

Saying Goodbye to David and Jo December 2024

St Mary's Monthly Message



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A Final Note From David

BY THE RECTOR

Dear Church Family,

One of the signs that Christmas is coming, is the postman dropping Christmas cards with pictures of robin redbreasts through our letterboxes. Now we all know that at the centre of Christmas is Jesus, but those robins on the Christmas cards also remind us that birds have a special place. In fact, the Bible is littered with references to birds, from the birds that Noah sent out from the ark and the raven that brought food to the prophet Elijah, to the doves and sparrows mentioned in the Gospels. Birds are also associated with the lives of the Christian saints over the years. From Cuthbert of Lindisfarne and St David of Wales to St Francis of Assisi, there is this love for birds. And whilst most of us are neither twitchers nor saints, birds can inspire us and bring comfort and peace. Two of my favourite Biblical phrases are of God being described as covering us with his wings that we may take refuge under them (Psalm 91:4), and the reference Jesus made to the birds of the air, to encourage us to put our fears and concerns into perspective (Matthew 6:26).

In our hectic lives, it's not easy to slow down and enjoy the present moment, especially during the pre-Christmas rush! But perhaps that makes it all the more important to find time each day to take time out for ourselves and for God. The symbol of the Holy Spirit is a bird – the dove that is seen on our Christmas cards or the wild goose in Celtic spirituality. As we pray at Christmas for 'peace on earth', so needed in our broken world, may we ask the Holy Spirit to bring peace to our hearts and minds, calming any personal anxieties we may have, and may God's joy and peace be yours this Christmas.

Every blessing. David



What's inside?

Jo talks about why her Time here has been so Special

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Jo Williams talks about her time in Risborough

David and I first came to Princes Risborough for an interview. As we drove into Risborough I had the overwhelming sense that I was coming home and said to David, with tears in my eyes, "I don't know what we will do if you don't get this job". I had been very ill with mental health issues in Andover so we came to Risborough needing to be restored.

God had spoken to me about going into the Canaan land and, when we visited the rectory, the pear tree in the garden was laden with fruit, representing that land of plenty, and I knew it was the right place for us.



From the outset and throughout our whole time here, we have found graciousness, unity, open-heartedness and open-handedness, and generosity. We were drawn by the fact St Mary's gave away 20% of its income, and we loved that spiritual generosity, rooted in giving. Also important to me was building the worship team and the time we spent in the primary school, whilst the church was being reordered, grew into the 11.15 service.

Other elements that have been at the centre of life here include: seeing church and community being so much a part of each other, giving to each other and being in relationship daily with the people on the high street or dog-walking at the park and enjoying their friendship; the young people who have lived with us, seeing youngsters drawn into our lives and being parents to a lot of young people has meant a great deal to me; building the prayer element of my relationship with God, praying in the worship band, starting to do a couple of sermons has been really lovely.



I feel that we have truly been family to each other and because we are God's family, we will always be family, doing life together. Everybody has brought something to us, like stitches in the tapestry, to make a truly wonderful picture.

Princes Risborough has been a place of peace and delight in our home. A beautiful place to live.

My sense is that I arrived from an arid and barren place, broken, and through being loved and accepted, I was able to feel refreshed and restored, and at peace with myself. I know that our new life in Wales is what God wants for us and I have the same feeling that I will be coming home once again.

David and Jo have asked if you would like to be included in a special book of testimonies for them to have as a 'keepsake', which tells your own story of what God has done in your life over the years of being part of St. Mary's family. Two books will be produced so we will have a historical 'time capsule' for the Williamses and for St. Mary's. It will bring them much joy and encouragement for their new chapter. Please send your story to jomarywilliams@gmail.com before 12th December.



Jo Williams



David Williams looks back and looks forward

Looking back, the first challenge that had been presented very clearly in the parish profile (or job specification) was getting the church over the finishing line with the reordering. That was a huge achievement for St Mary's, with a dedicated team making it all happen. There was also a remit to draw in more families. Today we have the 11.15 service, brimming with young children and their families, as well as children who attend the 9.30 service.

We have absolutely loved growing the connection with the community. In those early days, the Princes Centre was a small organisation, run solely by volunteers. But there was a vision to grow it, to encompass younger people, and to make it into the wonderful environment that it is now. We nearly lost it to closure but when we were offered the chance to buy the buildings on the proviso that we raise £300,000 in three years, we took over the buildings as a local community, raising the money in two and a half years. We were then able to employ a manager and additional staff. Now it is an award-winning centre that brings much joy to so many people. It was about being a voice for the voiceless, helping to rally the community and churches. I am now looking forward with some wistfulness to my final performance of the Jingers, the Centre's joyful choir, on 6 December in St Mary's.

Pat Kerr's phrase was that we are *a church punching above our weight*. This was never truer than during the pandemic. When Covid hit we benefitted from having invested in relationships in the community. Some town council members brought me into a meeting - socially distanced - and we had the idea of the Risborough Basket (a socially-distanced way of buying from local shops and getting our shopping delivered) which helped to keep local traders in business and local people fed. This, in turn, led to a realisation that there was the need to feed people who had been affected financially as a result of the lockdown, and the Risborough Food Cupboard was born, again hand in hand with the town council and the community. It was a huge operation feeding over 40 families, learning as we went.

Equally, we must not forget that, due to a great technical team, we were broadcasting Sunday services, starting on Mothering Sunday within days of the first lockdown starting.

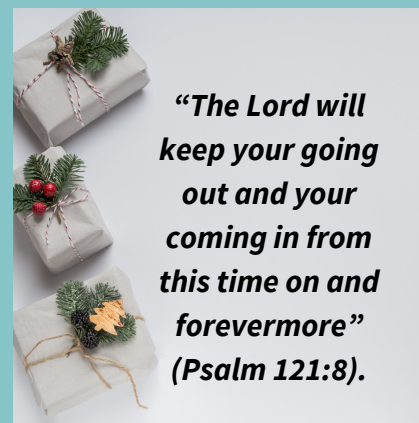
There has been a lot of laughter and I have many happy memories to look back on: answering the phone to a lady who had left her false teeth in church and wanted to collect them is amongst the funniest. Also in there are the time Jim [Taylor] and I dressed as Batman and Robin, being the back end of a donkey with the Bishop of Buckingham in the front, Pat dressing me as an inflatable Christingle, and then the blow up turkey...

I will miss you all, the fun times we have had, walking alongside you and being part of people's lives and stories.

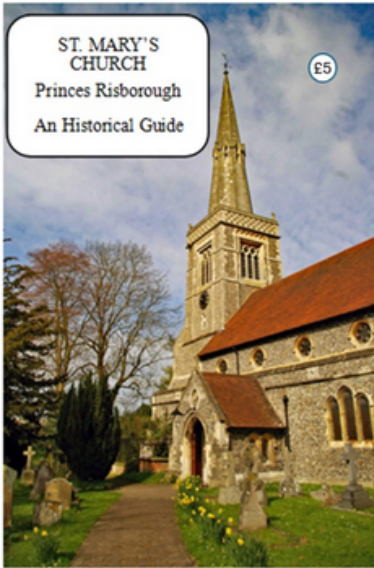
Looking forward, I shall enjoy walking the Welsh hills and living in Wales for the first time, experiencing everything that I have heard about from my Welsh family and living it for myself.



Batman and Robin aka David with Jim Taylor



A new Historical Guide to St Mary's



St Mary's Church
An Historical Guide
2024 new revised edition

Now Available in Church - £5
Pay at Payaz Terminal
or cash to Parish Office
or see
Debby Cadwallader
07803-590739

All proceeds to Church Funds



Debby Cadwallader

Congratulations to Debby Cadwallader on the completion of the new revised edition of the Historical Guide to St Mary's Church.

The original guide was written by Rex Kidd, who did the historical research in the 1990s. After the restoration and reordering of the church was completed in 2011, he suggested to Debby that she take on the task of updating his work, which she has now done.

Debby points out, however, that she could not have done it without help from others: Peter Knight who checked the details of the Chapter House and church renewal, David Lillycrop, who proofread the text, Tony Kerwood, who provided the colour photographs and Jim Cadwallader, who formatted the final version.

It is a very interesting record of how St Mary's comes to be the church we have today and we hope everyone enjoys reading it.

It is available to buy in church at a cost of £5.00, and the proceeds will go to church funds.

In other news...

A **huge thank you to all those people who helped with the Glitter Ball and Glitter Party**. Whether your role was in masterminding these events, washing up at the end, and everything else involved, teamwork *certainly* made the dream work! Congratulations to you all!

A list of all our special **Christmas services** is available at the Welcome Desk - details are also available on the website: www.stmarysrisborough.org.uk. David's final service is the **10am Christmas Day Celebration Service** - all welcome.

Please buy your **Christmas cards, Advent Calendars, books and gifts** from the stall in church. There is lots of choice - cash only please. If you can't find what you want, visit St Andrew's Bookshop: mailorder@standrewsbookshop.co.uk /01494 862168.

Come and join the **Jinglers for 'A Fond Farewell Concert' at St Mary's, 10.45am on Friday 6 December** (doors open at 10am for refreshments & there will be a raffle). Bringing their own brand of joy with their usual magic touch and enthusiasm, the Jinglers will be thanking David for his love and commitment to our community as they say 'Goodbye and Good Luck'.

There will be a **bring and share lunch after the 11.15am service on the 8th December** to mark David and Jo's departure to pastures new. A chance for the Church congregation to say an official farewell and wish them luck and all God's blessings in the future. Just bring a plate of food to share and drinks will be provided. There's a sign up sheet in church.

Make your gifting matter this Christmas and choose one of these **Project Possible Gifts to make a life-changing difference** for an overlooked child, family or community <https://projectpossible.org.uk/gifts>

There will be a **Christingle Service on Sunday 1st December at 3.15pm**. Lots of fun activities, food and craft including making a Christingle. You can sign up here at www.tickettailor.com/events/stmaryschurch1/1453100. Come and share the Light!

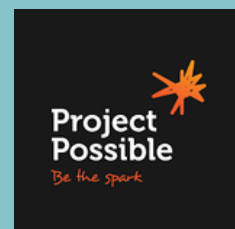
The **2024 Lighthouse Quiz Sheet** is now available from Cheryl Clark, Sally Greeno and Gill Wilkinson which helps raise funds for Lighthouse the children's holiday week. The closing date is 31st January 2025 so it's ideal to do over Christmas.

Princes Risborough Food Cupboard (PRFC) partners with The One Can Trust in High Wycombe to deliver food parcels weekly to referred clients in Princes Risborough and its surrounding villages. We are in need of drivers to deliver parcels to ca. 3 clients ca. once a month on a Friday morning at 10am. It would only take an hour of your time. We are a very friendly bunch and have fun helping the needy in our community. I hope you will join us. If you are interested, please contact Rupert Aries on 07471197756

Might you, or anyone you know be in a position, to **provide rented accommodation for a few months to support a family or individual seeking refuge from the war in Ukraine?** Short term accommodation is also needed from time to time to support our local hosts and provide them with a break. For more information contact Lizzie Thomas-Davies 07879420264.'



Glitter Ball Team:
Jacqui (top) and Hazel,
Eugene, Jo and Pete



Sign up for our weekly e-news by going to the homepage on our website. Receive all the news from St Mary's direct to your phone!

Dates for your Diary

Christingle Service Sunday, 1 December, 3pm in church

Lunch Club Wednesday, 4 December, 10am-3pm in church and then 8 January 2025

Bring and Share Farewell Lunch 8 December after morning services

Bereavement Drop-in Group in the Chapter House, 3pm on 9 December

Next Maker & Fixer @ Culverton Farm 19 January 3pm

No Tea for All in December, next one Sunday 26 January 2025

Prayers at the Yurt: Mon & Fri mornings, 7.30am to 8am

Play Cafe: Tuesdays during term time from 9.30am to 11am in church

Services at St Mary's and St Peter's

Christmas Eve Crib Service 3pm

Christmas Eve Midnight Holy Communion 11.30pm St Mary's

Christmas Day Holy Communion at St Peter's, Ilmer 9.00am

Christmas Day All-age Celebration at St Mary's 10am

Parish Communion, 29 December, 9:30 am NO 8am or 11.15 SERVICE



Holy Communion at 8am (*said*)

Parish Communion at 9.30 on Sundays in church and live streamed to your home.

See the St Mary's website for the link to our YouTube channel.

Live@St Mary's all age service at 11.15 in church. Kid's Church welcomes children to join them for activities during this service - contact the Parish Office for further info on sessions.

Mid week Holy Communion is on Wednesdays at 10.30 followed by coffee. NO service on Weds 25th Dec or Weds 1st Jan.

St Peter's Church, Ilmer - 15 December at 6pm, traditional lessons & carol service by candlelight.

For your Prayers this month

A Prayer for David and Jo

Loving God,

We give thanks for David and Jo, for their faithful service, guidance, and love shared with us. As they embark on this new chapter in Wales, bless them with peace, joy, and fulfilment in their new home.

May their new ministry and time of rest bring them closer to You and to each other.

Surround them with Your grace, guide their steps, and fill their hearts with Your presence. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

We remember these families in our prayers following the deaths of:

Erica Killoh and Frances Cutler.

Please pray for the families whose children are being baptised this month:

Luca Seymour, Phoebe Heather and Phoebe Williams.

We uphold in prayer: Lily Matthews, Dennis Scourfield, Kathryn's sister Heather, Pete Wynn, Elaine Needham, Paula Knall, Geoffrey and Joy John, Jenny Deverill, David Coleman, the Rolfe family, Carl State-Claridge, Kelly May, and all those bereaved, suffering ill health or facing operations.

Please pray for:

- those who will be affected by David and Jo leaving
- those people who have had to make difficult decisions regarding the Assisted Dying Bill
- those facing a difficult Christmas.

Copies of this newsletter are available in Church for you to collect and pass on to friends and neighbours.

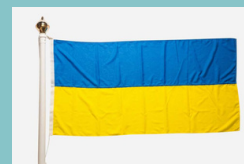


Join our weekly prayer meeting on Zoom every Wednesday at 9am - Zoom invite available from the Parish Office .

We encourage everyone to pray for one another. Ask the Parish Office if you would like to receive details of prayer requests.

Prayers for Ukraine: are held weekly on zoom - Fridays @ 9.00am.

*Zoom Link - Meeting ID: 714 5146 5358
Passcode: 262GY9*



*Contact the Parish Office
parishoffice@stmarysrisborough.org.uk*

Tel: 01844 273300