

The Benefice of Gloucester St George with Whaddon
St Margaret of Scotland, Whaddon
Worshipping, Caring, Pioneering ...

Newsletter for Lent 2020

Dear Friends

New Housing

The new area to the south of Grange Road, is rapidly taking shape, and a few of the houses are already occupied. We are preparing a welcome pack which will be delivered personally to the new residents. Their numbers will roughly triple the present population of our parish.



A vacancy looms

On 8th March, our much-loved parish priest, Bruce Clifford, announced that he would be retiring at the end of July. This is not of course the time or the place for a proper record of the tremendous work done over the past five years by Bruce and Rosie. Suffice it to say that they will be hugely missed. We have been wonderfully served ... by a couple who had already earned their retirement after a full working life, but who chose to devote themselves to the full-time work of the Church for a further five years. They have given unstintingly, and we as a benefice have gained so much.

Christmas at St Margaret's



Candlelit Carols,
20th December 2019

As predicted in the last newsletter, we made a few changes to our big Carol service for 2019. The new large-print carol booklet was a great success, as was the family seating area in the chancel. This gave a much better view for young children and people seemed to take to it very well.

The all-age service on Christmas morning was well-supported, and Lorraine Best spoke to great effect on 'the letters of Christmas'. It was nice that more and more people are choosing to stay for the short communion service which follows.

The church decorations were very attractive, as they always are. This year we decorated the three candle coronas with real greenery from the hedgerows, entwined over a base of artificial greenery from Wilko's, and tied up with wine-coloured ribbons from Gloucester Market. These stayed in place, together with the crib and other greenery decoration in



Corona decoration

the window reveals, until Candlemas. It must be said that the church looked very bare when eventually it all came down!

As in 2018, we were able to have a special service for Advent. This year we had a service of readings and hymns around the theme of Darkness to Light. We started in total darkness with the lighting of the first candle on the Advent wreath, and worked up in stages to a blaze of candle-light and eventually all the 'house lights' as well. At the other end of the season, on Candlemas, we had a special evensong with the blessing of candles, and a wonderful reflection from Bruce.



Portrait of the south sanctuary window – the altar candle is just visible

Porch problems

There is still not a lot to report on the porch. Trial pits were dug last summer by our archaeologist, Chiz Harward. They showed that underpinning may be too risky an operation: the simpler alternative being to pin the outer wall to the side walls of the porch and monitor what happens. The extreme solution would be to dismantle the entire porch and rebuild it on a new and firm foundation.

We now have rough budget figures for these options, and are awaiting further advice. The cracks do not seem to be getting worse, so it could be that careful measurement over a period would further inform our options. Dr Mike Smith has kindly agreed to keep things under review from the PCC's perspective.

Readings and intercessions

This time last year we reported that, for the first time, we had introduced a rota for volunteers to do the readings and intercessions. The system is working well. We have recently recruited Georgina Wood to the list of readers. It is great to be able to share the privilege of reading the scriptures and leading the prayers. Thank you all.

An historic service

History was made at St Margaret's on 5th January 2020. Evensong that day was led by Fr Gerry Walsh, parish priest for English Martyrs and Matson RC churches. Without fear of contradiction we can say that this was the first time since the Act of Supremacy in 1559 that a service at Whaddon church had been led by a Roman Catholic priest. It was a moment of great historical significance ... and yet it was also the most natural thing in the world, demonstrating the warm partnership within what we are calling the 'Church in Tuffley'. Fr Gerry coped very well with his first Anglican evensong, and preached a stimulating sermon for Epiphany. We hope he will visit us again before too long.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

As in recent years, we will have an all-age service on Palm Sunday at 10am, though it is sad to report that Dancer, the Pound Farm pony who for many years has been our honorary Passiontide donkey, is now too infirm to join us. However there is now a new pony, Fab, who belongs to Luke Hyett. Both are seven years old, by the way. Luke is very happy for Fab to come to church and we will all be looking forward to seeing them both.

Because there is a service of baptism and confirmation on Easter Eve at the Cathedral (which we hope will involve candidates from our benefice) we will not be doing our evening Service of Light this year. Instead, we will find a way of blessing and lighting the new Paschal Candle at the 9am Easter morning service. There will also be Family Praise at 10.30am on Easter morning.

Our “other” services

For the first time, an annual report has appeared for Family Praise, our monthly all-age service, which has now been going for about 25 years. (‘About’ because no-one can work out precisely when it started, but it was 1995-ish). A copy is attached for your interest. If you can make it, why not come along some time just to see what we do?

And then of course there is the Thursday 10.30am communion which started about 2006 at a guess. We have a faithful following and it is a much-loved time of peace and biblical reflection for the middle of the week. Normally the reserved sacrament is used, which enables Jonathan to lead the service. Jilly Ponter and Kath Senior do a great job in opening up the church and setting up the altar and all the other unseen jobs which make the service go smoothly. Here’s a picture of them at work.



Jilly and Kath setting up for the 10.30 Thursday communion service

Dates for your diary...

24 th – 26 th April	Hope in Tuffley weekend – see website and Crossroads for details
Sat 4 th July	Tuffley Festival – Tuffley Rovers ground 11.00 onwards
Sun 26 th July	Our farewell services for Bruce and Rosie
Sun 4 th October	Harvest Festival United all-age service at 10.30 (time tbc)
Sun 20 th December	Carols by Candlelight at 5pm

How you can help sustain the life and work of St Margaret’s

Please remember St Margaret’s in your prayers, asking God for his blessing on all that we do in His name. Please pray especially for Helen McGeoch, our Pioneer, who is doing great work in the schools and in the wider community of Tuffley.

We are always hoping and praying for new members. We need to know what forms and times of worship people find most helpful. If our services are not right for you, please say what you would prefer.

We always need help with the cost of maintaining the building, the churchyard and our ministry. The best way is by standing order, which helps us to budget and makes tax reclaim easier. But any type of giving is welcome. You may wish to consider a legacy – please ask if you need advice about how to do this.

Thank you for your help and support, which mean a great deal to us.

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Website for St George's and St Margaret's: <http://www.glos-stg-stm.org.uk>

NB: you can download our monthly magazine Crossroads on the website

Normal Service Times

1 st Sunday	10.30 am	Family Praise
	5.00 pm	Evensong
2 nd 4 th and 5 th Sunday	9.00 am	Sung communion
3 rd Sunday	5.00 pm	Evensong
Thursdays	10.30 am	Holy Communion