

Online edition of
St Mary's Church Old
Swinford Parish Magazine
February 2012



ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



Parish Church Magazine



RECTOR: Interregnum in process
All enquiries to the Parish Office

CURATE: The Revd Ruth Atkinson, 58 Arlington Court,
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FEBRUARY 2012

50p

SUNDAYS AT ST MARY'S

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Parish Communion and Children Together
6.30 pm	Evensong
10.00 am	(second Sunday) Worship Together

WEEKDAYS AT ST MARY'S

Daily:	9.00 am - Morning Prayer (except Fridays and Saturdays) Morning Prayer on Thursdays will alternate between St Mary's and St Thomas'
Daily:	5.00 pm - Evening Prayer (except Fridays)
Wednesday:	1.30 pm - Noah's Ark at St Mary's (term time) parents & toddlers
Thursday:	10.30 am - Holy Communion in Lady Chapel
Thursday:	7.30 pm - Bell Ringing Practice
Friday:	Choir Practice and Youth Groups (in term time)
Saturday:	10.00 - 12.00 am - Open Church –refreshments available
Curate's Day Off: Friday	

OTHER REGULAR EVENTS

First Tuesday Fellowship:	First Tuesday in month	(Tel:441003)
Bible Study Group:	Monday, first in month at 2.30 pm	(Tel: 379972)
Mothers' Union:	Second Tuesday at 2.15 pm	(Tel: 422677)
Outreach Group:	Occasional meetings	(Tel: 01562 851491)
Music Group Practice:	Second Saturday at 10.00 am	(Tel: 375167)
St Mary's Walking Group:	Last Saturday of the month. Depart 9.30 am	

Reader Emeritus:	Mr Roy Peacock	379972
Reader:	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
Church Wardens:	Mr Edward Haden	378104
	Mrs Marjorie Ferguson	393454
Organist / Choirmaster:	Mr Robin Walker	01905 353939
Treasurer:	Mr Richard Harris	395760
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Magazine Editors:	Miss Gemma Sutton	423021
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661

Church Hall and		
Coach House: - Bookings	Parish Office	441003
Parish Administrator and		
Publicity Officer:	Mr John Sutton	441003
Parish Office:	Open 9.00 am -12.00 noon Monday to Friday	441003
Church website address:	www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk	
	E-mail: st.mary.os@btconnect.com	
Magazine e-mail address:	stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk	

ENQUIRIES ABOUT WEDDINGS, BANNS OF MARRIAGE, BAPTISMS.

Please come to the Church on Saturday morning between 10.00 and 11.00 for Vestry Hour. You will be warmly welcomed. Tea and coffee will be available.

WELCOME TO ST MARY'S

There is a strong sense of relief, joy, satisfaction and gratitude in the St Mary's community at the announcement of the appointment of Revd Stephen Agnew as the new parish priest. Our warm welcome awaits Stephen and his family and we wish them well as they prepare for the move to Old Swinford.

A NEW PARISH PRIEST FOR ST MARY'S

The following announcement from the Archdeacon Fred Tretheway was made at all services on Sunday 8 January 2012.

The Bishop of Worcester is pleased to announce the appointment of a new parish priest of St Mary, Old Swinford. He is the Revd Stephen Agnew.

Stephen has been the Vicar of Claines in North Worcester for 12 years and is currently Rural Dean of the Worcester East Deanery.

Early in his ministry he worked in the diocese of Chester and was then Chaplain of Bromsgrove School for a number of years.

Stephen is married to Jean who is a teacher. They have four grown up children and two grandchildren.

A date for his licensing has yet to be agreed but it is likely to be in late spring or early summer when repairs in the Rectory are completed.

The Bishop is delighted that Stephen has accepted his offer to become the Priest in Charge of Old Swinford and asks for your prayers for him and the Agnew family as he prepares to begin a new ministry here.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our monthly magazine cover continues to record 'Interregnum in Process'. Since Greville's retirement, St Mary's Church and Parish activities have continued as normal, thanks to the extra efforts of the clergy, church wardens, the parish administrator and the PCC.

A special acknowledgement is due to our curate Ruth who for the past few months has bravely managed to hold everything together. The Christmas period was a particularly heavy burden with many additional services, all enjoyed by large congregations. The work in preparation and delivery of these events is enormous.

Perhaps less visible than her duties in the weekly church services, her commitment to bereavement care, pastoral visiting, the Hospice and 'keeping in touch' is very special. This aspect of her spiritual support is appreciated by many in our very large parish.

Thank you Ruth for all the devotion, care and love you are giving to St Mary's during your curacy.

From all at St Mary's

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

First of all a very big thank you to everyone who made Christmas happen. Thank you to the 'Flower Guild' for decorating the church so beautifully, to Geoff Davies and his team who put up the Christmas tree, to Robin and the choir for a wonderful repertoire of music and to all those who were wardens, vergers and sides people for making people welcome and to John Sutton who produced endless service sheets and helped the curate keep track of everything that was meant to happen.

As we look forward to all that 2012 has to offer we are blessed with the announcement of the appointment of the Revd Stephen Agnew as the new priest in charge to the church. I know that many of you will be relieved to know that the end of the uncertainty is in sight.

It is worth reflecting though that the role of a priest is someone who, at least in part, helps to shape and develop the ministry of everyone in the church. I would like to encourage each one of you to consider what role you might play in this ministry. In recent weeks some people who have played key roles in the church have had to take more of a back seat as they cope with illness or the effects of aging. Others have come forward, Jane Knowles and Janet Peart are doing an excellent job in running our Mums and Toddlers group 'Noahs Ark', Tony Tatford, Malcolm Frost and Jan Drew are showing a gift for hospitality as our new vergers and we have been blessed with Megan, Alice, Molly and Jack, some of our younger members of the choir developing their skills and becoming confident members of our reading team. However, we still have a need for others to play an active part in the life of the church; as Bishop John frequently says, 'Mission is about seeing what God is doing and joining in with it'. Probably the most pressing need is for 'servers', a robed role helping the priest as they preside at the altar. We could also do with another person to help with 'Children Together' and more people to join the reader's rota. Some of you may have a hankering to do something which is not a recognised role at the moment. I am currently looking for people who will welcome and support couples who are worshipping with us before their wedding day. Whatever your gift there is a space for each person to be part of the ministry team.

Please pray for Stephen and his family as they prepare to move to St Mary's and for the church of St John the Baptist, Claines, as they enter a time of uncertainty.

With my prayers and best wishes,

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY 2012

5 February Septuagisma	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 40. 21-31	1 Corinthians 9. 16-23	Mark 1. 29-39
	6.30 pm Evensong	Numbers 13. 1-2,27-33	Philippians 2. 12 - 28	
12 February Sexagesima	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am	Worship Together		
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Genesis 2. 4b - 25	Luke 8. 22 - 35	
19 February Quinquagesima	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	2 Kings 2. 1-12	2 Corinthians 4. 3-6	Mark 9. 2 - 9
	6.30 pm Evensong	1 Kings 19. 1 - 16	2 Peter 1. 16-21	
26 February First Sunday Of Lent	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 pm Parish Communion	Genesis 9. 8 - 17	1 Peter 3. 18 - 22	Mark 1. 9 - 15
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 2.15-17, 3.1-7	Romans 5. 12-19	

QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it — but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.
(1809 – 94) U.S. physician and writer

DIARY FOR FEBRUARY 2012

Thursday 2	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 3	7.30 pm Worcestershire and District Change Ringing Association Branch Practice
Saturday 4	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 10.00 - 12.00 Coffee and Cake in aid of Church Mission
SUNDAY 5	THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT SEPTUAGISMA, Education Sunday 3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 7	Holy Communion at Hollycroft Nursing Home
Thursday 9	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 11	Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 12	THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT SEXAGESIMA, 10.00 am Worship Together 10.30 am Holy Communion
Thursday 16	Open Church and Vestry Hour
Saturday 18	
SUNDAY 19	THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT QUINQUAGESIMA 3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 21	2.00pm Anchor Bereavement Care Group
Wednesday 22	Ash Wednesday 11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge 7.30 pm Holy Communion
Thursday 23	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 25	Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 26	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LENT COURSE 2012

In collaboration with clergy and congregations at St Thomas's and Holy Trinity churches a programme for the Lent Course is being devised on the theme of 'Jubilee'. As this magazine goes to print details are being finalised through discussion amongst the clergy. Full details of the programme will be made available in church and will be published in the pewsheets. Do try to take part in what has always proved to be a thought-provoking element of our church programme.

Lent is a time when Christians remember the 40 days and nights Jesus spent alone in the desert without food being tempted by the Devil. Jesus used this time to prepare for His work by fasting and praying.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (22 February) and lasts for six and a half weeks. Lent ends at Easter when Christians remember the execution of Jesus and then celebrate his rising from death.

The last week of Lent begins with Palm Sunday (1 April), which celebrates the day Jesus entered Jerusalem and the people lay down palms at his feet. The last day of Lent is Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday (8 April)

A VISIT WORTH THE MAKING

I recently had the honour of spending an hour chatting with Jack Witley, a 91 year old resident of Oriel House. This was the first of what promises to be an interesting and very enjoyable series of visits initiated by Jack's wish to share a tale or two through the pages of this magazine.

Proudly displayed on surfaces around his room are photographs of Jack's family, each having particular associations and a tale he is keen to tell. On the walls are mounted three pictures of particular importance to Jack, two showing the Catalina flying boats in which he flew during WWII and one of the crew with which he served. I am sure that future visits will lead to many tales of his flying days for sharing with a wider audience.

In the course of his conversations with Revd Ruth Atkinson, Jack had spoken of two pieces of verse he wished to recommend to our readers and the main reason for this visit was to collect these. The first is printed below, a reminder, I'm sure, of the little creature featured in one of Jack's photographs. The other will follow in a later edition. Thank you Jack.

The Editor

NO WONDER HE WAGS HIS TAIL

When God had made the earth and sky
The flowers and the trees,
He then made all the animals
And all the birds and bees.
And when His work was finished
Not one was quite the same.
He said, "I'll walk the earth of mine
And give each one a name".
And so He travelled land and sea
And everywhere He went
A little creature followed Him
Until its strength was spent.
When all were named upon the earth
And in the sky and sea,
The little creature said, "Dear Lord,
There's not one left for me".
The Father smiled and softly said
"I've left you to the end.
I've turned my own name back to front
And called you Dog, my friend."

Author unknown

YET ANOTHER MUSICAL DELIGHT

What an enjoyable evening it was for those able to attend the 6.30pm service on Sunday 8 January. With Ruth keen to maintain a tradition for a post-Christmas evening service a special Choral Evensong had been arranged by our Musical Director, Robin Walker with readings selected by Dorothy Gibson.

As we have come to expect, but never to take for granted, the choir performed the key elements of the service with singing that delighted and maintained their usual, much respected and enjoyed, high standards. Responses were very ably led by William Peart whose talent and commitment to music at St Mary's is always appreciated and seems to grow more as the weeks and months pass. We really are blessed by the wealth of talent and dedication of all who contribute to music at St Mary's.

Four specially selected readings were included, read respectively by Jack Kirton, John Sutton, Valerie Partridge and Roger King. Thank you for the pleasure they brought and the expression with which they were presented.

A resounding voluntary of Nun Danket alle Gott by Karl Elert concluded the service in a manner that was clearly enjoyed and appreciated by all present and was acknowledged with applause of thanks and well done to all.

The Editor

NEWS FROM CHRIS AND CHANTAL

In a Christmas card sent to everyone at St Mary's Chris and Chantal Bryan wrote:

2011 has been the year of the builder with five-yearly repairs on the rectory to include a fully accessible extension we call 'Jonathan's pod' which provides him a downstairs bed/play room, specialist bathroom, utility rooms and carer's accommodation. Jonathan is doing quite well although his needs have become very complex—he loves his new accommodation and it's made looking after him much easier. Susannah is very active and talkative, happy going to preschool once a week. Chantal is expecting another baby in mid January. Do please pray that all will be well.

2011 was also year of the holiday, you wait three years and two separate week-long holidays come along at once. Susannah still thanks God most nights for the beach and chips!

Chris is ok, work keeping sensibly busy and with some encouragements. He looks after eight parishes of varying size which keeps him out of mischief.

It was good to see you all at Greville and Pauline's do!

With love from

Chris, Chantal, Jonathan and Susannah

In St Mary's Church Narthex

Saturday, 4 February 2012

Coffee and Cake

10.00 am -12.00 noon

Raffle

and good company

Tickets £1.50



In aid of Church Mission at home and overseas

UPDATE TO SOUND SYSTEM

One of my areas of interest is looking at how modern technology can assist and enhance different aspects of our lives and particularly in my work as parish administrator how technology can help us to communicate not only with each other but the work that we do and the message that we bring as disciples of Christ. The late Betty Tandy benefited enormously from the recordings that we used to make of our Sunday morning services and often spoke about how her spirits were lifted through her listening. It therefore seems very appropriate that a recent legacy that she left to the church has been partly used to enhance and improve our sound system by replacing a very unreliable CD player and adding a modern digital recording facility which will allow us to now record services directly to a memory stick or SD card as an MP3 audio file. This makes managing the file much easier as it can easily be copied, edited or transferred to a CD for either taking out to people who are unable to attend church or by making available through our website.

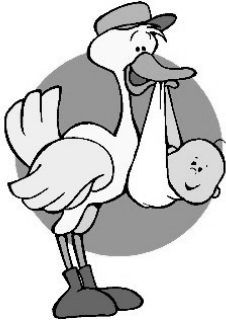
I know, through the management of our website, that the audio files of sermons which have been made available are frequently downloaded and through feedback I have received I know that people have enjoyed listening to these particularly when they were not able to attend church on a Sunday. We are very grateful to Betty and her family for this generous and lasting legacy which we hope will be of benefit to many people in the future. If you know of anybody who might benefit from receiving audio files of services then please let me know at the parish office and I will make arrangements to enable this to happen.

John Sutton

FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

PREPARING FOR NEW LIFE

GETTING READY FOR BABY



When a new baby is expected many things have to be prepared or bought before the birth. Make a list of at least ten things that may be needed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

ANIMALS AND BIRDS PREPARE

Animals and birds prepare for their new babies as well. They build and line their nests or bring new bedding into their homes. Do you know which creatures prepare these homes to make a safe place for their babies?

A DREY IS PREPARED BY _____
AN EYRIE IS PREPARED BY _____
AN EARTH IS PREPARED BY _____
A HIVE IS PREPARED BY _____
A SETT IS PREPARED BY _____



YOU TOO CAN MAKE READY FOR NEW LIFE

You can plant seeds to grow into new flowers.
Fill some small pots with compost.
Get some big seeds like sunflowers or nasturtium.
Put one seed in each pot.

Water them then keep them warm and just damp.
Watch for new shoots.
Plant them in the garden or a tub later.



LENT - THE TIME WE PREPARE FOR EASTER



During the six weeks before Easter we try to prepare ourselves by learning to live a better life. We can happily agree to help Mum. Do a job we don't like doing like tidying our bedroom or washing up. Give up one chocolate bar and put the money in a Charity box.

NEW MESSAGE IN CODE

Write out the alphabet with a number code.
i.e. A=1 B=2 C=3 etc

Now decode:

2.5.8.15.12.4. 9 13.1.11.5 1.12.12 20.8.9.14.7.19 14.5.23

Amazing Grace

Back in the early 1970's you could not fail to hear the tune of Amazing Grace played by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards! The tune was Top of the Pops for nine weeks and remained in the charts for some weeks after. That said, the words of Amazing Grace have appeared in very few major British hymnbooks. The situation in the United States is quite different where its popularity has lead it to appear in most Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Lutheran hymn books.

John Newton, at the age of 11 was sent to sea with his father. He was flogged for deserting from the navy and became captain of a ship engaged in slave trading. His conversion was in part influenced when he found himself at the ship's wheel in a terrible storm which lasted well over 24 hours. Following this, he became friendly with John Wesley and George Whitfield, themselves leaders in Evangelical revival. He was ordained in 1764 and became curate at Olney in Bedfordshire and later went, until his death, to St Mary, Woolnoth, in the City of London.

The words describe Newton's conversion as a wretch saved from eternal damnation. The verse which begins: "When we've been there ten thousand years," is of suspect authorship. The tune is based on an American folk melody and is almost certainly of Scottish origin, probably brought across the Atlantic in the eighteenth century.

Robin Walker

IN PRAISE OF BELLS

Several people have told me how much they have enjoyed hearing the bells ringing this Christmas and I thought it would be appropriate to just speak briefly about the ringing of bells and their significance as part of our worship. You may have seen on television recently a very interesting programme which traced the history of bells and bellringing and talked about the long history of the use of bells to traditionally mark and signal the beginnings of services. This of course still happens and hearing the sound of a peal of bells is very much part of Sunday for people whether or not they attend church. I like to think of it as a sense of mission in that we constantly remind people of God's presence in our community gently hailing the presence of the church and its mission.

Just as the organ plays and the choir sings so the bells and their music play their part in celebrating, mourning, rejoicing and helping to create an atmosphere in which we can give thanks and praise God. And so we celebrate with wedding couples as they enter and leave the church, and mourn with grieving families, sometimes with bells half muffled as respect, and often just sing out praises, happiness and rejoicing as we let the bells ring out their song far and wide from the church.

And so to the poem that I have chosen by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which nicely sums this all up.....

CHRISTMAS BELLS

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play.
And wild and sweet The words repeat
Of 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song,
Of 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day -
A voice, a chime
A chant sublime,
Of 'Peace on earth, good will to men!'

And in despair I bowed my head;
'There is no peace on earth.' I said,
'For hate is strong
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail.
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men!'

Henry Wordsworth Longfellow



NEWS FROM THE CHURCH HALL



Tickets are now available at £3.00 each for the **‘Posers and Puddings’** quiz on Saturday 25 February. Teams of up to six contestants to take part. If you haven't got six, we will make the teams up. Bring your own drinks, glasses and savouries and we will provide sumptuous puddings and coffee. There will be prizes for quiz winners and a raffle. -See page 18

We have now had an engineer to look at the loop system and await a price for a new unit. We are arranging for the drive to be improved from the gate to the tree on the left hand side. This will rid us of the nettles in the summer and mud in the winter. Kitchen modifications are still being thought through.

Ian Ferguson

ST MARY'S WITH ST JOHN'S MOTHERS' UNION

Two visitors were welcomed to the January meeting.

The New Year service was led by Janice Sutton and Janet Blaxland and was based on our theme for 2012 'Meeting the Challenge.'

In ever-changing and challenging times MU membership is still based on prayer, purpose and fellowship. We aim to serve the worldwide community through faith in action and through love, still to support family life whatever their circumstances.

After the service Betty Foulkes thanked members for their prayers during her recent stay in hospital and Revd Ruth Atkinson for her visits. It was good to see Betty's splendid recovery.

Twenty members were in attendance for our AGM. During AOB a request was made for small, knitted white bears with coloured scarves for very young baptism candidates. Patterns are available (contact Anne May). Also, Clent MU have invited members to an open afternoon 2-4.00pm on Thursday, 2 February.

Sarah Jordan spoke on "Stress Therapy." She retired as a research scientist for cancer and now advises and demonstrates Emotional Freedom Technique. This has proved very effective and she likened the treatment to acupuncture without needles. Sarah gave us practical tips for testing it out and it is worth considering as a help in our stressful modern times.

Diary date -

February Meeting—Tuesday 14 February 2.15pm at the Coach House.

Mike Blaxland will present a talk entitled 'Turkey'.

Dawn Nex

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Happiness is the realisation of God in the heart. Happiness is the result of praise and thanksgiving, of faith, of acceptance; a quiet tranquil realization of the love of God.

FROM ACROSS THE SEAS

Simple scrolls carrying the following article were being sold to raise funds by a very poor school visited recently by Jean and Ray Drew whilst staying with their daughter and family in Vietnam.

POOR PEOPLE

One day, the father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people lived?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered:

"I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our feed, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing? It makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don't have. Appreciate every single thing you have, especially your friends!

Pass this on to friends and acquaintances and help them refresh their perspective and appreciation. "Life is too short and friends are too few."

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CHRISTINGLE 2011

Thank you so much to all those people who supported the Christingle Service on 18 December. £126.28 was raised for The Children's Society which will help disadvantaged children.

Wendy Tranter

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

CHEESEY MUSHROOM MELTS

Serves 4

It's always handy to have a simple vegetarian recipe. You don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy these.

8 large Portobello mushrooms

2 tbsp. good olive oil

Salt and black pepper

Small pot of tomato salsa, at room temperature

Grated parmesan cheese

Pre-heat the grill to medium. Remove the mushroom stalk keeping the mushroom intact. Brush the mushrooms all over with the oil. Place the mushrooms, rounded side up, on a baking tray season well and grill for 2-3 minutes.

Turn the mushrooms over and top each with one tablespoon of the salsa, grill for five minutes.

Remove the tray from the heat and sprinkle generously with the grated parmesan and grill for a further three minutes until the cheese is golden.

Serve with crusty bread

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE.....

Come February and your cellar may be looking a little depleted after Christmas. Just the special crus left waiting a suitable occasion? Hopefully you still have one inexpensive bottle left intact, for it could be just right for this month's dish. Mushroom melts with tomato say simple farmhouse fare to me — although such a combination may well appear on many a menu at a modern bistro-cafe too. Italy and the South of France ought to present some good options. Being meat-free, we don't want anything too big and tannic, nor are we looking for an alcoholic 14.5% offering.

The Italian grapes Sanglovese and Barbera can hit all the right notes. Both can sometimes show more muscle: Sanglovese is the grape of Chianti — tannic and powerful at times — but simple varietal wines show fleshy morello cherries which is more where we want to be. Similarly, the Barbera d'Alba made by Pio Cesare which I keep tasting is a big intense cherry liqueur style of wine, but many less expensive Barberas can be found with just a bite of acidity and fruit which is all we need here.

The South of France blends of Fauquieres, Costieres de Nimes and the prime villages of the Cotes du Rhone would be equally successful. They have the right balance and weight and are very much at home with good farmhouse fare. Crack open a bottle and let your prized Gigondas or Hermitage wait for that special event!.....Enjoy your wine-sipping.

Richard W.B. Ryan

DIOCESAN NEWS

On your Marks for the 2012 Games....

Next summer's games might still feel like a long time away, but there are lots of things that churches can be doing to prepare for the Olympic Games, planning some community involvement around them. Over recent years, churches have been involved in over one hundred programmes associated with major sporting events.

London (particularly the east side where the Olympic village is located) can seem quite distant from Worcestershire and Dudley. However, the 2012 games will be enjoyed by people throughout the UK and is a great opportunity for churches to connect with the community, perhaps through showing key events on a big screen or by hosting a 'pub quiz' which will be sent out early in the year by the Diocesan Evangelism and Church Growth Group.



There are also other opportunities set out on the '*More Than Gold*' website. (www.morethangold.org.uk) *More than Gold* is an ecumenical organisation set up to try and help churches make the most of the opportunities that the 2012 Olympic Games can offer and has a tried and tested programme of outreach, hospitality and service to meet the needs of every church - whatever your size, location or make up.

WHAT'S ON AT THE CATHEDRAL?

23 January - 10 February	Exhibition 'Cathedral and Town in the Nineteenth Century.'	Dean's Chapel
Saturday 11 February, 1.00 pm	Lunchtime Recital by Cheltenham Choral Society.	Free admission, Retiring collection.
14-26 February	'And Thereby Hangs a Tale' - Exploring the truth about William Shakespeare's wedding.	Dean's Chapel
14-16 February	'Shakespeare and the Bible' - An exhibition which explores the way that the Bible shaped Shakespeare's world and how that influence impacted on his work.	Dean's Chapel
Saturday 18 February 1.00 pm	Lunchtime Recital by University of Gloucestershire and Community Choir.	Free admission Retiring collection.

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

8 January Finn Edward Tennyson Ralston
Finley James Rogerson

Weddings

23 December Stephen Handscomb & Claire Dunn

Funerals

12 December	Canon Alan Hayward	Aged 86
14 December	William Wright	Aged 73
4 January	John Cutler	Aged 88
10 January	Norman Whittington	Aged 78



Posers and Puddings



In St Mary's Church Hall
Saturday 25th February 2012, starting at 7.00pm
A general knowledge quiz for all
Teams of up to 6 - Raffle and Prizes
Bring your own nibbles, drinks and glasses. Puddings provided
Tickets £3.00 per head

PUBLIC NOTICE CONCERNING STREET COLLECTION HELD IN DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

The Borough Council of Dudley granted a permit to the person named below to collect money for the benefit of **Mary Stevens Hospice** in **Stourbridge & Ryemarket only** on 23 December 2011.

The total amount collected was **£342.08**

The total amount of the expenses incurred was **NIL**

The total amount of the payments made by me to persons in connection with the promotion or conduct of the collection was **NIL**

Michael Harrison

52 Field Lane, Oldswinford, DY8 2ED

Dated 27 December 2011

CHILDRENS PAGE ANSWERS

HOMES: 1) Squirrel 2) Eagle 3) Fox 4) Bee 5) Badger

CODE: Behold, I make all things new

A LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

For something like 150 years the majority of the population of the UK have enjoyed a better standard of living than their parents. It's become ingrained in our culture that those of us who are parents can anticipate our children exceeding our own accomplishments. When a pattern like this becomes established over such a long period it moves from being something we hope for, and are grateful if it happens, to something we expect, as of right, and are frustrated, angry or resentful if it does not come about. Every year on year, with occasional exceptions, we expect things to improve – so that what we have afforded one year becomes part of our expectations every year: consumer goods, fancier cars; bigger homes; more foreign holidays or whatever.



It wasn't of course true of the world in which Jesus grew up. Things often did get worse, steadily worse. Indeed, the Bible is framed in a world view of decline – from the Garden of Eden to the destructing of the Jerusalem temple. And you and I may now be entering a prolonged period when it won't be true in our society either. Whilst overall the world economy can and will continue to grow, the greatest beneficiaries of that growth will not be in Europe or North America, and for some years the present economic crisis may well more than offset the modest growth we might otherwise achieve.

The question for 2012 is whether as a society we can adapt to that, learn to make do without the expectations of growth, and continue to play a full part in reducing the environmental impact of our lifestyles, for the sake of those who will follow.

For Christians, who hold to a higher value than the accumulation of wealth and possessions, there will be a vital part to play; not least because when the cake gets smaller the squabbles over the sizes of the pieces get harder. Recent research has shown attitudes in the country hardening against the poor. Paradoxically the fewer jobs there are, the more we seem inclined to blame those without work for their own plight. At the same time, the rhetoric of the debate on the welfare benefits suggests we would rather see ten innocent people impoverished and humiliated than allow one to milk the system.

I believe that we are called to stand up to this harshness, to be a people who look to see that neither the poorest in our society, nor generations yet to come, are made to bear the brunt of our failure to recognise that, unlike the song, it isn't always the case that "things can only get better."

Bishop David

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