

St Olave's Church, Gatcombe

May 2026



Hello friends,

I hope that as always, this Newsletter finds you well and happy. And looking forward to the Merry Month of May!

I often feel that we are so blessed to live in such a beautiful and quite frankly stunning part of the world, let alone Island. And within our local community we have a number of highly regarded and dedicated gardeners. Many of whom tend many of our shared spaces, including our own churchyard at St Olave's. To you, I simply wanted to say a heartfelt thank you. For all you do in making our local area look so stunning and well cared for. Your work is much appreciated by us all.

I am very fortunate to have a garden. And over the course of the last few years, some very kind friends have helped me in bringing a bit of increased beauty to it.

We've encouraged more wildlife, especially butterflies and bees, by planting such plants that help support them in their habitat. Gardening also helps me switch off from the challenges of this world. And reminds me of the wonderful diversity of creation. Which in turn supports my spiritual health. I'm sure many of you know of a poem or two about gardening, but one of my favourites is part of one entitled 'God's Garden' by Dorothy Frances Gurney;

*The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.*

It reminds me of the wonder of creation. And how there is a perfect balance between all aspects of creation. But with that wonder, there is a responsibility for us to nurture it, as custodians of the planet. To help support Mother Nature rather than just take from her.



This then helps us with our own physical and spiritual health. By recognising the important part we play in the story of life. For me it also reminds me of another aspect to Christ's teachings for our life. For one of his most important pieces of guidance lie in the words 'Love your neighbour, as you love yourself.' Although we widely interpret this passage as referring to all people, I also believe that this can also mean to take care of all aspects of life, including nature.

So, if you have a spot from which you can help Mother Nature, please help her and in turn you will be brought nearer to God.

With my love, Revd Steve xxx

Annual Vestry Meeting (AVM) & Annual Parochial Church Council (APCM)

**To be held on Sunday May 10th in the church following the 11am Service of the Word Service.
Nominations and elections of Church Officers will be taking place together with
presentation of Annual Reports.**

All who are on the Church Electoral Roll are welcome to attend and use their vote..

In Your Prayers...

Dear Lord

As we ease ourselves into the lighter evenings we think of all the summer activities to come which we enjoy so freely.

We are blessed to live on such a beautiful Island, enjoying freedom.

We must pray for all the people in the world whose lives have been shattered by war and grief.

May they one day enjoy what we have. Amen

Maggie Puckett



Services at St Olave's in May

Sunday 3 May	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 May	11am	Service of the Word <i>Please stay afterwards for coffee and cake</i>
Sunday 17 May	6.30pm	Evensong
Sunday 24 May	11am	Holy Communion
Sunday 31 May	11am	Holy Communion

The Baptism of Joey

**was held on
Sunday March 29th at
St Olave's Church,
Gatcombe**



Service for Ascension Day

There will be a
Holy Communion service for
Ascension Day on
Thursday May 14th in
The Minster at 11am



The Wedding of Elizabeth Parsons & Sebastian Manger was held on

**Saturday April 25th at
St Olave's Church, Gatcombe**



The Baptism of Elijah was held on Sunday April 26th at St Olave's Church, Gatcombe



The Chrism Eucharist

On Maundy Thursday, 2nd April, Carol and I were delighted to be invited by the Reverends Steve and Emma, together with many clergy, lay ministers, and parish officers from across the Diocese, to attend the annual Chrism Eucharist at Portsmouth Cathedral.

This was our first visit to Portsmouth Cathedral and we found it to be an exceptionally welcoming place. The original church, dedicated to St Thomas a Becket, dates to 1185 and has undergone numerous alterations and extensions over the centuries. The most recent addition, the great west doors featuring the tree of life design, was completed in 1997. The harmonious blend of historical and contemporary elements creates a beautiful, light, and airy space in which to worship.

The congregation, joined by the magnificent Cathedral Choir, rose to sing the opening hymn as Bishop Jonathan, accompanied by other senior clergy from the Diocese, entered in procession. The service followed the traditional order, with prayers, readings, and inspiring music from the choir, including *Gloria in Excelsis* sung in Latin. Bishop Jonathan delivered his sermon in his distinctive style, beginning with a reference to the Artemis 2 rocket launch, and offering thought-provoking and enlightening reflections.

A significant moment of the service was the "Renewal of Commitment to Ministry", during which all those involved in the work of Christ's Church—both lay and ordained—stood in turn. The bishop addressed each group, who then renewed their vows. When it was time for the bishops' renewal, Talitha, one of the young people present, addressed them eloquently. Finally, the entire congregation stood, was addressed by the bishop, and prayed for all clergy and their families.

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During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, following the Peace, the holy oils were brought in by the Deacons. The bishop blessed each oil in turn: the oil for anointing the sick and dying, the oil for signing the cross at Baptism, and the Oil of Chrism. Communion followed, accompanied by the Choir singing *Agnus Dei* and "*Love Bade Me Welcome*".

After the service, a light lunch of soup and rolls was served in the hall opposite the Cathedral. The entire day proved to be a wonderful experience for Carol and me, marking another step in our journey of faith and discovery.

Steve and Carol Denness.



Easter at St Olave's

I realise it seems ages ago now but we couldn't let Easter go by without mentioning and celebrating it in this, our May news sheet.

At 6am we gathered in the churchyard, around a fire pit, for our Dawn Service. The dawn chorus was amazing and Richard Smout helped identify some of the birds we could hear. We remembered the distress of the disciples on that first Easter morning and we sang Elizabeth Peace's favourite hymn, 'As the deer pants for the water.' The Pascal Candle was then lit and we listened to the Easter readings, read for us this year by Carol and Steve Denness, about Mary Magdalene arriving at the tomb and the wonder of the Resurrection. We processed into the church for the last part of the beautiful and moving service.



Leonie and Michael Terry, who were spending Easter on the other side of the world, kindly donated a lovely selection of Easter Eggs for the two Easter Day services, so everyone was offered a chocolate egg as they went home. Amazingly just as everyone was safely on the way home there was a beautiful rainbow and a short sharp rain storm. Any earlier and the congregation would have got soaked. The sun came out again afterwards, for a glorious sunny Easter Day.



Our second service was a Holy Communion at 11am with the church looking so beautiful with Easter flowers in all the windows and on the altar. As always, a special thank you to the flower arrangers. Revd Steve took the service and Revd Emma gave the sermon. Louise Parsons read the first lesson for us, Lyndon played the amazing Easter hymns for us, and we used St Olave's special Tudor Chalice for communion. We use it at Christmas and Easter and our Patronal Festival but it is on view securely in the Minster Treasury Collection and clearly marked as coming from St O's. Wonderful and moving to think it has been used at the Communion Service for hundreds of years in our tiny village church, to celebrate Christ's birth and His Resurrection. I hope everyone had a very Happy Easter. Harriet Robinson

....The Dawn Chorus....

Revd Steve did tell us to listen to the birdsong more than once....

Our dawn service at 6am coincided perfectly with the dawn chorus. We were encouraged to listen to the 'music', and heard at least 13 different species of bird.

Pheasant, Blackbird, Robin and Canada Goose were heard first. They were soon joined by Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Wren, Dunnock, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Coal Tit, Carrion Crow and Jackdaw. A red squirrel ran through the branches along the eastern side of the churchyard. It was, indeed, a joy. Richard Smout



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John the Baptist at St Olave's Church...!!

Not, of course, in person, but John the Baptist will be the theme of the church scarecrow this year. We always choose a Bible story to illustrate with our scarecrow and John the Baptist in the desert, dressed in sackcloth and eating locusts and wild honey will be our scarecrow this year. In the past we have had the Three Kings, we have had little angels flying in the trees, we have had an Egyptian princess finding Moses in the bullrushes (see photo) and many more.

Do come and see John the Baptist when you are visiting the villages of Chillerton and Gatcombe for the Scarecrow Festival over the Bank Holiday week from Saturday May 23rd to Saturday May 30th. There should be at least 100 scarecrows. There will be refreshments at Aunt Sally's Tea Rooms in the village hall in Chillerton and at the Gallybagger Inn too.

If you come on Tuesday May 26th please have tea or coffee and cake at the village hall between 10.30am and 4pm as the church are running the tea rooms that day. We very much look forward to seeing you there. It is an amazing event involving the whole village. *Harriet Robinson*



Your Diary Dates



Saturday 6th June sees us holding the Coffee Morning in Chillerton Village Hall again from 10am till noon. Time for homemade cake and chat with friends.

Don't forget the Chillerton and Gatcombe Village Show on Chillerton Green on Saturday 25th of July. We will be having our *Guess if it's Water or Wine* Stall. Come and see if you can be lucky, and enjoy a traditional village show.

Christian Aid Week
May 10 - May 16



Your Church Matters!!

Our next PCC Meeting is on Thursday 7th May. On the Agenda we have updates on Safeguarding Training, reports from Revd Steve, our Treasurer, Deanery Synod news, Fund-Raising and, as always... Church and Churchyard Maintenance.

There will also be a preliminary discussion on the findings of the recent Spaces for Nature survey, fund-raising for Christian Aid week, and a discussion about the IW Rifles Flag.

