



NEWSLETTER – Late May 2026

New Service Times

Please remember the new arrangements which start from the beginning of June.

1. Sunday services at St Mary's will start 30 minutes earlier at 9.30am.
2. Sunday morning services at Milton on Stour will start at 11am. Evensong on the third Sunday of the month will remain at 6.30pm.
3. Sunday services at Silton will start at 11am.
4. On the first Sunday of the month there will be an 8am traditional language Communion at St Mary's and every Wednesday a Communion at 10.30am.
5. On the fifth Sunday of the month (when there is one) there will be a Benefice Service, rotating round the three churches.

We understand that people do not like change, but the great advantage in this plan is that Revd Becca will be able to take two services per Sunday, therefore keeping in much closer contact with all three congregations. At St Mary's we hope to be able to have a deacon each Sunday and to be able to reinstate the second distribution point for Communion, as was our practice before the Covid pandemic and the interregnum.

Church Paths

As you will have heard, during the work to renew the church paths, a brick-lined vaulted tomb was discovered inches below the path outside the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The vault is approximately 2.2 metres long and 1.76 metres wide and perhaps 1.5 metres deep at the apex. It does appear to contain bone remains. It is very hard to date, but may have been first built in the late 17th or early 18th centuries.



Many thanks are due to Gillingham Town Council their work on this project. They have called in the church architect, a consulting archaeologist and a structural engineer. At the time of writing we await their advice before any decision about what to do next. It **may** be that the adjacent table tomb was moved from the top of the vault when the chapel was built in 1920/21 and is now pressing unevenly on the side of the structure, causing it to subside. If the table tomb has to be restored or moved, Listed Building Consent will have to be obtained from



Dorset Council. Any restoration of the vault itself will no doubt require a Faculty from the Chancellor of the Diocese.

Photos: The discovery on 24th April (above).

The church architect, Tom Griffin (in the pale

shirt) and the consulting archaeologist, Keith Faxon, investigate the discovery (right).

The vault is unstable and in danger of collapse. Please keep away from the area.