

# **ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD**

**Parish Church Magazine**

**ONLINE EDITION  
JANUARY 2015**



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



## Parish Church Magazine



**PRIEST IN CHARGE:** The Revd Stephen Agnew, The Rectory,  
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**JANUARY 2015**

**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 noon - Open Church –refreshments available
<b>Priest in Charge 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	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		

<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	07968 586285
	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 am and 11.00 am for Vestry Hour. You will be warmly welcomed. Tea and coffee will be available.

## DIARY FOR JANUARY 2015

The Parish Office will be closed from 24 December 2014 to 5 January 2015

### SUNDAY 4

Monday 5

Tuesday 6

Wednesday 7

Thursday 8

Saturday 10

### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Dudley Schools term Begins

7.30 pm Standing Committee Meeting

9.00 am Morning Prayers and Full Staff Meeting

10.30 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

Copy date for February magazine

### SUNDAY 11

Monday 12

Tuesday 13

### FIRST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

9.30 am Open the Book team visit Old Swinford Primary School

11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft

2.15 pm Mothers' Union Meeting and AGM in the Coach House

Wednesday 14

7.30 pm Magazine Editorial Meeting

Thursday 15

10.30 am Holy Communion

Saturday 17

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

### SUNDAY 18

### SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Tuesday 20

7.30 pm PCC Meeting

Wednesday 21

11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge

Thursday 22

10.30 am Holy Communion

Saturday 24

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

### SUNDAY 25

### CONVERSION OF PAUL

Tuesday 27

2.30-4.00pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex

Wednesday 28

11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge

Thursday 29

10.30 am Holy Communion

Saturday 31

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

7.30 pm Barn Dance Social Event for all the family

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## ANNUAL LICENSING SERVICE

At 7.30 pm on Thursday, 4 December, members of churches throughout the Deanery met at St Thomas' Church, Stourbridge for the Annual Licensing Service for Authorised Lay Ministers and Eucharistic Assistants. The service was presided over by Revd Paul Harrison, Rural Dean, assisted by Hilary Savage, Reader at St Thomas's. This was a joyous occasion at which members of churches throughout the Deanery joined together to reflect on the meaning and purpose of their service and to re-affirm their commitment and promises for the coming year. At the end of the service the Rural Dean signed the certificates of authorisation for the coming year.

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

January is the month when we look ahead to what might come our way in the year stretching out before us. Of course the uncertainty of what is ahead might fill us with trepidation, but there are always endless possibilities in the year to come.

As a Christian I believe that all time is God's time and our main task as followers of Jesus Christ is to find what is God's plan for the future in our lives and in the life of our parish. When we have done that we should seek to work with it because the chances of success, if we are in line with God, are so much greater than if we are working against the ways of God.

I am looking to the future in the parish with a great sense of hope and enthusiasm, because there are a number of people from St Mary's who have been undertaking training as Authorised Lay Ministers throughout the Autumn. As they come to the end of that training in the Summer of this year we will be asking the question: 'How do they use their gifts for the benefit of the Parish of St Mary's?' We don't quite know what the answer to that question is yet, but I am sure that God has ideas for their future ministry, and over the next few months we will be seeking God's way forward for them and for us.

The particular areas of ministry in which members of St Mary's have been training is: Pastoral Care, Leading Worship and Children and Youth Work. These are the areas in which we may see some steps forward in our Church and Parish life in the future and we should approach that movement forward with a sense of thanksgiving and optimism. Of course they are only five people, but five people whose gifts have been released for the work of the Church. In time I hope that others will join them in offering their gifts for the mission of the Church, because the responsibility for the ministry and mission of the Church lies with all of us, not just the few.

As we work together proclaiming and living God's Kingdom and God's values, the year ahead seems a time of possibilities, because it is God's time. So we rejoice in those who have offered themselves for the mission of the Church, and pray that others may follow in their footsteps.

With best wishes for the year ahead.

*Stephen Agnew*

## SERVICES IN JANUARY 2015

<b>4 January Second Sunday of Christmas</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Ephesians 1. 3-14	John 1.
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 46. 3-13	Romans 12. 1-8
<b>11 January First Sunday of Epiphany</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Isaiah 42. 1-9	Ephesians 2. 1-10
<b>18 January Second Sunday of Epiphany</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Revelations 5. 1-10	John 1. 43-51
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 60. 9-22	Hebrews 6. 17 - 7.10
<b>25 January The Conversion of Paul</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Galatians 1. 11-16a	Matthew 19. 27-end
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 56. 1-8	Colossians 1.24-2.7

## A MESSAGE FROM FRIENDS

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to the many people who supported Doreen during her illness for their kindnesses and fellowship. We felt deeply indebted to everyone who helped with Doreen's funeral. Thank you all. Your efforts were a wonderful tribute to Doreen who loved St Mary's.

**Richard, Rachel and Richard Ryan**

## ONE YEAR PASSES, ANOTHER BEGINS....

As the Christmas decorations come down and are packed away for another year there will be many people who will be sighing with relief at the conclusion of a particularly busy and perhaps stressful time. Whilst many of us will have spent time in church, later to go home, to relax and enjoy family festivities, others will have faced a series of duties which impose significant demands on their time when their families would hope to enjoy far more of their company.

To all members of the clergy, Stephen Agnew, Roy Peacock and Kanthi Ariaraj, to John Sutton our Parish Administrator, to Robin Walker our Choirmaster and Organist, all members of the choir and the music groups, a very special thank you is extended in appreciation of the lead provided throughout our Advent and Christmas season.

With the ending of one year and the beginning of another it is appropriate to reflect on and acknowledge the many people who quietly contribute to the day to day life at St Mary's and our local community. Glenys, who reliably attends early each morning to clean both church and church hall, the many members of the PCC who give of their time, knowledge and expertise in administration of the church, those who look after our sound system, those who work in the Play School or Coach House, our bell-ringers, flower arrangers and tea-makers and those who lead activities on a regular or occasional basis; all deserve a moment's recognition and appreciation.

We have so many links of varying proximity with many other organisations both locally and more distant for which we are grateful. The Diocesan team and the wider Christian community, Oldswinford Primary School, Old Swinford Hospital, Mary Stevens Hospice, the Food Bank team, those who form the churchyard work teams from the Community Payback Service, Clover Leaf, No Limits, the local trades-people of Oldswinford and Stourbridge.....the list could go on and on. To you all, Happy New Year and thank you for your efforts.

With the New Year comes the traditional call for new resolutions. Let us all consider how we contribute to our community, what we do for each other and whether we can make the time to do a little extra. Remember that for many Christmas can be a lonely time. What better way might there be to start a new year than with a determination to help to banish loneliness or to support someone in need in whatever way you are able.

Thank you one and all.....and a Happy New Year to everyone.

**The Church Wardens**

*Thank you for your generosity*



## CHRISTMAS MARKET RESULTS

The Christmas Market started well and carried on getting better and better. Quite a queue of people had built up when Tony Tatford performed the opening ceremony with a very warm welcome to all. He thanked all the helpers for the work they had put into the Market's preparation and the generosity of the donors who had contributed to goods and prizes. Father Christmas was soon with us and over a dozen children were able to visit him in his specially decorated grotto. The happy atmosphere helped to provide a very relaxed time with much general laughter. All the stalls attracted brisk and regular business throughout. The chance to sit down with a delicious homemade mince pie and coffee proved as popular as usual. As always, the event was very successful in bringing together the many communities of church and parish and I would like to thank everyone for their immense generosity – both those who were hard at work and those who came to support us.

**Katey Fletcher**

The various stalls raised:-

		Brought Forward	1,049.89
Books	50.20	Jigsaws	45.00
Bottle Stall	67.45	Name the Reindeer	37.00
Cake Stall	256.40	Name the Teddy Bear	30.50
Face Painting	21.80	Outreach	71.80
Christmas Hamper Raffle	162.00	Refreshments	127.35
Donations	32.50	Tombola	107.00
Entrance Fees	220.50	Treasure Island	130.60
Father Christmas	32.50	White Elephant	88.88
Gifts	83.64	Youth Group Games	35.40
<u>Jewellery</u>	<u>122.90</u>		
Carry Forward	1,049.89	Total	<u>£1723.42</u>

## TOY SERVICE THANK YOU

If you were able to attend the Toy Service on Sunday 7 December you will know how generously people responded to the invitation to bring a gift - a toy or perhaps some toiletry items. The extent of that generosity became very obvious as the items were collected from under the Christmas Tree the following morning and packed for transporting to CHADD, Churches Housing Association of Dudley and District. A key role of CHADD is to provide a safe refuge for victims of domestic abuse and their children. Your Christmas gifts would help to provide some much-needed cheer and support for those in refuge care. Thank you to all who helped to express one of the central messages of Christmas with giving and compassion.

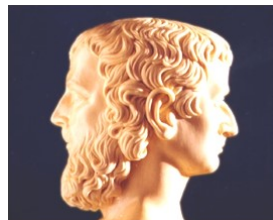


## JANUARY

“January brings the snow  
Makes your feet and fingers glow”

Do you remember this nursery rhyme which was made popular by Flanders and Swann in the 1960s? Despite being the coldest and darkest month, January provides opportunities for optimism and celebration as it heralds the new year. The first month of the year is appropriately named after the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions. He is usually depicted as having two faces since he looks to the past and to the future.

Around the world the first day of January is celebrated with a wide variety of customs and events but in recent years a common theme has been the increasingly spectacular fireworks displays in capital cities. With live TV coverage viewers in the UK can observe New Year events in eastern countries from early afternoon on New Year's Eve as the Earth rotates into the New Year. Happy New Year Greetings are exchanged and many people make New Year resolutions which are often broken by the end of the month.



Most local UK customs are derived from the Scottish Hogmanay which may have origins with Viking traditions. First-footing is a common element of New Year celebrations particularly in northern counties. The first person to enter the house of a friend or neighbour in the New Year traditionally carries a symbolic gift such as a piece of coal or cake to bring luck to the householder for the rest of the year.

Food and drink are then shared with the guests in a lively party. The



widespread practice of singing “Auld Lang Syne” also has an obvious Scottish origin. It is well known in many countries and is traditionally used to bid farewell to the old year on the stroke of midnight.

Fires feature in many events in towns and cities in Scotland and the north of England and in the village of Allendale in Northumberland the New Year tar barrel ceremony attracts many visitors. At the start of the New Year forty-five selected residents process through the streets carrying barrels of burning tar on their heads before throwing them onto a ceremonial bonfire to dispel evil spirits.



Later in the month fruit farmers in the west country still maintain the tradition of wassailing the cider orchards, a custom which can be traced back to pagan origins. Groups from local farms and villages form a procession through the apple trees, traditionally led by the wassail queen. Sticks are clashed and much noise is made to drive out the evil spirits before cider is poured round the roots of a selected tree and the party sing a wassail to encourage full crops in the next season.

“Old apple tree we wassail thee, And hoping thou will bear  
For the Lord doth know where we shall be, 'Til apples come another year”

The major event in the Christian calendar during the month of January is the Feast of the Epiphany. It celebrates the visit of the Magi as the revelation of the infant Christ and the realization that Christ is the Son of God. The Adoration of the Magi is a popular subject in classical art and Peter Paul Rubens produced several paintings between 1609 and 1640 inspired by the story in St Matthew, Ch.2. The version illustrated here was painted in 1634 and is displayed above the altar in the chapel at King's College, Cambridge. The Epiphany of the Lord falls on 6 January at the end of the twelve days of Christmas. There has been a custom that Christmas decorations should be removed on this date but it is less frequently observed now. Epiphany is marked in literature with Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' which opens with the memorable quotation “ If music be the food of love, play on”.



Have a Happy New Year.

**Alec Beevers**

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# BARN DANCE

7.30 PM SATURDAY 31 JANUARY

**A ST MARY'S SOCIAL EVENT**

**FOR ALL THE FAMILY**

**WITH OUR FAVOURITE CALLERS**

**EVE & JOHN**



**TICKETS £6.50 PER PERSON TO INCLUDE SUPPER**

**Please bring your own drinks and glasses**

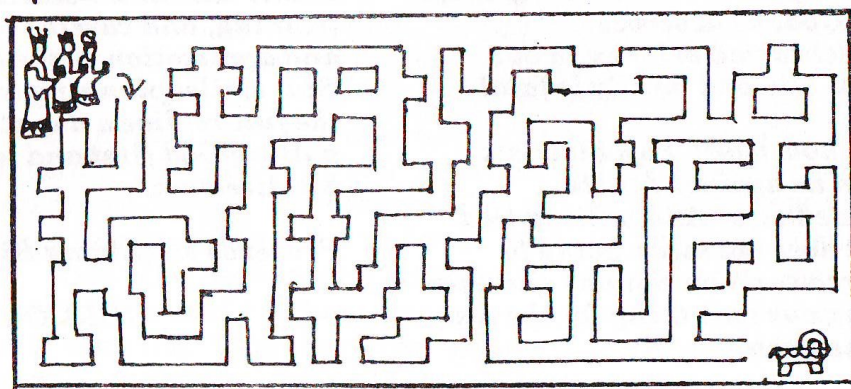
FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

## FINDING THE WAY



The three wise men had a long journey to find the new born king. They were given a light to follow, a brilliant star, so they could find the way.

GUIDE THE KINGS THROUGH THE MAZE to find the baby in the manger. When you have found the way, colour it yellow. You might like to colour the picture above, using your Christmas crayons.



There are many ways. Find the shortest way.

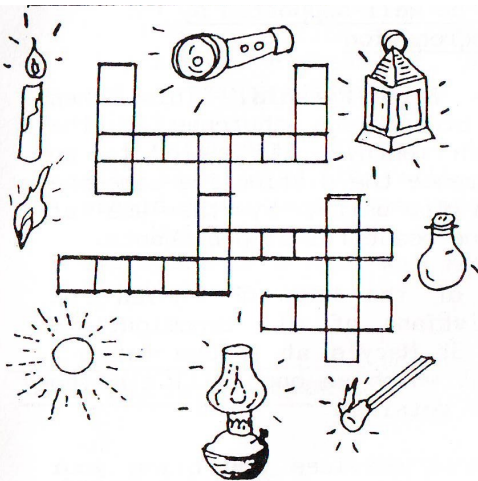
## CALCULATOR MAGIC

Find the way to work out the answers:

The wise men may have studied the stars. They would have been clever at maths. If you have a calculator you can find the answers to these questions by doing the sum and pressing the “=” button and then turning the calculator upside down to read the answers.

1. We should never tell  $1873 + 3444$
2. Moses was told to take off his  $10609 \times 5$
3. Give me  $(233 \times 3) + 11$  in my lamp
4. This one was green.  $7866 - 152$
5. We get a chocolate  $(1326 \div 2)$  at Easter
6. We ask God to  $(16333 + 39045)$  us.

### LIGHT PUZZLE



Find the way to fit the names of the pictures into the grid. They all help us by giving light.

We too have to find our way to Jesus. We can find out about Him and get to know Him by getting involved with church activities like Children Together and Messy Church.

We can say prayers and read about Him in the New Testament. He tells us how to love Him by loving others.

**“Thy words are a lamp  
unto my feet”**



There has been some coverage in the press lately regarding charities and how the funds raised are distributed and used.

The Church Family at St Mary's over the years has kindly donated to our various fundraising activities; Three Peaks, The Welsh 3000, Hadrian's Wall, The Botswana Experience, to name a few.

I would like to remind everyone, as I do at every activity presentation, that all staff at "No Limits" are volunteers and do not receive any remuneration whatsoever.

The more "No Limits" becomes involved in the whirlwind of Autism, the more help we need.

On behalf of our Members, Volunteers, Trustees and Manager, Chris Morgan, I would like to thank you all again for your kindness, support and generosity, and to wish you a very peaceful 2015.

Best wishes,



**Frank McGain-Harding.**  
**Chairman, No Limits Community Project**

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

Visitors Stephen Agnew and Margaret Woodall were welcomed to our meeting on 9 December. Anne May opened proceedings with an appreciation of the service given to St Mary's Church and our Mothers' Union branch by our member Doreen Ryan who had died. Congratulations were sent to Eileen McGillvray who was celebrating her ninetieth birthday.

Members then enjoyed a service of traditional lessons and carols. Stephen sang "Silent Night" in German which echoed, in remembrance, a Christmas truce in war trenches a hundred years ago. He also used a guitar accompaniment and sang "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven came."

Following the time of reflection special refreshments were served by committee members.

Next meeting: The Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 13 January, 2015, at 2.15 pm at the Coach House.

**Dawn Nex**

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## DOREEN RYAN

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Doreen Ryan. Our deepest condolences are recorded to Dick, Rachel and Richard as we look to support them through this difficult time.

Doreen's funeral service, so movingly led by Revd Stephen Agnew, was a sad occasion, balanced with the joy of knowing we were celebrating a life that had brought much joy and goodness to our world.

In his address Revd Greville Cross read from Luke 4: 18-21, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" and spoke of Doreen's journey of faith and service, drawing out connections between the text and with the joy she brought in her life and the fulfilment achieved. Doreen's was a life into which was woven a commitment to helping others improve their lives, something which ensured our lives were immeasurably enriched by her companionship along the way.

Over many years, St Mary's has been at the centre of her life, alongside her concern for her family. Specially prepared floral decorations reflected her own love of flowers and the artistic gifts she brought to many exhibitions and presentations in church. Her contributions to this magazine, especially her production of the Children's Page, her service as Churchwarden, her commitment to the mission of St Mary's and her custodianship of the churchyard reflected the breadth of her service. The presence of Stephen, Greville and of Revd Owain Bell and his wife Kim illustrated the esteem in which her service was held by Rectors past and present. Above all, her leadership of and determination to see the Coach House project realised and grow to the health under which it operates today illustrate the gifts she gave to her local church and to God's world.

Doreen had valiantly faced up to an illness that had severely restricted her outings for the best part of the past year, a time in which we were constantly reminded of the need for our prayers by the empty pew where Dick and Doreen would invariably sit each Sunday. The long familiar regularity of their presence and the enormity of their involvement with St Mary's added to the poignancy of their inability to attend services.

If ever there was a life to celebrate Doreen's is one. Her involvement in and contributions to the local community were immense, yet were undertaken with a sense of service and a desire to have achieved something worthwhile, always trying to avoid personal recognition and accolade. Many children benefitted and grew richly from her teaching while parents were grateful for her compassionate guidance of their offspring. She served Old Swinford Primary School well.

Well done thou good and faithful servant.

## A WALK OF SUPERLATIVES

Our November walk was very different to normal as it was totally within the urban area. 14 walkers caught the train to Smethwick Galton Bridge where, after climbing the stairs to street level, we walked across Thomas Telford's Galton Bridge which, when built in 1829, was the longest, single span ( 151 feet ) cast iron bridge in the world. The bridge is now Grade 1 listed. We descended from the bridge via a zig zag path to canal level. At this point the canal, Thomas Telford's New Main Line Canal, is in a deep cutting which when constructed was the largest man-made earthwork in the world.

We headed along the canal towards Birmingham City Centre and soon reached the Smethwick Pumping Station (now restored but not open at the time of our visit ) built in 1892. At this point there are canals on both sides of the pumping station; the New Main Line at low level, and the Old Main Line at high level. The purpose of the pump was to raise water the 38 feet from the new to the old canal to keep the old canal topped up at its summit, so as to enable the three locks up and three down to function at all times.



We climbed the steps to the higher level, and could immediately see the contrast between the two waterways. The Old Main Line built by John Smeaton followed the contours, whilst Telford's new line was dug straight through anything that got in the way! Telford's new route was dug to bypass the locks, and hence speed up the passage of barges. From the pump house we continued towards Birmingham along the old canal, and descended past the three locks to Smethwick Junction, where the two waterways join. Just before the top lock we passed Telford's aqueduct that took barges from the old line, at high level, over the new line to access various industrial wharfs. ( See photo )

From Smethwick Junction, we walked along the New Main Line for a mile to the Soho Loop, which we followed. This was originally part of Smeaton's main canal, but was bypassed in 1827. The loop provides access to Hockley Port Basin where "live aboarders" can moor up. We continued to rejoin the main line at Rotten Park Junction. From here the view towards Birmingham changed from run down industrial to the tower blocks of the city centre. Not long afterwards we reached the very expensive apartment blocks which front onto the canal and Sherbourne Wharfe. Very shortly we were at the three-way canal junction where the NIA, the Sealife Centre and the Malt House hostelry front onto the water. Within the water at this junction there is a "roundabout" with a finger post showing where each of the three arms goes.

We were able to enjoy a good lunch at the Malt House, before continuing our canal side walk down beside a flight of 12 locks to the railway bridge out of Snow Hill Station. An iron staircase took us up to street level, with just a short walk to the St Paul's entrance to the station itself. Fortunately one of our party was young enough to have had to buy a ticket, as the rest of our group's Network West Midlands cards refused to open the unmanned barriers. Perfect timing meant that on reaching the platform a Stourbridge bound train was waiting to depart.

**Mike Blaxland**

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## **TUESDAY TEA**

Tuesday Tea takes place in the church Narthex, normally on the fourth Tuesday of each month, from 2.30 to 4.00 pm, when you are welcome to come for a chat with friends over tea/coffee and cakes.



It is organised by the Mission Committee and, since it began over a year ago, it has proved to be a popular event. Anyone can come - you do not have to be a member of St Mary's to do so. You'll find that there's always a very welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.

There is no charge but you may like to make a donation to go towards St Mary's Mission work

Tea, coffee and cakes are served. At our Tuesday Tea in November, it was good to hear comments such as:

*"Isn't it just lovely to come out for a cup of tea" and "such wonderful cakes."*



This is what it's all about, so do come along and enjoy yourself. Everyone is welcome. And if anyone would like to make cakes occasionally, it would be much appreciated and enjoyed.

**Pamela Scudamore**  
**St Mary's Mission and Pastoral Committee**



## THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

### RICH COCONUT TARTLETS

I have been making these for years. I think the recipe was in my old Bero book. I usually make a double dose as they freeze well. Desiccated coconut goes stale quite quickly so I usually freeze what's left in a plastic tub

150g (6oz) shortcrust pastry

Filling

4 tablespoons of Jam

50g (2oz) margarine or butter

50g (2oz) caster sugar

1 medium egg

50g (2oz) desiccated coconut



Heat oven to 170 fan, 180°C, 350°F, Gas Mark 4.

Roll out pastry thinly and cut in rounds using a 7.5 cm (3 inch) cutter and line 12 party tins.

Place 1 x 2.5 ml spoon (½ tsp) of jam in each.

Cream margarine and sugar, add the egg and coconut.

Place 1 x 5 ml spoon (1 tsp) of the mixture on top of the jam.

Bake for 20 minutes until the sponge is risen and golden brown.

**Ann Jennings**

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Thank you Ann for providing another year's suggestions of interesting items to make, eat and enjoy. If you have a recipe to share please send it to the editors for inclusion in a future edition of the magazine.

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### AND FOR THE WINE.....

Coconut is a flavour we rarely hold uppermost when selecting wines. Its nutty, slightly spicy notes present a challenge for matching. Spicy characteristics are detected in many wines but almost always in the background.

The flavour features in certain whiskies : Old Pulteney, Aberlour and some lowland malts spring to mind. However our tartlets require something rich and indeed the jam and cake might send us on a quest for a sweet wine. The glory of a sweet dessert wine lies in its accent on intense fruits - less appropriate here. Vin Santo follows a different school ; oxidized and less distinctly fruited. It is mostly produced from the white grapes Trebbiano and Malvasia; a higher proportion of the latter in the blend will fashion a more floral and fruited wine.

Alternatively, it is well established that rum has an affinity with coconut and a light or a clean white rum probably comes nearest here. Most of the golden and dark rums we meet are distillates of molasses, resulting in a richer, more complex spirit.

Most Caribbean islands produce rums in this style. However those from the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe are distillates of sugar cane juice and can exhibit a lovely minerally, slightly smoky note which would work very well. They are rarely encountered and tend to be expensive : if you track a bottle down tell me! Perhaps this should be our theme for 2015 - make it the year you hunt out some rare and special wines to taste!

Enjoy your wine sipping.

**Richard W. B. Ryan**

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## **MAGAZINE NOTES**

We look forward to bringing you another year of our monthly publication. The price of the magazine will be kept at 50p. per issue: the annual subscription is £5.00 per year with free local delivery and £10.00 per year with postal delivery. Our distributors will be collecting subscriptions during coming weeks. Copies of the magazine are also available for purchase in the church and at Oldswinford Pharmacy.

If you are able and interested in helping our distribution team by delivering the magazine in selected areas of the parish we shall be pleased to hear from you. Please contact Janet Beevers on 01384 444229.

Contributions of reports of parish activities and articles of general interest are welcome at any time. Please send them to the editors either through the tray in the narthex, or by email (see address on page 2) or by post to the parish office. If you might be interested in joining the editorial team please contact the editors.

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## **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity organised by the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland runs from 18-25 January and this year is taking its theme from the Churches of Brazil: "The Well is Deep", where intolerance is becoming a focus of concern.

Jesus challenges us to acknowledge that diversity is part of God's design, to approach one another in trust and to see the face of God in the face of all men and women, whoever they may be.

More information on and resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity can be found on the Churches Together website: <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/>

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

16 November Elizabeth Hettie Clough

### Funerals

14 November Margaret Brannon Aged 78

2 December Patricia Harris Aged 83

2 December Doreen Ryan Aged 85

## NEWS IN BRIEF

When the hearing loop system in church failed, several people were frustrated by their inability to access the spoken words of our services. Harold White kindly organised a discreet collection to help meet the cost of repairs. In the event, due to the generosity of many, the appeal raised £526 to cover the costs of updating a system that should be fit for purpose for a long time to come. Many thanks to all who contributed and to Harold for his initiative and determination to see the matter resolved as quickly as possible.

Further improvements to the sound system are also being undertaken.

The ciborium, the silver altar container from which the wafers are distributed at communion, has long shown the effects of wear and tear and has been in need of re-silvering. This is now underway and it is hoped the restored ciborium will have been returned to be in use for Christmas services.

Efforts continue to find a full-time organist and Director of Music, especially someone who is motivated and equipped to maintain, develop and enthuse our choir.

### Children's Page Answers

CALCULATOR MAGIC

1. LIES,  
5. EGG

2. SHOES,  
6. BLESS

3. OIL

4. HILL

## LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF DUDLEY

I wonder how often you look in a mirror? And I wonder what you see? Perhaps you pull a funny face and laugh. Or you pull and tuck here and there to imagine what the plastic surgeon could do to defy gravity. Or you cry, knowing that there is hidden pain there. Or smile, knowing some hidden joy. Thank goodness the bathroom is a private place!



At Christmas we looked into the manger and saw the face of God in a vulnerable baby. At Epiphany we see the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh reflected in his face with their rich portents of future kingship, holiness and death. At Candlemas we will hear again how Simeon and Anna, with the wisdom gleaned from years of being in God's company, saw the Messiah in the face of this baby brought to the Temple.

That face did not side with the ruler who beheaded his cousin, John the Baptist, but with the victim. It did not side with those who hated foreigners, as he himself had been a refugee. It did not side with the powerful, but with the marginalised. Nor the respectable, but with the scandalous. Or those deeply faithful people who followed every dot of the religious law, but with those whose lives were messy and complex. And ultimately that face, blood-stained and bruised, turned to face the cross at Golgotha.

At the centre of our hope in the future is the face of Jesus. The face where we can look deeply and always find love and joy, mercy and forgiveness. The face whose glory we discover more and more as we live the words of the Psalmist, 'your face, Lord, will I seek, hide not your face from me' (Ps 27.10-11).

We glimpse that face in the poorest, the lost, the least and the lonely; those who the world so often forgets. At the end of last year I was part of a group from the Diocese who visited our link diocese of Peru. We visited a shanty town, built amongst the rubble and graves of a community hit by a massive earthquake to the south of Lima that killed 7000 people. There was no electricity and no water, with buildings made from bamboo matting. As people gathered in the open-air Anglican church, I saw resilient faces smiling and prayerful, and in their eyes there was immense warmth and love as they spoke about their great hope for the future in Jesus. They had, as Saint Paul wrote, seen 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'.

We also see Jesus' face in Christ-like people; people who slowly take on his face by trying to live as he did. They are not those who only think of themselves, but those who live lives of love and service. Not those who trumpet their achievements, but who quietly go on supporting others in their community. Not those who chart ambitions, but those who discover that in order to care for others they sometimes have to leave behind their own futures.

Jesus calls us to travel in the company of those in whom we see his face until that day when we will no longer see dimly in a mirror but see his glory face to face.

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