in the Temple when the angel Gabriel appears to announce that his wife Elizabeth will bear a son, John. This moment of divine intervention, set amid priestly ritual, marks the first breaking-in of the Gospel promise and prepares the way for all that follows.

The narrative then turns to the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2:22–35). Mary brings the child Jesus in obedience to the Law, and Simeon receives him with reverence. His canticle, the *Nunc Dimittis* - "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace" - has echoed daily in the Church's prayer ever since, and here stands as a moment of recognition: the long-awaited salvation is held in human arms.

Between the upper and lower scenes run decorative bands rich in meaning. On the right, angels sing "Gloria in excelsis Deo" (Luke 2:14), the heavenly song of praise that follows Christ's birth. On the left, lilies, traditional symbols of purity and obedience, prepare the way for the Annunciation and quietly interpret what is about to be shown.

In the lower left lights appears the Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26–38), the central moment of the Gospel story. The angel Gabriel greets Mary with the words *Ave Maria, gratia plena* ("Hail Mary, full of grace"), while Mary responds with faithful humility: *Ecce ancilla Domini* - "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Their exchange, visibly written on scrolls, shows the Word of God spoken and received, and the Incarnation begun.

The lower right scene completes the Lucan cycle with the angels appearing to the shepherds (Luke 2:8–14). The shepherds, watchful and ordinary,

receive the first proclamation of the good news, while the heavens open above them in light and song. The Gospel is revealed not to the powerful, but to those who keep watch in faith. Taken together, this window proclaims St Luke's Gospel as a story of divine mercy and human response, gathered under the sign of the Lamb of God, who draws heaven and earth together in praise.

***My Mags** in June will feature our new Vicar, whose first sermon back in Mary Mags will appear in the July Parish Notes.*

Sermons

There follow the sermon delivered on Easter Sunday by Fr. Hugh Wybrew, then Mother Mel Marshall's sermon on the road to Emmaus, preached the week after.

Father Hugh:

Readings: Acts 10.34, 37-43; Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-9

Many years ago I went to church on Easter Day. At sermon time the Rector mounted the pulpit. 'You all know what Easter is about, so I'm not going to preach. The Easter Offering goes to the Rector.' He left the pulpit and continued with the service. The Easter Offering died the death years ago; but this morning there is a sermon, because we can't know everything about Easter.

The Resurrection is a mystery, in the proper Christian sense of that word. Nobody saw Jesus rise from his tomb. Mary Magdalen found it empty; and when she turned and saw Jesus standing there, she didn't recognise him; she thought he was the gardener. Only when he called her by name did she know him. The Resurrection is a mystery, an action of God beyond the comprehension of the human mind. It's the mystery of mysteries; and, in deepest divine reality, it took place on Friday, on the Cross.

On the Cross the Love that God is, embodied in the human Jesus, gave itself away in love, so that human nature could be healed. On the Cross, divine love overcame human sin. On the Cross, Jesus passed from death to eternal life in God. From the Cross, in John's gospel, Jesus last word is, 'It is accomplished!' Death and Resurrection are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. That's why on Easter Day the Orthodox Church sings, 'Come, all who believe in him, adore Christ's holy resurrection. For, see, through the cross joy has come to the whole world. Always blessing the Lord, we praise his resurrection. For he suffered crucifixion, and by death has killed death'.

This joyous day we celebrate the death that has killed death. But it's not only the Resurrection of Jesus that we celebrate. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of Christ's resurrection as the first-fruits of those who have died (1 Cor 15.20). We who believe in Jesus as the Christ are to share in his risen life. In sacramental fact, we already do. Today we re-affirm our baptismal promises, because, as Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, 'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life' (Rom 6.3-4). To the Colossians he wrote, '...when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead' (Coloss 2.12). In reality, our resurrection is a process. In this morning's second reading, Paul tells the Colossians, '...you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.' Our job as Christians is to let our risen life become less and less hidden, and more and more apparent in the way we live. That's why Paul goes on 'Put to death therefore whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry' (Col. 5.3-4).

We are celebrating the Resurrection in a world where many people are enduring crucifixion. Across the Middle East thousands are being killed by bombs and tens of thousands made homeless and destitute. Some political leaders even claim that what they are doing is what God wants. In other parts of the world millions of people are refugees from internal violence in their own countries. Across the world, one in seven Christians are victims of persecution.

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God become human, is not just a past event, it's a continuing reality. 'Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and for ever', says the Letter to the Hebrews (13.8). God in Christ suffers in those who suffer, whether it's from human violence, natural disaster, or disease of all kinds. But ultimately suffering divine love wins out. The Resurrection is the basis of hope in a world that can seem hopeless; it's the assurance that death and destruction are not the end. 'In the midst of life we are in death' runs a medieval chant. It is also a Christian truth that in the midst of death we are in life. That is shown in the selfless service given by many, Christian and non-Christian alike, to neighbours in need – a fruit of the risen life in which we are called to share ever more fully as witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Mother Mel:

Pivotal moments in Luke's writings are often marked by characters looking the wrong way. In Luke's account of the resurrection, the baffled disciples peer ever deeper into the darkness of the tomb, prompting the angels to ask "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" That is: turn the other way, and you might see something worth seeing. And again, at the ascension, the disciples' eyes follow the Lord skywards, straining to see him as he vanishes. "Men of Galilee, why are you gazing into heaven?" ask the angels. That is: you would see the image of God on earth very easily, if only you were looking at one another.

Which way we are facing depends, of course, on what we think we are looking for. If we are looking for safety, we will look out for danger, like that king in Luke's parable, looking out towards the overwhelming size of his enemy's troops, instead of looking behind him, to see the overwhelming courage of his own. Or in the parable right next to it, of the man who wants to build a tower. Confidence and faith and hope come from God, so today's epistle tells us. But this guy is sure he can find them in his accounting book, if he just looks hard enough. But then, real possibility may be exactly what he is hoping to avoid.

As for what the disciples on the Emmaus Road are hoping to avoid, we don't know, but we can guess. In Jerusalem, the Jesus event was, as they say themselves, on everyone's lips. And they are getting out of there. If they could be identified as followers of Jesus - by their accent, clothes, company - then they may be skipping town to avoid their enemies. And if they don't quite believe these tales of a resurrection, they may be skipping town to avoid their friends. Either way, they are gone, getting as far as they can from this Jesus business, and heading for safety, or whatever they think they are looking for.

And what they find? Is the presence of God. I wonder, as many have wondered down the centuries, **which** scriptures Jesus opened to them as they sped from the city. Maybe Psalm 139: "Where shall I flee from thy presence? If I go up to heaven, or down to Sheol, to the wings of the morning or the depths of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me." Or today's psalm which Peter quotes in our reading from Acts: "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand". Beginning with Moses and

all the prophets, God's name is "I AM with you, and I WILL BE with you". That is the truth of the scriptures and of the resurrection as well. Open your eyes to one, and you open your eyes to the other.

And then at last their eyes are opened. And they turn around, and walk all the way back, the way they have just come. Jesus, you see, is nothing if not practical. How could God guide us to a better path, except by being right next to us, perhaps for many, many miles on the wrong one? It's true that Jesus' first call to us in his public ministry is "repent" - that is, "turn around and face the other way." But before he can so much as utter that word, he is among us. Wherever we are and whichever way we are facing, God wants to be there. That is what the incarnation means. And however stupid and doomed and self-destructive the course we are set on, he still wants to be with us. That is what the resurrection means.

So when we next talk of Luke's parable of the prodigal son, the greatest of Luke's stories of someone facing the wrong way, let us have no more of how the younger son has "wandered far from God", or must "return to God's presence". Where is God, but in the pigsty? God the tender voice prompting him to consider that he is worth more than this. God the will to live that shouts within him, and all of us, "I will die if I keep doing this". God that spirit that propels us to our feet, and up, and out, and onward.

We have all absorbed the image of "God the benevolent patriarch who awaits our return". But we must add to it "God the wandering stranger who meets us on the road." Meets us, sometimes, in a pretty battered condition. On a path we wish we hadn't taken. Picks us up, takes us to be cared for, pays the price. The good Samaritan meets a lost soul on the road, and joins him. No longer going in the right direction to finish his business affairs. Eschewing Jerusalem and Jericho, the great cities where great men take counsel. He turns his face towards compassion.

And so, many things are turned around in the telling of that parable. The Samaritan turns round on his journey. Jesus turns anti-Samaritan prejudice on its head. And Jesus turns back on the questioner his own question. That Pharisee, remember, who prompted the story, asked "who is **my** neighbour?". Instead, Jesus shows him how to be a neighbour. Answer: go where you are needed. That will always be the right direction.

There is no point in pretending that it does not take huge courage - huge and self-effacing courage - to go with someone who is heading the wrong way. But we do. Because love does. If you have a friend who is behaving like an idiot, you stick with her. And when a friend next plans to marry an idiot? Rejoice with her. It is because you were there with the confetti and champagne that she will let you be there with the hankies and vodka, when, like the disciples at Emmaus, her eyes are finally opened. Or maybe, it is your eyes that will be opened - and you will come to see in Mr Idiot a little more of the face of God than you first thought.

My friends, we need never worry that we don't know which way to turn. Turn to him, and he will show us the right direction. And we need never worry about the time we might have wasted, or might still waste, following the wrong path. Because he will give us gladness just with his presence, and there are no conversations on the road that are not worth having. And above all, never worry about what you think you are looking for. In the end, we are all only looking for one thing. As good old, mad old St Augustine knew: we are looking for peace. Whether late or soon, wisely or not so wisely, by paths well-lit or obscure, and by all the dead ends and wrong turnings we follow - we are all seeking the peace that comes only from our maker. Good news! He has already found us. And he will never, ever let us go.

Poem of the Month will return in June.

May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
(31) Trinity Sunday					1 Philip and James Aps	2 Athanasius B Dr
Parish Community					Steven our Bishop	Sarah our Archbishop
3 5th Sunday of Easter	4 Feria	5 Feria	6 Feria	7 Feria	8 Feria	9 Feria
Parish community	The persecuted church	The PCC	World peace	Those standing for election	Oxford City Council	The homeless
10 6th Sunday of Easter	11 Feria	12 Feria	13 Feria	14 Ascension of the Lord	15 Feria	16 Feria
Parish community	The Gatehouse	Christian Aid	Refugees	The hope of heaven	Aid workers	Helen and Douglas House
17 7th Sunday of Easter	18 Feria	19 Dunstan B	20 Feria	21 Feria	22 Feria	23 Feria
Parish Community	Those taking examinations	Bishops	Religious Communities	Healing Ministry	Our musicians	Sacristans and Servers
24 Pentecost	25 Bede Pr Dr	26 Augustine of Canterbury B	27 Feria	28 Feria	29 Feria	30 Feria
Parish Community	Historians	Anglicanism	Our parish	Vocations	The faithful departed	Children's church