

Online edition of the  
St Mary's Old Swinford  
Parish Magazine  
December 2012



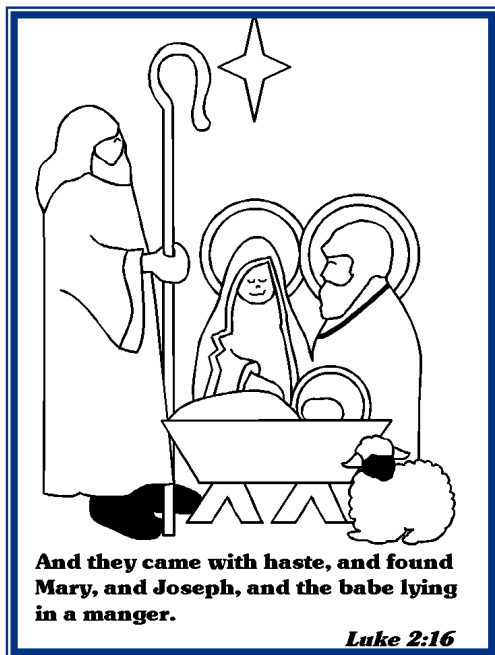
# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



## Parish Church Magazine



*Christmas  
Greetings*



*Christmas  
Greetings*

A picture for children of all ages to colour

**PRIEST IN CHARGE:** The Revd Stephen Agnew, The Rectory,  
Old Swinford, Stourbridge, DY8 2HA  
Tel: 01384 395410  
E-mail: revsmagnew@yahoo.com

**CURATE:** The Revd Ruth Atkinson, 58 Arlington Court,  
Old Swinford, Stourbridge, DY8 1NN  
Tel: 01384 373286  
E-mail: home@riatkinson.plus.com

**DECEMBER 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 Tuesdays will alternate between St Mary's, St Thomas' and Holy Trinity Amblecote
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
<b>Priest in Charge and Curate's Day Off:</b> Friday	



## OTHER REGULAR EVENTS

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

<b>Reader Emeritus:</b>	Mr Roy Peacock	379972
<b>Reader:</b>	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
<b>Church Wardens:</b>	Mrs Marjorie Ferguson	393454
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
<b>Organist / Choirmaster:</b>	Mr Robin Walker	01905 353939
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr Russ Fowler	442684
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
<b>Magazine Editors:</b>	Miss Gemma Sutton	423021
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661

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

## DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2012

Saturday 1	10.00 am Christmas Market in the Church Hall 4.30 pm Mary Stevens Hospice Tree of Light Service
<b>SUNDAY 2</b>	<b>ADVENT SUNDAY</b> 10.00 am Confirmation with Bishop John 3.00 pm Baptism 6.30 pm Advent Carol Service
Wednesday 5	Group visit to Worcester Mystery Plays
Thursday 6	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 8	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 9</b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> 10.00 am Toy Service
Tuesday 11	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft
Wednesday 12	1.00 - 2.30 pm Noah's Ark Nativity
Thursday 13	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 14	2.30 pm Old Swinford Hospital Carol Service
Saturday 15	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 16</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> <b>3.00 pm Christingle</b>
Tuesday 18	7.00 pm Oldswinford Primary School Carol Service
Wednesday 19	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 20	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 22	9.00 am Decorate Church for Christmas 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 23</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> 6.30 pm Nine Readings and Carols
Monday 24	4.00 pm Crib Service 10.00 pm First Communion of Christmas
<b>Tuesday 25</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> <b>8.00 am Holy Communion BCP</b> <b>10.00 am Parish Communion</b>
Friday 28	12.30 pm Wedding
Saturday 29	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 30</b>	<b>FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS</b> Services at 10.00 am and 6.30 pm only today

### ST MARY'S WELCOMES THE RT REVD JUSTIN WELBY AS THE 105TH ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

At the announcement of the appointment on 9 November Bishop John said:

"I was delighted to learn that Justin Welby is to become the next Archbishop of Canterbury. He is a very godly and able man with a wealth of appropriate experience both inside and outside the Church. His appointment is good news for the Church of England and the nation as well as the Anglican Communion. I look forward very much to working with him."

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

Why is Christmas time so appealing for so many people? I suppose the answer to that one is quite easy if you are a child – it would be something to do with receiving gifts. But that doesn't account for why adults are so easily caught up with the celebration of Christmas. Of course the adults might say that they are just enjoying watching the excitement of the children, but I don't think that's quite enough. I think there is a part of most adults which wants to capture the 'magic' of Christmas for themselves. So the question remains: 'What is the Magic of Christmas'? Why does it appeal so much?

Like many children (of all ages) I have always been attracted to the stories of St Nicholas (or Santa Claus as many would recognise him). Yes, he was a real person, who as legend tells us derived great pleasure from secretly giving gifts to help people who were in need. I think that the association of St Nicholas, whose feast day is 6 December, with Christmas is inevitable. St Nicholas has always been remembered as the Christian Saint who gave, and Christmas itself is the festival of giving, as it celebrates God giving his Son to the world, an act of immense generosity.

The act of giving is an act which generates much pleasure for the party that receives the gift, but also the party that gives finds much pleasure in the act of giving. And I believe that this is the magic of Christmas. The generosity of Christmas points us to the very centre of the Christian message – God gives to us generously and abundantly, and we not only receive what God has given to us, but we are encouraged to give in response to that gift. And Christmas frees us to be generous people, to be open-handed, rather as the ghost of Christmas present in Charles Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' is open-handed and benevolent.

Whenever I come across people who are truly generous I find them to be the most attractive people. There is something so attractive about generosity, something which those who are mean and parsimonious can never attain. I find such generosity in many people of faith, and I think that is one of the things which has always drawn me to faith.

So why do I find Christmas so appealing? Because more than anything else it reminds us of what we have been given by God, it encourages us to value that gift and to share in the delight of giving with God himself.

I wish you all a joyful Christmas and pray that you be able to both receive and give gifts, and that in doing both you will have much pleasure.

*Stephen Steward*

## SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2012

2 December Advent Sunday	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am	CONFIRMATION WITH BISHOP JOHN		
	6.30 pm	ADVENT CAROL SERVICE		
9 December 2nd Sunday of Advent	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am                      WORSHIP TOGETHER - TOY SERVICE Please bring a new gift (unwrapped) that will be given as a Christmas present to a mother or child in the care of Dudley Women's Refuge.			
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Isaiah 40. 1-11	Luke 1. 1-25	
16 December 3rd Sunday of Advent	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Zephaniah 3. 14-end	Philippians 4. 4-7	Luke 3. 7-18
	3.00 pm	CHRISTINGLE A SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY		
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 35.	Luke 1. 57-66	
23 December 4th Sunday of Advent	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Micah 5. 2-5a	Hebrews 10. 5-10	Luke 1. 39-45
	6.30 pm	A TRADITIONAL SERVICE OF READINGS AND CAROLS		
30 December 1st Sunday of Christmas	THERE IS NO 8.00 AM SERVICE TODAY			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 Samuel 2. 18-20, 26	Colossians 3. 12-17	Luke 2. 41-end
	6.30 pm	SPECIAL SERVICE OF CAROLS AND READINGS		

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Remember, if Christmas isn't found in your heart,  
you won't find it under a tree.

**Charlotte Carpenter**

# CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS COMPETITION



## Christmas 2012



There will be prizes for different age groups and best entries will be printed in the church magazine.

Entries to Revd Ruth Atkinson at church by the Crib service on Christmas Eve.



Many people in the Christmas story go on a journey; Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for the census, the Shepherds and Wise Men travel to see the baby Jesus, the



Angels go to see the shepherds. Other people would also have been going to Bethlehem for the census and would have seen the Holy family.

Imagine that you are journeying to Bethlehem either as one of the people in the story or as someone you imagine might be there.

Either write or draw what it might have been like or do a combination of the two. You can ask an adult to write down what you want to say but it must be in your own words.



*Don't forget to include your name, age and a phone number*

**ENTRANCE**  
**£1**  
**Children**  
**Free**

**ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD**  
**CHRISTMAS MARKET**  
**SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER**  
**10.00 am – 12.00 noon**  
**in the Church Hall**

**ENTRANCE**  
**£1**  
**Children**  
**Free**

**Please join us on this happy occasion**

If you are able to help before or on the day please get in touch

**Katey Fletcher, 01384 378182**

**A warm welcome to all**

## **BISHOP JOHN'S VISITATION**

Bishop John spent 6 November visiting the Stourbridge Deanery and his visit included Blakedown School and Pre-School at St Michael's, Norton. hH had lunch with the clergy of the Deanery and in the afternoon visited our Coach House to see first hand what it achieves.

During the evening he addressed an open meeting of the Deanery Synod, held at St James' Wollaston. After an act of worship he addressed the gathering in a most thought provoking way. He opened by expressing the belief that the local church is the key to the future and has had more influence than any other institution, both historically and geographically. He told us that the Christian Church is growing faster in the world than population, particularly in Korea and some African countries.

He took as his text Matthew 17.7 which he emphasized summarizes the whole of the Gospel.

"Jesus came, touched, invited his terrified disciples to get up and told them not to be afraid". He stressed that Jesus' actions spoke much louder than words, and that nothing can come between us and God's love through Jesus Christ.

For the latter part of the evening Bishop John invited questions. There was a range of interesting and challenging subjects raised, of a contemporary and contentious nature. The Bishop responded to everything put to him in a most challenging way; certainly no dodging of the issues raised.

He left us encouraged for the maintenance and growth of God's mission in the Deanery and wider Diocese. In response to one of the questions he gave the Diocesan priorities as renewal of prayer, public worship and to help each other to speak out and live our faith. We should all pray and let God direct us in his work.

**Mike Blaxland**



**Members of the Magazine Committee send you their best wishes for a Joyous Christmas and thank you all for your support during the past year.**



## LIGHT UP CHILDREN'S LIVES WITH CHRISTINGLE



It's Christingle time again!



Thanks to many churches holding celebrations up and down the country £1.2 million was raised last year to go towards the work of the Children's Society helping vulnerable children and young people.

Will you join the celebrations this year to help raise even more vital funds? Our service at St Mary's will be held on **Sunday, 16 December at 3.00pm.**

You and all your family will be very welcome.

**Wendy Tranter**

**We are extremely grateful to Sainsbury's at Amblecote for generously providing the oranges for our Christingle celebration.**

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The Children's Society first introduced Christingle to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become one of the most popular events for families and communities in the church calendar.

Loved by children and adults alike, this candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country.

Christingle celebrations may include songs, prayers, performances and a collection in aid of The Children's Society. The main element that is universal to all Christingle celebrations is the lighting of Christingle candles.

The Children's Society relies on the vital funds raised through Christingle celebrations to fund work with vulnerable children and young people in your community and across the country.

The symbol of Christingle is a lit candle mounted on an orange wrapped with red ribbon and with sweets attached.



The orange – represents the world.  
The red ribbon – indicates the love and blood of Christ.  
The dried fruits and sweets – symbols of God's creations.  
The lit candle – symbolises Jesus, the light of the world.

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## CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

The Church will be decorated for Christmas on Saturday 22 December from 9.00am. Everyone is welcome to join the Flower Guild for this. Please sign the sheet at the back of church if there is a particular area you would like to decorate.

Offers of foliage (particularly ivy and eucalyptus) would be appreciated. Thank you.

**Sally Frost**

## **ELAINE PRITCHARD AND THE NOAH'S ARK GROUP**

In this new series of articles we hope to highlight some of the people involved in the various activities at St Mary's; with this in mind I went to see Elaine Pritchard, who has become the latest leader to run The Noah's Ark Group.

One bright autumn day as I made my way towards the Church Hall, I could see Elaine with a group of pre-school children happily playing in the garden. This is the area where over the years countless choirboys have enjoyed throwing sticks into the branches of the horse-chestnut trees to gain the prize of a bright shiny conker. This area is now fenced off and has been turned into a safe environment for imaginative play. Elaine encourages the children to play outside whenever it is possible. Later as I walked back along the corridor I could see thirty eight pairs of muddy little wellingtons (what fun getting those sorted!!)

Elaine has been running St Marys Pre-School for 25 years, and has seen many changes in that time. The school is Ofsted registered, and follows the required syllabus. The Government funds children for 15 hours each week, from the term after they reach their third birthday. It was most fortunate that Elaine stepped in to run Noah's Ark when she feared that the group would probably fold if a successor for Janet and Jane could not be found.

The first group (known as St Mary's Mums and Toddlers) was formed in 1977, when Canon Lewis Davies and Mrs Jessie Harding (MU Enrolling Member) felt there was a need for mothers of young children to have a place to meet, chat and enjoy a cup of tea. The name was changed to Noah's Ark by Jennifer Doores, our previous Curate. There have been many excellent leaders since that time but in the early days there was no money for equipment. MU members gave generously of their time to sing, play games and tell stories to the toddlers. Now the Noah's Ark Group possesses a wonderful range of stimulating play equipment which is used every Wednesday afternoon. Elaine believes that social skills should be developed at an early age whilst she insists on manners, courtesy and those very important words "please and thank you". Like her predecessors she plans music, art and baking activities for the children in her care. She obviously enjoys working with young children and some years ago formed the 1<sup>st</sup> Old Swinford Beavers Group .

Elaine always welcomes Ruth (our curate) and they encourage parents and carers to bring their children to the family services; it was lovely to see some of the pre school children in church for the Harvest Festival. On the following Monday they had their own Harvest celebration in church. At Christmas, Ruth will arrange Nativity Services for the children and parents of both Pre-School and Noah's Ark groups.

Elaine has lived in the Old Swinford area for most of her life and is married to Bev - together they have two children and 2 grandchildren and are all very family orientated; they all live and work in close proximity and are able to enjoy activities together. As Elaine leaves at the end of a very busy day (in her beloved classic mini) she is tired but fulfilled and we are thankful that once again Noah's Ark is in safe hands.

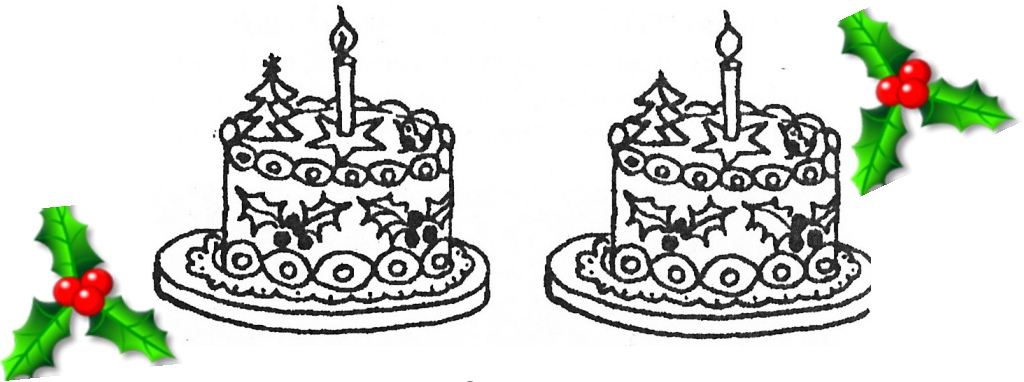
**Brenda Selby**

## BIRTHDAYS



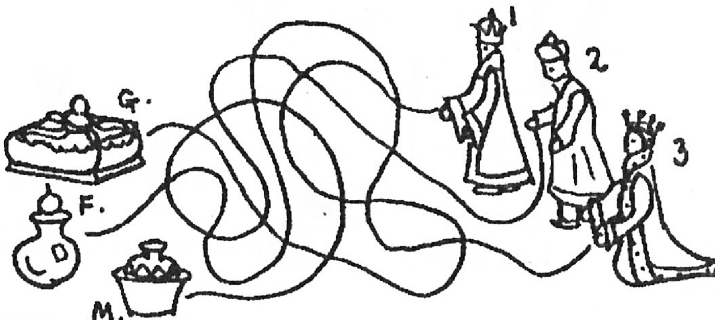
Do you have a party on your birthday? Many people will send you cards and you will invite friends and relations to come to tea. You will have a cake and good things to eat. You will get presents and will give presents in return.

Here are two birthday cakes. Put a ring round the five differences.



You may think they look like Christmas cakes. They are! They are Jesus' Birthday Cakes. We all have a big birthday party on 25 December to celebrate Jesus' birth. We send cards, have delicious things to eat, and give presents. We give presents because we want everyone to feel loved at Christmas.

Follow the lines to find which gift each King gave. Why not colour them in?



## FIND THE BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

Hidden inside this puzzle are eleven words. They tell us where Jesus was born and who was at his birth.

S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
T	P	C	S	Y	T	B	I	L
A	E	N	O	D	R	O	M	E
B	S	R	X	E	O	I	A	G
L	O	S	G	H	A	S	R	N
E	J	N	T	B	A	B	Y	A
R	A	N	E	M	E	S	I	W
M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B

When you have found them all there will be seventeen letters left over. Rearrange these letters to find the birthday message. What is it?

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(some letters are used twice)

## MAKE A DECORATION

Write the letters of CHRISTMAS on separate cards, decorate with lots of colour and glitter then punch holes in them in order to be able to string them up.



## BIRTHDAY JOY

We remember Jesus' birthday with happiness because God showed his great love for us by his gift of Jesus. Remember to say Thank You.

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

Three official letters from the Queen – This has been Roy Peacock's experience. The first was for his commission in the Army, next for a commission in the Royal Air Force with the Cadet Force and last, but not least, for an invitation to join the Diamond Jubilee Maundy Service. Roy had been invited as Worcester Diocesan representative in York Minster in April for his long service as Reader. The latter was a complete surprise and Roy recounted this day attended also by his wife and daughter.

This ceremony is a very ancient tradition, begun by Henry IV, to wash the feet of the poor as Christ had washed his disciple's feet reflecting his humility on the Thursday before Easter. Cash gifts are now the token of care. These were started by Charles II in 1662 and the costs are still met by the Queen. Roy recounted his experiences and showed us the two purses of newly minted special coins he had been given, 86p – 1p for each of the Queen's years and £5.50 as a clothes allowance.

This was the only time in her reign that other Dioceses had been invited to the Cathedral of choice because it was such a momentous year.

Roy sent a letter of thanks to Her Majesty and we thanked him for allowing us to share this unique time.

### Member's News

Anne May is now Indoor Member's Prayer Circle Representative.

Requests have been made for toiletries to send to the Women's Shelter and for prisoners. Please help if you can.

In a letter Audrey Cartwright thanked members for their friendship and advised she is moving to the care of her family in Reading.

**Meetings** - 2.15 pm in the Coach House,  
Tuesday, 11 December, 'The Christmas Celebrations'  
Tuesday, 9 January, Annual General Meeting.

**Dawn Nex**

## OUR SCHOOL IN KENYA

Over the past years readers of St Mary's Parish Church Magazine have been able to follow the remarkable story of hard work and generous giving that has supported our friends Jan and Brian Drew in their determination to help their "Little School in Kenya."

In furtherance of this work and to help promote the fundraising necessary to finance the next phase of development the charity now has a fully operational website, [www.thehillwheelercharity.com](http://www.thehillwheelercharity.com) where full details of the work to date and the plans for the future are available.



Jan and Brian have asked as many as are able to access the website to view the outcome of the cumulative efforts of everyone's support, fundraising and giving. Perhaps through the pages of the site you will be able to determine some measure of the appreciation felt by the community that has, and continues to benefit from the work of this very worthwhile project. Certainly, Jan and Brian hope their own thanks for everyone's support is clear. Please do access the guest page to leave your message of support and to raise the profile of this 'Little School with a big heart.'

## DID YOU KNOW?

Whilst preparing for his recent move Richard Harris found the following facts of historical interest relating to past Rectors of St Mary's. Richard was keen to ensure that the Revd Stephen Agnew is made aware of the deeds of his predecessors in case the information may assist him in his leadership of the parish.

*A Charter of King Eadred (946-955 AD) granting land to Theyn Burholm at Old Swinford tells of the "Preosta Cote" – Priest's house. The Rector of 1199 bore the name John, and in 1285 the then Rector was Robert of Norwich.*

*Other Rectors since that date have been Roger Tyrehere (1480) who was charged with assault, Gervaise Bryan put into the living by the Cromwellians in 1648, but ejected by the Royalists in 1664. Simon Ford DD (1676-1699) was a Parliamentary supporter when he was at Oxford, but turned to support the Restoration, and was suitably rewarded. William Hallifax DD (1699-1722) built the present Rectory on the site of the mediaeval house.*

*Thomas Foley (1797-1835) was an eccentric and supporter of the prophetess Joanna Southcott, keeping a white horse ready saddled in the stable to ride to Jerusalem on the Day of Judgement. Joanna's Box was kept at the Rectory for many years.*

*An equally eccentric successor was Charles Craufurd (1835-1876), the son of Major General Craufurd (killed in the Peninsula War). He rebuilt the present church. He is well-known locally for the fact that he took as his second wife his cook – much to the disgust of the gentry.*

Thank you, Richard. We take this opportunity to wish you well in your new home and to invite your future contributions to this magazine in recognition of your long association and valued knowledge of St Mary's .

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A short history of the Rectory has been written by Roy Peacock. Copies of this interesting and informative document are available at the back of church for the cost of a donation of 50p to church funds. We hope you will enjoy the information Roy has researched and thank him for his generous gift of time and sharing.

### MIGHT YOU HAVE A FEW SPARE HOURS IN THE FUTURE?

Over the coming months we are hoping to renew some of the sadly dilapidated features of St Mary's furnishings. Hymn books are being covered with film in order to ensure many more months of use from these before incurring great expenditure on new books. Thank you to the team.

Once materials are available the pew kneelers are to be re-covered with carpet and a small team is preparing to take on the huge task of renewing cushions on the side pew seats.

If you can spare a little time to help with sewing cushion covers, fitting covers to the kneelers or whatever, please add your name to the list at the back of church or speak to Sue Tatford or one of the wardens. We hope to organise work groups for the new year.

With thanks in anticipation.

**The Churchwardens**

## ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

The weather on 28 October was sunny and cold, perfect conditions for the church walk. A group of nineteen people set off from the Bowling Green Pub at Hadley, a pub which has the oldest crown green in the country at approximately 400 years old.

We began by walking down the lane towards the River Salwarpe before crossing a mixture of fields and lanes to arrive at Mildenhall Mill Farm on the River Salwarpe and Droitwich Barge Canal. The canal was built in 1771 by James Brindley for transporting salt from Droitwich to the River Severn in 64ft x 14ft 6" barges. The walk continued along the towpath of the canal in the direction of Droitwich with the river alongside. Eventually we arrived at Porters Mill for the refreshment stop. The mill dates from Saxon times, but with many changes it now boasts very desirable living accommodation. Opposite the mill is Mill Hall which again is a very old building. Queen Elizabeth I is thought to have stayed here on 14 August 1578.



Having refreshed ourselves with drinks and nibbles we then rejoined the canal for a short distance to Ladywood Bridge where we left the canal via a gently climbing lane to a farm specializing in "small breed" animals. Continuing through the farm, over fields and a narrow path via a private garden we arrived at St Michael Church, Salwarpe. This very old church has strong connections with St Mary's, please read Roy Peacock's latest leaflet "William Hallifax and the rebuilding of Old Swinford Rectory 1701."

The canal is at the side of the church and it is here that we rejoined it for a hundred yards before walking down to a bridge crossing the River Salwarpe. From here it was a half mile of field and lane walking back to the Bowling Green Pub where we all enjoyed a very nice lunch.

**Ray and Jean Drew**

### SASI'S NEWS

Sasi and Mark have enjoyed another happy year in their lovely new home. They feel so blessed to have a home of their own.

There have been heavy downpours in that part of the country, but Sasi, thanks to you, was nice and dry.

She has written about a new addition to their goat family. A male baby goat was born a few months ago. She speaks of him as quite handsome. She feels he will fetch a good price next year when she sells him for slaughter at Diwali.

Mark is sometimes not happy at school. The authorities in the area gave all primary school children whose fathers had died a new pair of shoes. Somehow they 'overlooked' Mark and he was not given a new pair of shoes. Their robust unfairness hurt the little boy. His mother felt so bad for her son that she went to school to inform them Mark had been overlooked. They ignored her, absolutely ignored her, for she was not of the 'social class' to bother to reply. Such is their life. Mark has learnt to live with disappointments.

On a happy note, the generous gift from our church mission committee helps them with soaring food prices. They are happy and content with what they receive and are most grateful to you. She writes, she is much blessed by the love-gift from St Mary's and she lights a candle once a month for us at her church. How blessed we are to know that one person across the globe is praying for us.



## THE ROBIN'S SONG

My robin is wearing  
A bright scarlet vest,  
Every feather in place,  
He's looking his best.



From his perch on a stump  
He performs a sweet song;  
While I rake up the leaves  
He's still warbling along.

But he's whispering now,  
Such a soft, wistful air,  
It seems close to my ear  
And reminds me he's there!

As I pick up my spade  
His eye fastens on me,  
Urging me to dish up  
Some worms for his tea!

**Maggie Smith**

*Poem provided by Jack Witley*

.....  
**ROBINS AND CLOVER LEAF**

A recent visit to The Coach House provided some insight into the work undertaken by the students of the Clover Leaf group.



Chris told me how he and others in the group have been making garden ornaments in the form of robins, items they hope to sell at their Christmas Fayre on 8 December, between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm. Chris and Nicholas (pictured from right to left) showed me two of the robins, illustrating the variation they can achieve with products clearly made with great care and finished with skill to a high standard.

The robins and a range of other items, all made by the students, will be available at the Christmas Fayre and would make ideal presents. My advice would be to arrive early, for products of this quality are likely to sell very quickly.

The money raised at the Fayre will be used by the students to finance their visits next year, just as the £800 raised last summer provided for their visit to the Severn Valley Railway.

Do try to support this very worthwhile project and look out for more information from Clover Leaf students in future editions of our magazine.

**Tony Tatford**

## ST MARY'S CHRISTMAS CARD

As this magazine goes to print the church Christmas card is being prepared for delivery to every household in the parish. These will soon be set out on a table at the back of church. Please help if you can by taking a few packs and delivering them in the roads as labelled.

This is an important part of our mission in the Old Swinford community through which we offer a warm welcome to all to our services at Christmas and throughout 2013.

Thank you



## **THIS MONTH'S RECIPE LEMON & PARMESAN STUFFING**

For something different try this stuffing. This is enough to stuff the neck of an average sized bird. If you are cooking a turkey crown you can cook the stuffing separately in a dish - top with a little butter, cook for about 30 minutes. depending on the oven temperature.

100g/4oz freshly grated parmesan	2 lemons
Lots of freshly chopped flat leaf parsley	2 medium eggs
150g/6oz fresh white breadcrumbs	

Put the parmesan, parsley, finely grated zest of both lemons and the juice from one lemon in a food processor. Add the crumbs and eggs and whizz until just combined. Season well.

This can be prepared in advance and stored in the fridge.

All the best for 2013, stay healthy, happy cooking,

**Ann Jennings**

.....

## **AND FOR THE WINE**

Wines for the Christmas meal; the yuletide conundrum. Poultry suggests a white wine but by the time we've added the trimmings – bacon, sausage, rich gravy, herby roast vegetables, chestnuts and cranberries, a red wine seems more appropriate. However, this year let us take the lead from the lemon and parmesan stuffing and stay white. We are looking for a wine with a rich creamy texture and mouth filling fruit. Chardonnay is the ready answer. Only Semillon provides a credible alternative – here the Wildekrans bottling from Walker Bay in South Africa is a particular favourite. However, if there is a time and a place for everything then the Christmas meal is right for a fine white Burgundy: Chardonnay at its best. We've been deferring our premium bottles for several months now as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let's select something worthy. Perhaps a Chablis (Premier or Grand Cru if you wish) with its purity of fruit and poise. The great Chardonnays of the Cote d'Or (Puligny Montrachet and Corton Grand Crus) can soar in price but the list of villages making good white burgundy is long: Marsannay, St Aubin, Santenay, Auxey-Duresses all produce lovely wines with peaches, crunchy apples, a rich buttery texture and long citrus finish. It is thought that vines of some sort have been growing in the Burgundy region for over 2000 years stretching back to Celtic times. Christianity and the Chardonnay vine variety followed on later – what blessings!! Enjoy your Christmas wine sipping -

**Richard W. B Ryan**

Many thanks to Ann for the recipes she has shared with us during the past year. They have provided much enjoyment in both the preparation and the eating. We look forward to more surprises in the coming year.

Equally, thank you to Richard for his rich contributions and recommendations of wines to complement our recipes. Here's a toast to your good health in 2013.

## **SANTA CLAUS DOES NOT FORGET**

Callum was a very good boy. He was kind, obedient, truthful, and unselfish. He had, however, one great fault,—he always forgot.

No matter how important the errand, his answer always was, "I forgot." When he was sent with a note to his aunt down the road his mother would find the note in his pocket at night. If he was sent to the shop in a great hurry, to get something for tea, he would return late, without anything, but with his usual answer, "I forgot."

His father and mother talked the matter over, and decided that something must be done to make the little boy remember.

Christmas was near, and Callum was busy making out a list of things which he hoped Santa Claus would bring him.

"Santa Claus may forget some of those things," said his mother.

"He cannot," replied Callum; "for I shall write sled and skates, and DVD, and guitar, and all the things on this paper. Then when Santa Claus goes to my stocking he will find the list. He can see it and put the things in as fast as he reads."

Christmas morning came, and Callum was up at dawn to see what was in his stocking. His mother kept away from him as long as she could, for she knew what Santa Claus had done.

Finally she heard him coming with slow steps to her room. Slowly he opened the door and came towards her. He held in his hand a list very much longer than the one he had made out. He put it in his mother's hand, while tears of disappointment fell from his eyes.

"See what Santa Claus left for me; but I think he might have given me at least one thing."

His mother took the paper. It was a list of all the errands Callum had been asked to do for the past six months. At the end of all was written, in staring capitals, "I FORGOT."

Callum wept for an hour. Then his mother told him they were all going to grandpa's. His grandpa always had a big Christmas tree. Perhaps there might be something there for him.

It seemed very strange to Callum, but under grandpa's tree he found everything he had written on his list. Was he cured of his bad habit? Not all at once; but when his mother saw that he was particularly heedless she would say, "Remember, Santa Claus does not forget."



## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

21 October	Eleanor Florence Hadley
4 November	Jack Joseph Fellows

### Funerals

22 October	Millicent Bentley	Aged 84
30 October	Jean Hopkins	Aged 72
2 November	Lyndon Thackery	Aged 54
5 November	Grenville Parnell	Aged 99
5 November	Pamela Brittain	Aged 81
8 November	James Oxley	Aged 78

## ST MARY'S BELLRINGERS IN TRIBUTE

Worcestershire & Districts Association

St Mary's, Old Swinford, West Midlands

Sunday 4 November 2012

1260 Changes of Plain Bob Minor

1 Katrina Emery	5 Christopher Lees ©
2 Pat Whalley	6 John Sutton
3 Georgina Pearson	7 Antony Lloyd
4 Mark Wilson	8 Martyn Wall

Before evening service for All Souls, rung half muffled, in remembrance of bellringers Jane Jukes and Ian Ferguson and Churchwarden Edward Haden.

### **This prayer preceded the tribute.**

*Let the music of these bells this evening ring out in thanksgiving and remembrance of our dear departed friends Edward, Jane and Ian. We give thanks for their dedication and service to this church and remember with gratitude the friendship that we shared. In the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen*

### CHILDREN'S PAGE ANSWERS

#### DIFFERENCES IN CAKES

1. No wick in flame 2. No star on tree 3. Berry missing 4. Veins in leaf missing 5. Cake board end

**KINGS** 1 gave G 2 gave M 3 gave F

#### MESSAGE

Shepherds, stable, angel, Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem, Ox, Ass, Manger, Wisemen

The remaining letters make **Christ is Born Today**

## LETTER FROM ROGER MORRIS, ARCHDEACON OF WORCESTER



There are some people who have Christmas all sorted out. By November, their Christmas cards are all written and most of their Christmas shopping is done. Christmas Day itself is project managed to the nth degree and the timing of everything is controlled with military precision. I am not one of those people. Christmas is always a bit of a mad scramble fuelled by panic and prone to last minute hitches and occasional domestic disasters.

It is comforting to remember that the first Christmas was also a string of chaotic and messy events. An unplanned pregnancy, a challenging journey over rough terrain and a muddle over the room booking. But in the midst of all this, God is telling us something very important.

Archbishop Rowan says that 'in the complete mess of the first Christmas, God says, 'Don't worry - I'm not going to wait until you've got everything sorted out perfectly before I get involved with you. I'm already there for you in the middle of it all, and if you just let yourself lean on me a bit instead of trying to make yourself and everything around you perfect by your own efforts, everyone will feel a little more of my love flowing' '

Christmas is about God getting involved and being with us in the middle of our messy, disorganized and chaotic lives. He is there for us - right in the middle of it all.

Nobody ever explained this to me as a child. I believed in God. It was hard not to; this world, the vastness of creation, the miracle of life and the irreducible things like truth and beauty and love all pointed to the fact that God existed. But he was a god who was remote - more of a benevolent force than a person. As the song goes, 'God is watching us... from a distance'.

But around 2000 years ago, this awesome almighty God was fed at the breast of a teenage girl and held in the arms of the mother who bore him. This reveals a God of intimacy as well as transcendence. The great Christian writer Henri Nouwen described intimacy as being motivated by love and demonstrated by the willingness to reveal one's self with truth, tenderness and vulnerability.

That's what Christmas is about. It's about God - being motivated by love - revealing himself with truth, tenderness and vulnerability. God is here for us in the middle of all our messes and he understands. He knows what we're going through; he knows our public concerns and the private fears that haunt us. He understands the situation we're in. And with that understanding can come healing and salvation.

Saint Paul said of Jesus' coming that the grace of God has dawned upon the world bringing healing and salvation for everyone (Titus 2:11)

It is in the intimate encounter with God that his gentle work of healing and of transformation can take place as he puts right what's wrong and ultimately frees us from all that spoils or harms our lives. All that mucks up our lives; all that spoils, damages and ruins things; all that's wrong or corrupt; all that makes our lives such a mess has been soaked up and utterly destroyed - by Jesus.

May you rest in the intimate knowledge of the God who's in this with you.

And in the midst of the strain and the stress, and the pain and the mess of Christmas, may you know his peace and experience his joy.

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