



[Bruton](#) [Pitcombe](#) [Redlynch](#) [Brewham](#) [Shepton Montague](#) [Wyke Champflower](#) [Bratton Seymour](#)



This month, as the Christmas season comes to an end with the feast of Candlemas, we have just two weeks of Ordinary Time before we enter the season of Lent on 18 February. That is not very long to find our equilibrium and focus as we try to decide how to approach Lent this year. Lent can be a

IN THIS ISSUE

News from our Parishes

Reading

Spiral of Light

Kimberley Snapshot

Bruton Parish Visit

Prayer Ministry

Caring for God's Acre

Lent Retreat

Childhood memories

Bible Course

Merched y Môr

Lent Group

Deanery Quiet Day

BrueCrew

Benefice Events

Benefice Services

Diary Dates

Contact



rich and precious time of reflection and evaluation – evaluation of self and of the life of the Church. What are we doing and why? What do we feel like celebrating and what do we feel like lamenting. Lent is a gift to us all as we intentionally take time and make space to look and listen and feel, waiting on God expectantly and with our hands open.

Lent should feel different.

But often, it passes as if it were a continuation of Ordinary Time, with no discernible difference. I think that is a shame and a missed opportunity. There is plenty of help around to facilitate the sort of reflection and contemplation that can make Lent profitable. If you don't already do so, why not give it a try this year?



If you have something to contribute to a future edition of this newsletter, please send it to the Rector at the benefice office address.

Easy-to-follow details of how to receive this newsletter by email can be found on the St Mary's website (www.stmarysbruton.org), or email benefice@stmarysbruton.org. If you are aware of someone who might like to receive it but does not use email, please consider printing a copy yourself and delivering it to them.

Christmas across the Benefice

The Festival of Christmas was well celebrated across the Benefice, with good numbers of people attending the various carol services and Christmas Day services. Huge thanks to all who prepared, decorated and cleaned for these celebrations of the Nativity of Christ. The season of Christmas will come to its close on the Feast of Candlemas (the presentation of Christ in the Temple) on 2 February. We will mark this with a special service of Choral Evensong on the eve of Candlemas – Sunday 1 February – at St Mary's, 6.30pm. Do come if you can.



St Mary's West Tower Star just after completion

Brewham



Ed & Guy at work

The re-wiring project at St John the Baptist has begun! Having obtained an emergency faculty, the contractors started on site on 13 January and have made great progress already with the cabling runs. We are still struggling with the electricity supplier about the necessary upgrade of the metering and switching equipment, but hope that we will soon find a way through that. We are hugely grateful to all the generous donors who have enabled this vital work to be done.

Bratton Seymour

St Nicholas may soon need its own major building maintenance project as sections of the plasterwork ceiling in the nave are beginning to collapse and fall. This will require some major fundraising. The extent of the work needed is still being assessed.

Benefice wide

All of our churches paid the full amount of Benefice Share requested in 2025, which was a great achievement, given the size of the increase in our contribution. We hope to receive a letter of thanks from the Diocesan Board of Finance in due course.

Messiah

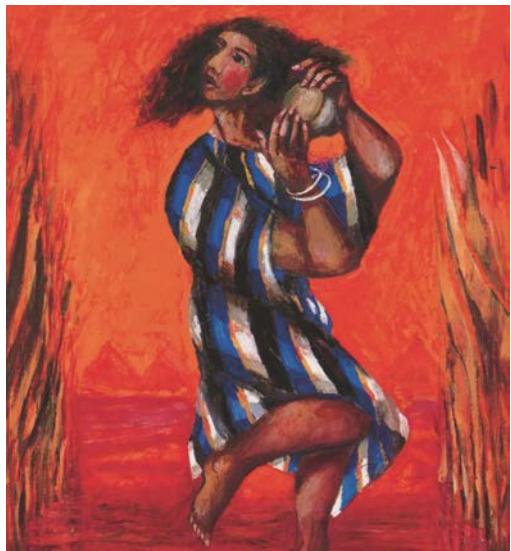
Among all of the wonderful music and joy in the lead up to Christmas, surely one of the highlights was the glorious performance of extracts from Messiah at St Mary's by The Echoing Air with Music for A While. We very much hope that they will come again this year.



The Echoing Air and Music for a While

At St Mary's we were very touched by, and grateful for, a generous donation received just before Christmas from our friends in Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg. This act of kindness made a big difference to our finances and is very welcome.

Reading suggestion: Easter in Disguise



LIZ DODD
**EASTER
IN DISGUISE**
THE 2026 LENT BOOK
BLOOMSBURY

Liz Dodd, who used to be a journalist and is now a nun, has published a book for Lent called 'Easter in Disguise'. She is anti-capitalist, anti-racist and very much pro radical poverty. The Rector wondered about using this book as the focus for our Lent Discussion groups (see below), but decided that for us it was probably too radical, too disturbing, too much. Read it and tell him if he was right. Or is the author right? Or both?

Spiral of Light

The Friends of St Mary's are delighted to announce that the Spiral of Light is being organised for Saturday 7 February from 5–7.30pm. The event takes place at Jubilee Park and there will be fire dancing, street food, mulled cider and more. Entrance is free, with a voluntary donation in aid of the Friends of St Mary's. We hope to light up the Dovecot with flares, encircling the hill as we celebrate Candlemas, the Festival of Light.



THE SPIRAL OF LIGHT

Saturday 7th February 2026

5pm - 7.30pm Jubilee Park Bruton

Fire Dancing, Street Food, Mulled Cider and more



Sponsor a Flare @ £10 each



Free entry with voluntary donations

All funds to Friends of St. Mary's

Kimberley Snapshot



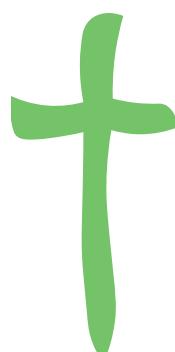
William Bunjuck, Jerry Jangoot and Alan Mungulu

Please take away our drinking rights

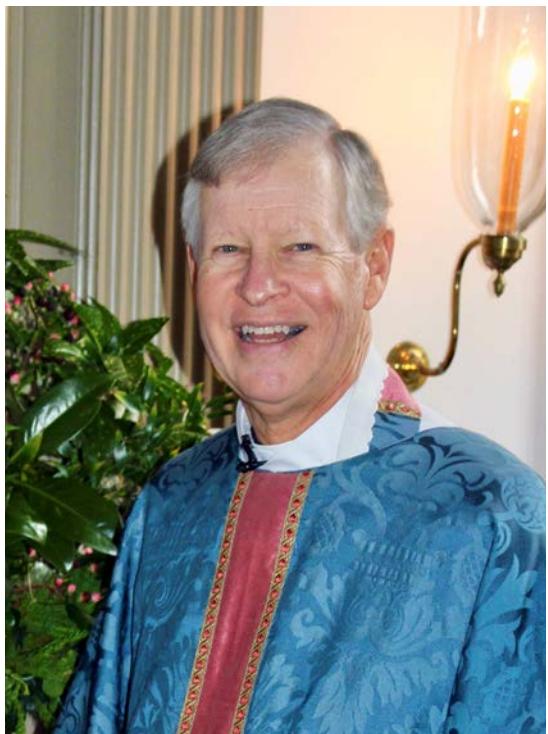
This picture was taken in 1976 at the commissioning of the first Aboriginal Police Aides in the Kimberley. The two Elders in the uniforms were William Bunjuck (Narynyin man) and Jerry Jangoot (Worora man), and the man in the wheel chair was Alan Mungulu who was the Chairman of the Elders. It was one of the proudest days for Mowanjum Community – both of these men were the traditional lawkeepers in the community and this was the European Community's official recognition of this position. The local EU member was there, along with the Police Commissioner

and the local Town Council members. During the reception afterwards, some of the women from Mowanjum approached the Commissioner with a request: "Please take away our drinking rights – the drink is killing our people!" Prohibition had existed for the Native Aboriginals until 1964 when the United Nations Bill of Rights was lifted. The Commissioner tried to explain to the women what that meant. They were devastated as they had seen a huge increase of violence towards themselves and their children since that time. The only thing that the Community could do was to implement a community ban since that was the area controlled by the Elders – at least they could do that! That did initiate one of the funniest days in the life of the community I ever saw...

Across the road going into Derby was not Mowanjum land, so the drinkers decided that they would hide caches of booze across the road. The Elders found out about it and raided them, bringing the bottles into the common area and smashing them into the ground in front of the whole community. The drinkers were devastated – that was their life blood being poured out on to the red dust! The rest of the community was elated as there would be quiet nights for a while.



Bruton Parish Church Visit



At St Mary's, we are very much looking forward to a visit on 5 June by some pilgrims from Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, VA. You may remember that the Rector was invited to go there last autumn to preach and speak to their Friends of Bruton charity. Now it is our turn to offer them some hospitality as the pilgrims come to Bruton for a day on their UK pilgrimage.

Bruton Parish Church is currently looking to appoint a new Rector and they are very fortunate to have appointed an Interim Rector as they seek and discern the right candidate for the permanent appointment. Here is some info about the new Interim Rector, The Rev'd William J. Watson III.

The Rev'd Bill Watson is the Interim Rector during Bruton's clergy transition. He has served congregations in the Dioceses of Kentucky, Southwestern Virginia, and South Carolina. A graduate of the University of Virginia and Eastern Virginia Medical School, Bill practiced family medicine in Newport News for twenty years and helped form Tidewater Physician Multispecialty Group. In 2000, he discerned a call to ordained ministry and graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2003, where he received the Harris Award for Leadership. Ordained that same year, he later served

as a consultant to the Church Pension Group and spent sixteen years on the faculty of Credo Conferences, supporting clergy well-being. Bill treasures his marriage to Sallie; they have three grown sons and five grandchildren. His interests include reading, cooking, exercise, and gardening. His faith journey continues to deepen his understanding of holiness and wholeness, and as a disciple of Jesus, he finds great joy walking with others as they discern the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Prayer Ministry

Our prayer focus in February is on families

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for the families around the world. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as they seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen (Mothers' Union prayer).

Specific prayer points:

- Pray for families you know and their needs.
- Pray for social workers and organisations helping families.
- Pray for people getting married in our churches this year.
- Pray that our churches would be welcoming places that show the love of God.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 1 John 5:14

Caring for God's Acre

Somewhere to Shelter

February is not a particularly good time to see wildlife, but churchyards can be crammed full of creatures overwintering there.



Piles of vegetation such as leaf litter may hold a hedgehog, which rolls up the leaves until it resembles a leafy football. Do you have a pile of twigs and branches or stones somewhere? These are fantastic for amphibians such as newts, toads and frogs to hibernate. Frogs can pick up the colour of their surroundings during the winter, sometimes emerging pinky red from a red clay soil for example. Our churchyard walls contain nooks and crannies for slow worms as well as a multitude of invertebrates such as woodlice and spiders.

Grass snakes will use a compost heap, whilst lizards go below ground into the burrows or cracks common in churchyards. Queen bumblebees need burrows too, and don't forget the mice, voles and shrews who may have dug them.

Having an area of coarse or tussocky grass provides many overwintering nooks and crannies including hollow stems of plants like hogweed. These tussocks are used by many animals including some butterflies which may overwinter as eggs, chrysalises or even caterpillars. Thick ivy makes great shelter for small birds such as wrens, whilst the dense foliage of yew trees shelters goldcrests (amongst others). Holly Blue butterflies lay eggs on holly leaves in



the autumn, ready to emerge in spring.

Is there an old tree present such as a veteran oak? This can hold bats which roost behind sections of loose bark, or owls within holes. Hollow trees make a perfect place to spend the winter, but these are few in number. Man-made structures such as roofs, toolsheds and bird or bat boxes can provide similar conditions.

While we start to dream of spring and the wildlife we may see, remember not to tidy up too much so as to keep your churchyard full of species, ready to emerge.

With All Your Heart: a retreat in preparation for Lent

Saturday 14 February, 10am–1pm

Join us for this online retreat in preparation for Lent with Malcolm Guite, David Ford, Carys Walsh, Julia Golding, and Simon Horobin, and with worship from St Martin-in-the-Fields, led by Richard Carter with the St Martin's Voices.

[https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/
with-all-your-heart-a-retreat-in-preparation-for-lent](https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/with-all-your-heart-a-retreat-in-preparation-for-lent)



Childhood Memories

I visited my childhood home church of St Peter's, South Barrow, early in Epiphany, (hence the decorations) where the Holy Communion service was taken by Hilary Jalland, and where my Auntie is one of the church wardens.

In my teens I sometimes read or played the organ at services there. Without the luxury of microphones, in advance of a service Mum used to help me practise speaking loudly at home by standing at the bottom of the stairs while I read from the landing above.

The organ was tiny (it has since been replaced with a keyboard) and had a very wheezy motor which meant it was switched off for the sermon. That was fine so long as I remembered to promptly switch it back on in time for the offertory hymn! It sported just a few stops and a couple of pedals which gave me the 'extravagant' options of playing either loudly or softly!

I was baptised in the font and married at the altar there. Other life events that are special to me, one very sad one, and many more very happy ones, have also taken place there, and I treasure all the memories. Until the millennium, the east window consisted entirely of plain glass, but a stained-glass window was commissioned, with people sponsoring individual panes.





Bible Course

The Bible is a fascinating and important collection of books. But it is not an easy read, and it has sometimes been misunderstood and misused. Some people are confident about their reading of the Bible, and others are far from confident, and find it confusing or contradictory or irrelevant or all these things.

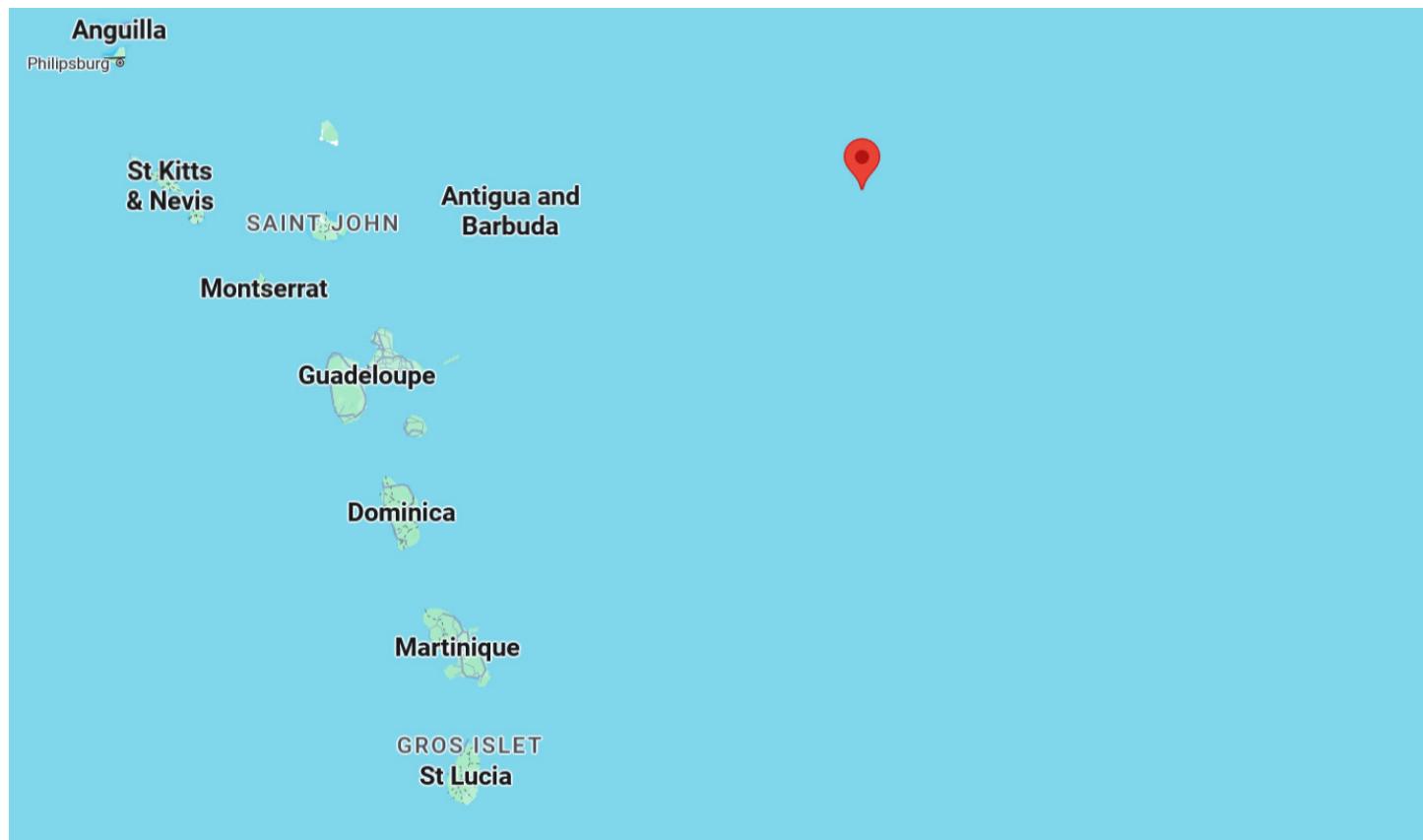
Would you be interested in attending a course in which we explore an overview of the Bible and seek to understand how the diverse books it contains fit together, to explore how to read it and receive the meaning and truth it contains? If so, please get in touch with the benefice office so that we can assess the degree of interest and see what we might put together after Easter.



Merched y Môr

For anyone not in the know, Merched y Môr is an all-female team from Pembrokeshire, West Wales, racing in the World's Toughest Row, Atlantic. A mere 3000 miles. Rowing.

The team (comprised of Denise Leonard, Liz Collyer, Helen Heaton and Heledd Williams) is currently in position 38 (all boats) and 8th in the Womens Class. Their current location is $17^{\circ} 18.66\text{ N}$, $058^{\circ} 34.10\text{ W}$, which according to Google Maps looks like this:



The challenge is an unaided charity row across the Atlantic Ocean, which means rowing 24/7 in all conditions for approximately six weeks. The journey to get to the start line began in 2022, and there were several practical and financial hurdles to be overcome. They

secured their ocean rowing boat (Cariad), however covering the cost of this and associated equipment, training courses, shipping and many other practicalities is a mammoth task!

Every little donated helps them, and gets them one step closer to raising thousands of pounds for their four chosen charities: the RNLI, Action for Children, Sea Trust Wales, and Popham Kidney Support.

As well as raising money and awareness for their charities they hope to inspire their children, friends and as many people as they can to see what is possible, and to push their own limits to achieve something extraordinary of their own!

Visit www.gofundme.com, type 'Merched' into the search box at the top left, and help these ladies to achieve something remarkable.



Lent Group

We will hold a series of discussion group meetings in Lent. As usual, these will be on Mondays, with one group meeting at 3.00pm and (if there is sufficient demand) another group meeting at 6.30pm. The groups will meet at Marksdales, by kind invitation from Katie Mills. The first meeting will be on the first Monday of Lent, 23 February and the final session will be on 23 March. The material for these discussions has not yet been decided and will be announced nearer the time.

Deanery Quiet Day

Just before the start of Holy Week, there is an opportunity for some quiet and reflection together with people from across our Deanery. On Saturday 28 March, a group of us will go to Hilfield Friary for a day of seclusion and reflection. Details coming soon.

Brue Crew – River Rights for the Brue

BrueCrew have an event on Wednesday 18 February downstairs @ the Chapel entitled *River Rights for the Brue*.

Learn from Barrister for Nature, Paul Powlesland, of the momentum flowing from recognition of the right of rivers and nature.

Paul Powlesland is a barrister and founder of Lawyers for Nature – an organisation that seeks to represent the natural world,

and all those who seek to defend it, in the courts. Its mission is campaigning for the legal rights of nature. Paul specialises in upholding the rights of environmental activists to protest and protect the natural world. He also uses environmental law and regulations to defend trees, rivers and wildlife.

Paul lives on a boat on the River Roding in East London. In 2019, he founded the River Roding Trust, where he works passionately and tirelessly to protect and restore the river, uphold its rights, and speak for the river's interests. Paul's relationship with the river also provides us with practical examples of the way in which our current legal and regulatory system is failing and how Nature guardianship can instead provide a practical, legal, and philosophical way forward.

Join us on Wednesday 18 February at 7 for 7:30pm in the Clubroom, downstairs At the Chapel – bring along your informed questions for Paul.

Please do consider donating £10 to enable BrueCREW to continue to host events like this, and fund our costs, such as insurance for our Riverfly monitors, and our balsam-bashing volunteers.



SHEPTON MONTAGUE PCC

in association with

SOMERSET MOVIOLA

proudly presents

THE ROSES

(2025/105 minutes/15)

Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Ivy (Olivia Colman) and Theo (Benedict Cumberbatch): successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. But beneath the façade of their supposed ideal life, a storm is brewing – as Theo's career nosedives while Ivy's own ambitions take off, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentment ignites. This is a reimagining of the 1989 classic film *The War of the Roses*, based on Warren Adler's novel.

Director: Jay Roach

in St Peter's Church, Shepton Montague

Thursday 12th February

at 7.30pm

Doors open 7.00pm for drinks & snacks

Tickets: £7.00 (£3.50 for under 15)
pay on the door with card
or at the bar with cash

All proceeds go towards St Peter's Church

For more information please contact Sarah Maude 01749 812 149

Visit our website at: www.moviola.org



Benefice Events

St Mary's Events

Sign up for our mailing list! It's very easy to do! Just scan the QR code using your phone's camera, and you'll be directed to our sign-up page where you can select which events you'd like to hear about. You can unsubscribe from this list any time simply by getting in touch with us.



CABARET VOLTAIRE

Cultural events: mostly music, but sometimes poetry and other things



LISA O'NEILL

SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2026

BRUTON, ST MARY'S, 8pm

Bruton Choral Society

Quiz Night

Friday 6 March 7.30pm
Bruton Community Hall



Tickets £10 to include a light buffet supper
from 01749 813161

Groups, singles, pairs, all welcome!

Maythorne in Concert

A Colourful String Instrument Band
making a name for themselves in Glastonbury
town ~ where they live, and beyond...

They will be playing Folk tunes, including
Celtic and Bretton, some very danceable to!

Rob Bray - Guitar & Bass
Daygan Robinson - Mandolin
Jenny Bliss - Violin & Flute
& Dave Williams - Irish Bouzouki



At BRUTON CHURCH / £15 OTD

7.30pm

Saturday 7th March 2026

A second concert will be held at Bruton Church on the 29th of May 2026

'Bliss Plays Bach and Biber in Bruton' Virtuoso Violinist Jenny Bliss will be playing Baroque music
featuring the composer Heinrich Biber ~ the pioneer of what is called 'The Fantastic Style.'

Benefice Services: February

Season Ordinary time / Lent (Green, purple)	Sunday 1 February Candlemas	Sunday 8 February 2 before Lent	Sunday 15 February Next before Lent
St John the Baptist, Brewham	No service		No service
St Mary's, Bruton	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 6.30pm Choral Evensong	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 11am Eucharist (CW1)	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 11am All Age Worship
St Leonard's, Pitcombe	11am Holy Communion (BCP)	9.30am Matins (BCP)	11am Holy Communion (BCP)
St Peter's, Redlynch			
St Peter's, Shepton Montague		6pm Evening Prayer (CW)	
Holy Trinity, Wyke			9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)
St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour			

Benefice Services: February

Season (Various)	Wednesday 18 February Ash Wednesday	Sunday 22 February Lent 1
St John the Baptist, Brewham		
St Mary's, Bruton	6.30pm Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes	8am Holy Communion (BCP) 9am Breakfast Service 11am Eucharist (CW1)
St Leonard's, Pitcombe		4pm Evensong (BCP)
St Peter's, Redlynch		
St Peter's, Shepton Montague		9.30am Eucharist (CW1)
Holy Trinity, Wyke		
St Nicholas, Bratton Seymour		

Diary Dates

February

- 2 • **Memorial:** Mary Stroud, St Mary's, 2.30pm
- 5 • Roman Catholic Mass, St Mary's, 10am
- 7 • **Memorial:** Fairlie Williams, St Mary's, 1.45pm
- 7 • **EVENT:** Spiral of Light, Dovecote, 4pm
- 12 • **EVENT:** Shepton Montague Film Night, 7.30pm
- 17 • Shrove Tuesday
- 18 • Ash Wednesday Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes,
St Mary's, 6.30pm
- 20 • Pitcombe PCC, 2.30pm,
- 21 • **EVENT:** Lisa O'Neill, St Mary's, 8pm
- 23 • Wyke APCM, 7pm
- 25 • **Funeral:** Elizabeth Taylor, St Mary's, 11am

March

- 6 • **Memorial:** Julia Clothier, St Mary's, 2pm
- 7 • **EVENT:** Maythorne, St Mary's, 7.30pm
- 21 • **EVENT:** Peaceable Living, St Mary's Church, East Chinnock,
10am–4pm
- 22 • **EVENT:** Joint Choral Concert, St Mary's, 5pm

Contact

Rev'd Jonathan Evans, Rector

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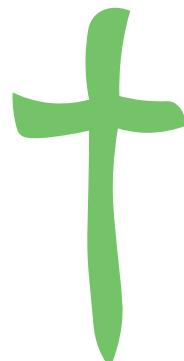
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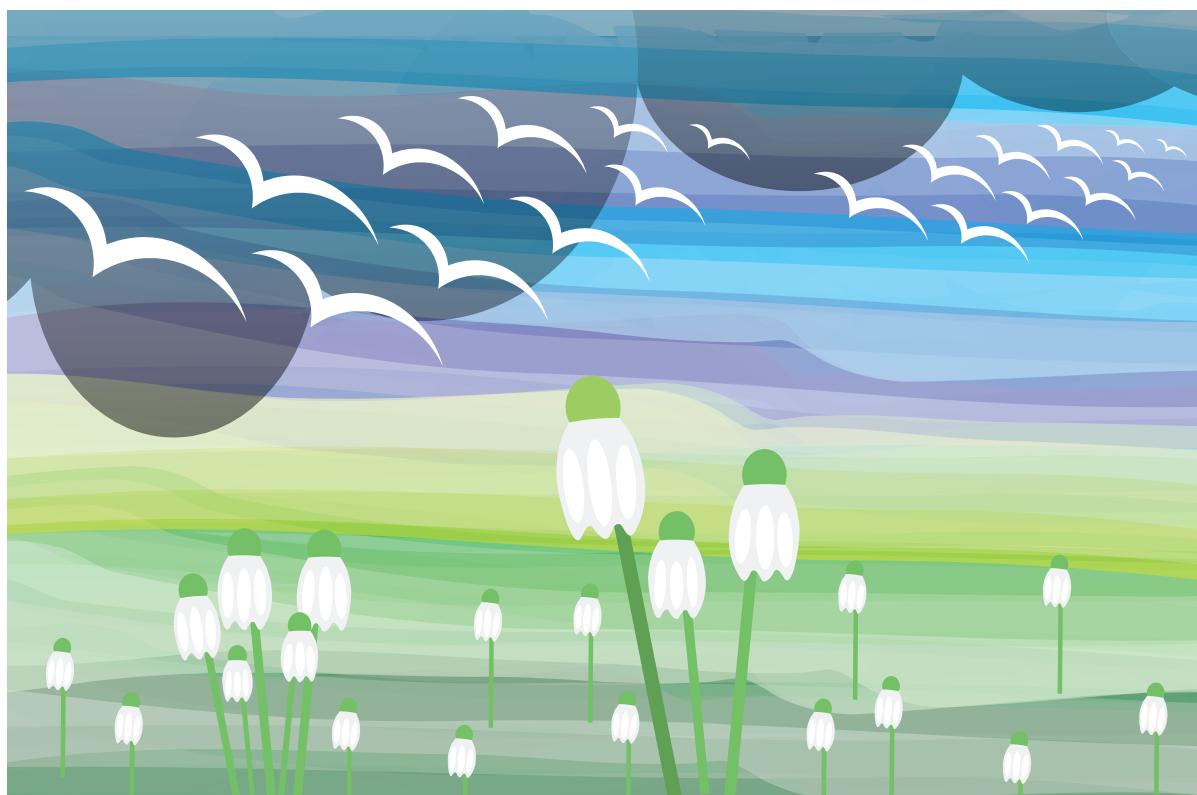
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www.stmarysbruton.org