



St Mary
Magdalen
OXFORD

Parish Notes

October 2025

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

We are in Interregnum just now,
awaiting the appointment of a new Vicar.

Associate Priest

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

Administration

Parish office

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. If you have any questions about safeguarding matters or wish to report a concern, please talk to the Parish Safeguarding Officer **Peter Dockrill** or send an email to: safeguardingsmmox@gmail.com

Treasurer

"Mary Mags Oxford costs £480 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"

Events

Concert

Saturday, October 11th. At 7.30 in church, a program of acapella and accompanied pop and folk music from around the world by Oxford's **Best Sing Since Sliced Bread** and the Dutch **Sing in Tune** - two community choirs from twinned cities Oxford and Leiden, meeting in international friendship. **Entry is Free.**

Oxford Half Marathon

Sunday, October 12th. With 13,000 runners this will mean road closures, making journeys to church more tricky. This year the start and finish have moved from Broad Street to Mansfield Rd, but if you have any access questions, please check out their website which includes a leaflet listing the roads affected. Just go to <https://www.oxfordhalf.com/before-the-race#travel> and click on the "Road Closures" link.

Student Group

Wednesday, October 15th Our Young Adult group is reconvening with its first meeting of the term. We will gather at Mags for the 6:00pm mass and afterwards at The Plough on Cornmarket. All welcome.

Wedding

Saturday, October 18th, sees the special occasion of John Spicer's daughter Sophia's wedding to Ned, plus Nuptial Mass, starting at 12 noon with a large choir. Please keep them in your prayers. All are welcome to attend.

Church Cleaning

Saturday 25th October, between 9.30am and 11.45am It is some time since we have had a cleaning session at Mary Magdalen, and we need to have one soon! After the Patronal festival and St Giles fair, there will be plenty to do. So we hope you can join us. Even if you have a very short time, please do come along. Refreshments and good company will be present.

Notices

First, a very warm welcome to **Thalia, our new Organ Scholar**, who makes her debut on Sunday, October 5th. A former member of Frideswide Voices, Thalia will be involved increasingly over the coming year. A pupil of our Organist Ian, she achieved Grade Eight with Distinction this summer.

Don't forget that **The Mary Mags Music Fund** can be supported in many ways, including sponsoring the music at the High Mass on a Sunday or Feast Day, perhaps in memory of a loved one. Please take a leaflet with you, from the chest by the door, or contact or contact our Director of Music, Will Dawes (wjbdawes@gmail.com) or a member of the clergy.

PCC

The next Parochial Church Council meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 14th** at 7.30pm in church. A major item of business will be our Section 12 meeting, for which we now have a date - it will take place on **Tuesday 28th October** at 6.00pm (note early start time) in church. This is a meeting with the Archdeacon and Patron, at which we shall discuss with them the appointment process, the parish profile and person specification, and the advertising and interview costs, and draw up a preliminary timetable – more details can be found in the [Vacancy guidelines - Diocese of Oxford](#) on the diocesan website. These are therefore important meetings for setting in train the appointment a new vicar.

Scripture on Saturday

Our Bible Study group has reconvened with regular Saturday morning Zoom meetings for which the usual link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89767962220?pwd=SW5CK2o3Z1pyRVBSL1U5Nmpjd0l0Zz09>

Ride and Stride

Last month I described our volunteers on this front as “doughty” and they all lived up to that label as they braved the winds and rain of Saturday, September 13th. Late signup Cooper Ackerly managed to walk nearly three quarters of a Marathon and you can still sponsor her at

<https://www.goodhub.com/go/cooperrideandstride>.

Poem of the Month

The Dwelling Place by Henry Vaughan

What happy secret fountain,
Fair shade or mountain,
Whose undiscovered virgin glory
Boasts it this day, though not in story,
Was then thy dwelling? Did some cloud,
Fixed to a tent, descend a shroud
My distressed Lord? Or did a star,
Beckoned by Thee, though high and far,
In sparkling smiles haste gladly down
To lodge light and increase her own?
My dear, dear God! I do not know
What lodged Thee then, nor where, nor how;
But I am sure Thou dost now come
Oft to a narrow, homely room,
Where Thou too hast but the least part:
My God, I mean my sinful heart.

So far this feature has dwelt among the pinnacles of the Metaphysicals in the output of Jonne Donne and George Herbert, so it is time to dip down towards base camp and look at a little Henry Vaughan – less dramatic than Donne (like most poetry!) and similar in tone to Herbert, but a touch less intellectually stringent.

One of the great joys of reading Metaphysical poetry is experiencing how each poet examines the relationship between the physical and metaphysical by imagining figures who slip between the two. Here Vaughan asks three questions of such a character who slips and slides.

The first sentence runs into the fifth line and only makes sense when we reach the final word “dwelling”. With “thy” uncapitalised (unlike “Thee” immediately afterwards), he could be addressing some kind of wood nymph or sylph until “shroud” and “My distressed Lord” transforms the creature addressed into Christ. The next question hints at the Annunciation and the Star leading the shepherds and Magi to the Manger. The beginning of the final six lines does work like the switch from octave to sestet in a sonnet. An admission of ignorance makes everything preceding it feel like

idle speculation and he is now addressing God as his bestie – “My dear, dear God” – in a statement of faith. So we imagine God as a tenant lodged in “a narrow, homely room” until the softly surprising final phrase turns that into a metaphor and God has gone metaphysical again. If God is actually in your sinful heart, you could hardly have anyone better placed to deal with your sins. All very comforting

Everything feels just a little understated, but the path along which he leads our imaginations has some charming twists and turns and biblical hints. The passage where the star is personified with “sparkling smiles” has an almost Disneyesque sentimentality.

The form is quite unusual – eight couplets with two shorter lines to begin with, then 14 iambic tetrameters with the usual counterpoint stress reversals or additions, and a series of three couplets from lines 9-14, where the rhyme is only visual and actually dissonant so, read aloud, it sounds like prose. Whereas several pieces we have examined here so far are bursting at the seams, this seems to shrink within the format. Donne’s God needs angry instructions. Vaughan’s has already turned up, unannounced.

Extra important Notice:

At the time of writing, we are having issues with our broadband connection in church, because rodents have chewed on a cable at an inaccessible point. This means our card donation facilities are currently offline. We hope you will accept our apologies on behalf of the rodent community. They know not what they do.

Obviously we are leaning on BT to fix this asap, but there is no quick solution. As ever, we still accept cash and cheques (don’t we all?) but card and online donations can be made via the Parish Giving Scheme page: <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/oxford-st-mary-magdalen-oxford/>

Our parish code is here for the: 270627222. They can also claim gift aid on our behalf.

My Mary Mags

Every month we highlight a feature of the Church (Our Mary Mags) or invite a member of the community to describe how and why they hooked up with it (My Mary Mags). Administrator Nigel Speight, opens this new series. Do start collecting your thoughts and a good pic to keep it going!



Back in 2008, my partner Tish and I decided it was about time we got married. Our engagement had already lasted 28 years. We knew where we wanted the Reception. Now all we needed was a nearby church. Our first port of call was the Chapel at St John's College, my Alma Mater, but we found it just weeks into a one year refurbishment. Emerging from the Lodge, we could see St. Mary Magdalen's, a church we had both walked past for 40 years. "Nah," I said. "High Church. They won't touch us." I was then a divorced, Anglican Easter/Christmas Christian, while Tish was a lapsed, Roman Catholic widow. I suppose Anglo-Catholic was in there somewhere.

Luckily, MMs was open – which is why I have always since plugged church watching: you never know who will walk through the door. At a meeting with Fr Peter, he was enthusiastic. "The Regs have changed," he said. "Maybe by him," I thought later. Everyone really is welcome at Mary Mags, and as a student of St Johns I had lived in the Parish for three years (!) which was another box ticked. He suggested we start coming to church which seemed a fair deal. "If you insist," we both thought at the time.

That first Sunday, we sat in front of a man who been 2nd in command at the British Embassy in Beijing and a lady who had been a Samaritan for over 30 years. During coffee afterwards, the CEO of Prudential and his wife took us under their wing, along with a lady who had been one of the first women surgeons in the country before doing an English degree at St Hilda's. There were several priests in the congregation and a few who could converse in Latin. There was a mix of Town & Gown, gay & straight, babies & nonagenarians. "Our kind of congregation!" we thought. And so it remains.

Intercessions

Please pray for the long-term sick and those in special need, among them: Sophie Brown, Pamela Rogers, Jo, Mathew Sale, Kay Brinton, Eleanor Sartain, Jasmine Turner, Kyeong Mi Lee, Janet Scott, Guy Westwood, Edward Llewelyn Jones, Peter Dodson, Barry Beck, Diana, Elwyn Knight, Erin Choi, Susannah, Kamal, Burns Ackerly, Vernon Porter, Wilma Murphy, Karen Jones, Graham Davies, Ruth Dryden, Andrew Siantonis, Christopher Lenton, Ann Garfit, Jonathan Gouws, Rene, Megan, Anna, Phoenix, Isla, Barbara Duncan, Sarah Murray.

If you would like any name added to this list (or removed from it, post recovery) ask admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

Sunday readings

Sunday 5th October: Habbakuk 1: 2-3, 2: 2-4. 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14. Luke 17: 5-10.

Sunday 12th October: Kings 5: 14-17. 2 Timothy 2: 8-13. Luke 17: 11-19.

Sunday 19th October: Exodus 17: 8-13. 2 Timothy 3: 14-4: 2. Luke 18: 1-8.

Sunday 26th October: Ecclesiastes 35: 12-14, 16-19. 2 Timothy 4: 6-8, 16-18. Luke 18: 9-14.

October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Teresa of the Child Jesus V Dr	2 Holy Guardian Angels	3 Feria	4 Francis of Assisi R
			Stephen our Bishop	Safeguarding	The Gatehouse	Frciscans
5 Harvest Festival	6 Feria	7 Our Lady of the Rosary	8 Feria	9 Feria	10 Paulinus of York B Ab	11 Ethelburga
Parish community	Famine Relief	The PCC	Children's Church	Students	Oxfordshire Historic Churches	Religious Communities
12 28th Sunday of the Year	13 Edward the Confessor	14 Feria	15 Teresa of Avila V Dr	16 Feria	17 Ignatius of Antioch BM	18 Luke Ev
Parish community	Those in Authority	Community Emergency Foodbank	Spritual Directors	Healing ministry	Theologians	Evangelists
19 29th Sunday of the Year	20 Feria	21 Feria	22 Feria	23 Feria	24 Feria	25 Feria
Parish Community	The City of Oxford	Those newly married	The homeless	Missionaries	Monthly Requiem	
26 Dedication Festival	27 Feria	28 Simon and Jude Aps	29 Feria	30 Feria	31 Feria	
Parish Community	Servers and Sacristans	Preachers	Church musicians	Helen and Douglas House	The Lutheran church	