

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

Parish Church Magazine

**APRIL 2014
Online edition**



ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



Parish Church Magazine



HAPPY
Easter

PRIEST IN CHARGE:

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APRIL 2014

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: toddlers	1.30 pm - Noah's Ark at St Mary's (term time) parents &
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
Priest in Charge Day Off:	Friday

OTHER REGULAR EVENTS



Bible Study Group:	Monday, first in month at 2.30 pm	379972
Mothers' Union:	Second Tuesday at 2.15 pm	392951
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	

Reader Emeritus:	Mr Roy Peacock	379972
Reader:	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
Church Wardens:	Mrs Marjorie Ferguson	393454
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
Organist / Choirmaster:	Mr Robin Walker	01905 353939
Treasurer:	Mr Russ Fowler	442684
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 am and 11.00 am for Vestry Hour. You will be warmly welcomed. Tea and coffee will be available.

DIARY FOR APRIL 2014

Tuesday 1	7.30 pm Lent Course at St Thomas'
Thursday 3	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 5	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 12.30 pm Wedding
SUNDAY 6	PASSION SUNDAY Stewardship Presentations at all services 3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 8	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 7.30 pm Lent Course at St Mary's
Thursday 10	10.30 am Holy Communion 2.30 pm Old Swinford Hospital Easter Service
Saturday 12	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 13	PALM SUNDAY
Tuesday 15	7.30 pm Lent Course at St Thomas'
Thursday 17	MAUNDY THURSDAY 10.30 am Holy Communion 7.30 pm Holy Communion
Friday 18	7.30 pm Concert by St Mary's Choir
Saturday 19	9.30 AM Flower Guild to decorate church for Easter 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 20	EASTER SUNDAY 3.00 pm Baptism
Monday 21	2.00 pm Wedding
Wednesday 23	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 24	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 26	St Mary's Walking Group
SUNDAY 27	SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 7.30 pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2.30pm-4.00 pm Tuesday Tea
Tuesday 29	

EASTER FLOWERS

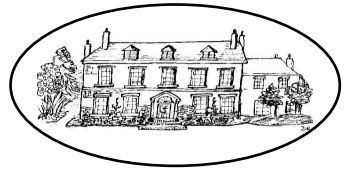
In keeping with our usual practice the names of loved ones will be placed on the altar for the Easter period.

If you wish to make a donation towards the cost of the flowers in memory of loved ones please place your donation in an envelope with the names of the person(s) being remembered and give it to Sally Frost or post it through the Rectory letter box.



These donations may be 'Gift Aided' if you are a UK tax payer. Should you wish to Gift Aid your donation please use one of the yellow Gift Aid envelopes found in the church pews and mark it clearly "For Easter Flowers."

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

Lent is the time when we are encouraged to take a health check on our faith. As we become more engrossed in the 'day to day' challenges of life we can lose sight of the importance of our faith to us, and what was once so clear and vital becomes a little dimmed and sometimes a matter of routine. Lent is the time to renew the vitality of that faith and to halt its drift into insignificance or irrelevance. Once in that place it becomes difficult to rejuvenate. So Lent is a time to take stock before we reach that place.

How do we take stock of our faith?

FIRSTLY we can ask ourselves whether our prayer life is a joy or a chore. The answer to this gives us an indication of the nature of our relationship with Jesus. We are called into a close personal relationship with him, which is affirming, challenging and supportive; if our prayer life does not show these characteristics, then we would benefit from some remedial work and attention.

SECONDLY our understanding of our faith must impact on our daily lives, informing what we do and how we relate to other people. If that connection between our faith and our day to day lives is not clear cut then we must look afresh at how we express that faith in our lives, and how the practical outworking of our faith is informed by our understanding of that faith and its claims upon us.

Over this Lent we have been, and continue to be, encouraged to look at our lives and see whether our lives do indeed reflect our faith. We have been following part of the Pilgrim series of booklets which challenge us to take seriously the journey of faith on which we embarked when we were baptised, something which for many of us took place years ago. As we think of that journey we need to consider are we still travelling on that road, or have we stopped or turned aside for a rest?

If you have found the Lent course helpful and an encouragement on your faith journey perhaps you might like to consider continuing your study. I hope that over the Summer we might meet again for a short course which will help us on our Christian journey, because like any journey we have to keep persevering if we are to get anywhere.

I hope that you have found this year's course helpful and that you have been able to see signs of a freshening of your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and I urge you to nurture that growth not only during Lent but throughout the whole year.

With every blessing,

SERVICES IN APRIL 2014

6 April Fifth Sunday of Lent	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Ezekiel 37. 1-14	Romans 8. 6-11	John 11. 1-45
	6.30 pm Evensong	Lamentations 3. 19-33	Matthew 20. 17-end	
13 April Palm Sunday	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER This service begins with a palm procession into church		
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 5. 1-7	Matthew 21. 33-end	
20 April Easter Day	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Acts 10. 34-43	Colossians 3. 1-4	Matthew 28. 1-10
	6.30 pm Evensong	Song of Solomon 3. 2-5, 8. 6-7	John 20. 11-18	
27 April Second Sunday of Easter	8.00 am Holy Communion			
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Exodus 14. 10-end	Acts 2. 14a, 22-32	John 20. 19-end
	6.30 pm Evensong	Daniel 6. 1-23	Mark 15.46-16, 6	

GOOD WISHES

There are times in our lives when poor health, infirmity, bereavement, uncertainty, unemployment, poverty, hunger, worry and disappointment bring us particular concern. Throughout this Easter season and each day please remember in your prayers and in your actions those in need of your thoughts, your help, your time.

The best wishes of the St Mary's community are sent to all who are unwell, caring for others or lonely at this time. May God bless you.



HOLY WEEK AT ST MARY'S

Father in heaven, as your people prepare once more to follow the events of this Holy Week, may we be led by your spirit to deeper insights into your love and saving grace; that we may love you more and serve you better, for the sake of him who died for us and rose again, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Sunday 13 April PALM SUNDAY

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Worship Together with choir and to include a reading of the Passion narrative. This service begins in the Church Hall with palm procession into Church.

6.30pm Evensong without choir.

14,15,16 April

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

6.30pm Meditation on the Passion with Compline.

Tuesday 15 April

7.30pm Final Lent Course Session at St Thomas'

Thursday 17 MAUNDY THURSDAY

10.30am Holy Communion.

7.30pm Service of Holy Communion

Friday 18 GOOD FRIDAY

10.00am Walk of witness from St John's.

2.00pm Devotions at the foot of the cross.

7.30pm Choral Concert in church.

Saturday 19 HOLY SATURDAY

9.00am Church decoration.

10.00am Open church and vestry hour.

2.00pm—4.00pm Messy Church children's activities in the church hall.

Sunday 20 EASTER DAY

7.45am Holy Fire. The lighting of the Easter Candle.

8.00am Holy Communion.

10.00am Parish Communion.

3.00pm Baptisms

6.30pm Choral Evensong and sermon.



O Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, who on a Cross with wood and nails has wrought our salvation, wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we, who come to you rough-hewn, may by you be fashioned according to your will; for the sake of your tender mercy. Amen

MARRIAGE PREPARATION DAY

St David's Day is always a special day for me, but this year I shared that 'specialness' with eight couples who are preparing to get married over the next six months at St Mary's.

Why did we meet up for the day?

Because so much energy goes into the planning of the 'big occasion' that we sometimes forget that the vows made on that day are for life, and it seems a good idea to think a little about the forty or fifty years of being together as husband and wife which I hope will follow their Wedding. So a Marriage Preparation Day is about helping the couple to live together.



But don't many couples already live together?



Indeed they do, so they will know something of the challenges of being a couple. Some have a family already. Some have been in previous relationships. But all this does not mean that the value of thinking about their future life together is lost. We could all do with thinking about our relationships, even though we might have been in them for many years.

So what do we do on the day?

Jean and I spent time with the couples thinking about their past, their families and the other influences on them which have made them the people they are as they prepare to get married. Marriage is, of course, full of dreams and expectations, and so we ask couples to think a little about these, and also relate where these ideas and dreams of marriage may have come from. Then we return to the present, looking at how couples will practically live together, something which couples may already have experienced to varying degrees.



Cont'd over

In the afternoon sessions we look at how we cope with disagreement and conflict, spending a little time thinking about how we communicate with each other.

Finally we spend some time in St Mary's thinking about what it will be like to make vows in church in just a few month's time.

All of this is undertaken with a lightness of touch. There are many activities and quite a lot of fun.



But perhaps the highlight of the day is the meal that we share, provided and served by parishioners, a real sign of the welcome of St Mary's being extended to those couples who come to us to make their vows to one another.



So many of the couples have sent messages of thanks for the day and in particular for the warm and generous welcome offered by the folk of St Mary's. And I will extend my thanks to all those many people who helped make St David's Day this year a very special day.

Stephen Agnew

HELP –GRANDMA'S LOST

The computer swallowed Grandma
Yes honestly it's true!
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'
And disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely,
The thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus
Or been eaten by worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin
And file of every kind;
I've even used the Internet,
But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Mr Google,
My searches to refine.
The reply was negative,
Not a thing was found 'online'.

So, if inside your 'in box',
My Grandma you should see,
Please 'Copy, Scan' and 'Paste' her,
And send her back to me.

**From the Gloucester Diocese
Mothers' Union
"Roundabout" Magazine**

THE CHOIR OF ST MARY
OLD SWINFORD
PERFORMS

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

BY
ARTHUR SOMERVELL

GOOD FRIDAY

18 APRIL 2014

**7:30PM – IN ST MARY’S CHURCH, OLD SWINFORD,
STOURBRIDGE**

FEATURING:

SOPRANO LESLEY COX

TENOR DOMINIC LEE

BASS WILLIAM PEART

ORGAN ANDREW FLETCHER

DIRECTED BY ROBIN WALKER

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF
THIS WORK, DESCRIBED AS AN ORATORIO FOR CHURCH USE,
WHICH INCLUDES SOLOS, CHORUSES AND HYMNS

CHILDREN'S PAGES

WHAT IS EASTER?

Easter is the time for holidays, festivals and a time for giving chocolate Easter eggs. But Easter means much more...

Easter is the oldest and the most important Christian Festival, the celebration of the death and coming to life again of Jesus Christ. For Christians, the dawn of the Easter Sunday with its message of new life is the high point of the Christian year.

Of all the symbols associated with Easter, the egg—the symbol of new life—is the most identifiable. Eggs have been used to represent rebirth and new life for hundreds of years with many customs dating back to pagan traditions. In the past, eggs were forbidden food during lent so Easter Sunday became the traditional time to start using them again. This led to many people giving eggs, usually decorated, to their friends or servants.



Celebrating Easter: Resurrection Eggs



many of you have seen the plastic "Resurrection Eggs" that are used in the story of the Christian Easter celebration. Did you know that these can easily, and frugally, be made at home?

First, purchase 12 plastic Easter eggs, the kind that you can open and fill. I recommend the size that can fit in a Styrofoam or cardboard egg carton. You can reuse one that you bring home eggs in from the grocery. This makes for easy storage so that you can use these many times without losing any of the bits and pieces.

If possible, try and have each of the 12 eggs a different colour. This makes it easier as well. If having 12 different colours isn't an option, use a permanent marker to write the number 1 through 12 on each egg and then put them in the egg carton.

Into each egg place the item and scripture reference written on a small piece of paper.

To order your own eggs, just go to www.amazon.co.uk and have fun decorating...

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20. 15-17)

Here is part of the story of Easter, taken from John 20.15-17 of the Good News Bible. Fill in the missing words in the wordsearch below

"Woman, why are you _____?"
Jesus asked her. "Who is it that
you are _____ for?"

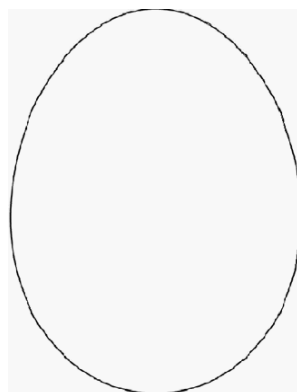
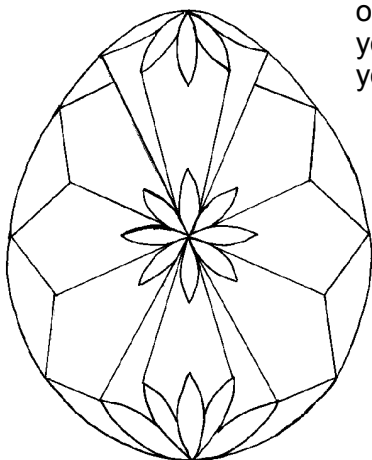
She thought he was the _____ so
she said to him, "If you took him
away, sir, tell me where you have
put him, and I will go and get him."
Jesus said to her, "_____!"

She turned towards him and said in
_____, "Rabboni!" (This means
"_____".)

"Do not hold on to me," Jesus told
her, "because I have not yet gone
back up to the _____. But go to
my brothers and tell them that I am
_____ to him who is my Father
and their Father, my God and their
_____."



Here is a beautifully decorated
Easter Egg. Why don't you add col-
our to it and perhaps display somewhere in
your house in Easter? And why not make up
your own design on the blank egg below...



BRITAIN IS HUNGRY

Half a million people used food banks in the last year. Charitable support programmes are rapidly expanding but nonetheless a quarter of families are shrinking portion sizes. 5,500 people were admitted to hospital for malnutrition last year.

No one should go hungry in Britain. More and more people are just one unexpected bill away from facing bare cupboards. This is a national and moral crisis and government must act to protect the half a million going hungry in Britain.

Chris Mould, Chairman of The Trussell Trust – the charity which runs a network of 400 food banks says: "That hundreds of thousands of men, women and children living in the seventh richest country in the world are being forced to seek help simply in order to eat is unacceptable. In January 2014 alone Trussell Trust food banks gave three days' food to 85,775 people, including 30,670 children. Some have gone without food for days. The food bank debate should not be about party politics, it should be about recognising the reality of what's happening right now in our nation, listening to the voices of the people who struggle to feed their families. We need to wake up to the hunger on our doorsteps, and ask urgent, in-depth questions about why this is happening and then be brave enough to take action to stop it. We'd urge people to add their voice to the call to end hunger, fast."

Bishop John has joined the End Hunger Fast campaign to raise the profile of those in this country who don't have enough to eat and who need to rely on food banks to survive. He said: "The experience of the Worcester and Black Country Food Banks reflects that of others – that there has been a very disturbing increase in hunger in our society over the past year. I am glad that this campaign seems to be generating a grown-up debate about the very real issue of food poverty, which will hopefully enable us all to work together to eradicate it."

By pledging to join the fast, you will help our call on the government to ensure:

- That the welfare system provides a robust last line of defence against hunger in Britain
- That work pays enough for working people to properly provide for their families
- That food markets function, promoting long term sustainable and healthy diets with no one profiteering from hunger in Britain

For more information go to:-

<http://endhungerfast.co.uk/causes/national-day-of-fasting-april4th>

Diocesan News



LENT COURSE 2014

St Mary's Old Swinford and St Thomas' Stourbridge



Our Lent Course this year follows a published course of study and worship entitled 'Pilgrim', with a particular emphasis on the Beatitudes. The dates and venues of the last four sessions are as follows.

25 March: Living Transparently

Revd Stephen Agnew

Venue: St Mary's Church, Old Swinford

1 April: Peacemaking

Hilary Savage

Venue: St Thomas' Church Hall

8 April: Living as Citizens of God's kingdom

Revd Stephen Agnew

Venue: St Mary's Church, Old Swinford

15 April: Foundations

Hilary Savage

Venue: St Thomas' Church Hall

Tuesday evenings, 7.30pm-9.00pm.

All sessions are free of charge and include tea and coffee

GIFT AID PLEASE

When you are next in church you will see in the pews new notices that explain the purpose and use of the yellow Gift Aid envelopes. If you are a UK taxpayer, by placing your donation in this envelope and completing the information requested on the outside, St Mary's can claim back the tax you pay, equivalent to 25p in the £. Please do so if you can. This will help us to meet the ever-increasing costs of the buildings and ministry of St Mary's.

COACH HOUSE SECRETARY

We are pleased to advise that this post has now been filled.

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

WOODS, FIELDS AND LAKES

For the second month our programmed walk for February had to be changed, again due to weather conditions. When the walk was pioneered, two weeks earlier knee-deep water did not seem a good idea! The alternative chosen was much closer to Stourbridge and main roads, and well above flood levels. We started and finished our walk at the Greyhound Pub in Norton Road, and had a very good lunch after our exertions; three others joined seventeen walkers for lunch.

We walked via Norton Covert up onto Sugar Loaf Hill where on the bridle path we encountered the worst mud of the day. We continued via Sugar Loaf Lane onto the start of the bridle path to Fairy Glen before turning north across fields to Bunkers Hill Wood. The weather was sunny throughout but with a stiff breeze at times; we had excellent views across to Kinver and the Edge, and further across to the Sheepwalks. We found a sheltered spot in the wood for a coffee stop before continuing on to Whittington Lane.



The lane to Iverley Kennels brought us up to Sandy Lane / Roman Road, after negotiating the "Great Lakes" (see above).



We were offered a coffee stop at a near-by residence but elected to press on for lunch. There is a spot in Sandy Lane where a very good echo can be generated, but by then we were too spread out to have a demonstration by those with the knack.

After crossing Greyhound Lane we returned to the Covert and thence back to the pub via Covert Lane.

It was a gentle walk, in ideal conditions and enjoyed by all.

Mike Blaxland

EASTER EGGS

Eggs are familiarly associated with Easter as being symbolic of new life, fertility and springtime. In Christian traditions the egg has associations with the empty tomb and the Resurrection.

The practice of decorating eggs can be traced back more than 6,000 years. Engraved ostrich eggs of this age have been found while decorated ostrich eggs, and representations of eggs in gold and silver, were commonly placed in the graves of the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians as early as 5,000 years ago.

The custom of the Easter egg originated with the early Christians of Mesopotamia, who stained eggs red in memory of the blood of Christ, shed at his crucifixion. The Christian Church officially adopted the custom, regarding the egg as a symbol of the resurrection; in A.D. 1610, Pope Paul V proclaimed the following prayer:-

Bless, O Lord! We beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs, that it may become a wholesome sustenance to thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to thee on account of the resurrection of the Lord.

In many parts of the world, especially in the countries of Central Europe, the art of decorating eggs evolved so much that skilfully and meticulously decorated eggs such as those associated with Faberge and the Russian Court became immensely valued. Elsewhere, beautifully painted and decorated eggs are distributed and displayed, sometimes on trees much as we adorn a tree at Christmas.



In other locations eggs are rolled down hills, danced around, are the focus of dramatic productions, are fought with or are hidden for children to seek and find. Eggs, as part of traditional dishes, are eaten at special festivals, the use of them in the making of pancakes at the start of Lent being a typical example.

Chocolate eggs first appeared in continental Europe in the mid nineteenth century but it was not until 1875 that Cadbury's manufactured the first English chocolate egg, a plain chocolate shell, filled with dragees (sugar-coated chocolate drops), later decorated with chocolate piping and marzipan flowers.

The power of advertising and the drive of the business world has led to a point where a huge range and variety of chocolate Easter eggs are produced each year to meet the apparently endless demand for eggs of all sizes, tastes, filling and decoration. In turn, the growth and elaboration of the packaging has developed to similar excesses.



Perhaps the most well-known of all such eggs is the Cadbury Crème Egg. This first appeared in 1971 and sales really took off in 1975 when television advertising proved its true potential. Now about 1.5 million such eggs can be produced each day at the Bournville factory and over 200 million are sold each year in this country, many more world-wide.

Enjoy your giving and receiving of an Easter Egg this year.

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

Cream of Tomato Soup with Croutons.

2 carrots, 1 onion, 1 potato, 1 tin tomatoes, 1 stock cube, 1 tsp sugar, milk, olive oil, salt & pepper, basil (optional), 2 slices thick bread, softened butter.

Fry the onion until soft, add the rest of the prepared vegetables, cover with stock and bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes until all the vegetables are tender. Puree in a food processor or with a stick blender, add milk to required consistency, season with salt and pepper.

To make the croutons, butter both sides of the bread, and toast both sides under a pre-heated grill until brown and crisp, cut into small pieces. This is easier and a more healthy way of making them.

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE.....

Tomatoes, whether here in a rich creamy soup or in a score of other dishes are frequently enhanced with the flavour of herbs: a whiff of the Mediterranean. True in Spain we would be enjoying a gazpacho with a fino or manzanilla sherry. Otherwise Sauvignon Blanc is the classic match - its acidity and fresh tomato plant aroma suggesting we should look no further. There are alternatives: the wines of Rueda, where the Verdejo grape combines with Sauvignon Blanc and the Cotes de Gascogne vineyards with their Colombar/Ugni Blanc blends. However none really outshine a zingy Sauvignon Blanc.

An interesting candidate is an English Bacchus: most probably it will be off-dry. Its grassy flavour profile works well enough and if you add a little basil, particularly a sweet basil, it can really come into its own.

We are always reminded not to let herbs determine our choice of wine. Herbs should add a flavour but should not dominate; more than once I've picked coriander leaves off the plate - too powerful unless carefully judged. However, if we want to give herbs their due, there are some neat pointers. Most herbs including basil, oregano, parsley, sorrel and dill lean to a white wine, whilst thyme, rosemary and mint generally prefer a red.

If we do wish to drink a red wine, the rich creamy notes, perhaps some intense sun-dried tomatoes, can find a partner in Italy - Barbera, Valpolicella or Montepulciano would fit the bill : brightly fruited, not too tannic and bearing a lovely streak of acidity.....Enjoy your wine-sipping,

Richard W.B. Ryan

ST MARY'S CELEBRATES BOOK LAUNCH

On Saturday 15 March, in the midst of a busy Vestry Hour, St Mary's hosted the official launch of the latest book to be written by Roy Peacock, 'The Origins of Stourbridge.' Following a welcome and introduction by Revd Stephen Agnew, Roy presented an enthusiastic outline of his book, commentating on how a cluster of ancient settlements eventually became a township which had the potential to develop into the Stourbridge we know today.

The book is the product of much detailed and complex research, the interpretation of documents and the analysis of transcripts, all of which provide an insight into the lives and influences of the times, up to the mid sixteenth century. It is written in a style that makes it accessible whether the book is read from cover to cover or 'dipped into' for passages that have particular interest.

Roy generously invited the Rector and Parochial Church Council of St Mary, Old Swinford to be identified as the publisher of the book such that the proceeds of the sales will benefit St Mary's. In commending the book to you I wish the book every success, thank Roy and Pamela on behalf of us all and hope they are able to enjoy some leisurely days together before Roy starts on the next project.

Tony Tatford

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

Twenty-three members attended our meeting in March. Pat Whalley led our worship in which she allied the 'spring-like weather' to getting us started on our household spring cleaning, to Lent time as a spring clean of our souls.

We also remembered Doreen Ryan and Margaret Casey who had been in hospital.

Our speaker this month was 'home grown' so to speak, as Dawn Nex treated us to a 'Stitch in Time'. This extremely talented lady related how she came to be so involved in stitching, not merely making things as in the making of garments, but the history of actual stitches and their meaning.

Dawn was influenced by her Aunt from an early age. Her Aunt taught her how to sew. Eventually Dawn became involved in Church Embroidery. Examples of Dawn's work can be found in Church with the renewal of the Altar Frontal, the Mothers' Union banner and very soon a banner in memory of Jane Harris which will be displayed on the balcony.

Along with anecdotes of family and friends, Dawn passed around examples of her work for us to see: stump work (raised embroidery) black work (beautiful fine black stitching on a white background) and beautiful samplers made to celebrate special family occasions. Dawn likened it to her 'Life Journey' and as one special sampler said 'Stitching is good for the soul; it brings comfort and peace'.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a wealth of talent and experience within our membership.

Our next meeting is on 8 April in the Coach House and is Lent Meditation led by Kanthi Ariaraj. Visitors are welcome to join us.

Anne May

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

2 March Tamzin Marie Fullwood

Funerals

20 February	Barbara Allen	Aged 79
3 March	Clarice Parnell	Aged 99
12 March	Ian Duncan	Aged 69
12 March	Brian Quinton	Aged 83
13 March	William Bedford	Aged 77

BETHLEHEM JOINS THE REAL EASTER EGG CAMPAIGN

A cooperative in Bethlehem has made tens of thousands of olive wood crosses for a special edition of the Real Easter Egg this year. It is the first time a cross has featured as part of a mainstream Easter gift.

Out of the 80 million Easter Eggs sold in the UK every year, the Real Easter Egg is the only one which tells the Easter story, gives money to charity and is Fairtrade.

The Meaningful Chocolate Company came up with The Real Easter Egg in 2010. Each Real Easter Egg has a copy of the Easter story in the box. The design is different from year to year so that people can keep giving it as a gift. But the appeal of The Real Easter Egg is very wide as it is also Fairtrade and charitable. As David explains; "Being the UK's top selling mail order egg means that not only has there been an increase in Fairtrade chocolate sales, but nearly £120,000 had been donated to charity and, as each egg had an Easter story booklet in the box, the core message of the faith was also passed on. It is a gift that offers hope and new life and is very different from the other eggs on the market."

Current commercial attitudes mean that few of the big stores are stocking these eggs. This year the Coop and Sainsbury's have decided not to stock The Real Easter Egg which means there will be fewer eggs on the shelves so more will be sent through the post. "Traidcraft and a number of independent retailers are stocking all three eggs. Tesco have the blue boxed egg and the special edition, Waitrose and Morrison's are stocking only the blue boxed egg.

As the egg sells out every year the advice is to please order early. You can check which shops are stocking the egg or buy it at www.realeasteregg.co.uk

Diocesan News

BISHOP OF WORCESTER'S LENT MESSAGE 2014

"What comes home to me when I come to Jerusalem, amongst all the other emotions that it evokes, is that our faith is an historical faith, a geographical faith. It's rooted in time and in history. It's rooted in the events of Jesus' birth and life and death and resurrection. Jesus Christ - crucified, risen and ascended.



We believe in what is sometimes called the scandal of particularity. That Jesus chose this time and this place in order to become human and to die for our sins. The logical conclusion of that though, is that there is an extension to us, to our time and our place in the Diocese of Worcester.

What happened in the Holy Land 2000 years ago is just as meaningful to us, in our time and in our place as it was when it happened. The death of Jesus, very near to where I am sat, avails for you and for me. Because of the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, we are able to be an Easter people whose song is Alleluia, who can be set free to praise the Lord.

Downstairs at the moment, worship is taking place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. People are meeting the risen Lord Jesus and as they do so, they are empowered to become, what Jesus wanted in his earthly living ministry to proclaim – Kingdom People. Jesus went about proclaiming the Kingdom. That's our vocation in the here and now, in the Diocese of Worcester and beyond. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are given a new power, the power of the risen Christ; the power of love, which is stronger than death; the power of the Holy Spirit working within us; enabling us to be set free to worship Him, to love Him and to love one another. Working for those Kingdom values of love, compassion, justice and freedom.

Those Kingdom values which Jesus espoused in his teaching – for which he lived, for which he died and for which he rose again. So as I'm here in the Holy Land with pilgrims from the Diocese, reflecting on the fact that ours is a historical faith, a geographical faith, rooted in time and history and pondering on the way in which it impacts on our lives in the here and now; my prayer for you and for me is that the death and resurrection of Jesus into which we enter this Easter, would impact in a new way in your life, would reach into your being, would touch you deeply and would set you free so that you and I and all our brothers and sisters in Christ, would be able to fulfil our vocation to become Kingdom People, proclaiming by word and deed – love compassion, justice and freedom.

Proclaiming it and living it out so that the Kingdom may go forward, Jesus may reign and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. God bless you during this Lent and Eastertide."

Bishop John

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