

# **ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD**

**Parish Church Magazine**

**Online edition  
DECEMBER 2015**



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD



## Parish Church Magazine



*A very warm welcome awaits you at  
St Mary's services and Christmas events.*

**PRIEST IN CHARGE:** The Revd Stephen Agnew, The Rectory,  
Old Swinford, Stourbridge, DY8 2HA  
Tel: 01384 395410  
E-mail: [st.mary.os.priest@btconnect.com](mailto:st.mary.os.priest@btconnect.com)

**DECEMBER 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)
Daily:	5.00 pm - Evening Prayer (except Fridays)
Wednesday:	1.30 pm - Toddlers' Group 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	01384 379972
Prayer Group	Third Wednesday in month, 10 -11 am	393454
Mothers' Union:	Second Tuesday at 2.15 pm	392951
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 Judy Hall	377349
	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>	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
	Miss Gemma Sutton	0121 360 0933

<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>Facebook:</b>	www.facebook.com/stmaryschurcholdswinford	
<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 DECEMBER 2015

Wednesday 2	9.00 am Morning Prayers and Full Staff Meeting 3.00 pm Holy Communion at Oriel House
Thursday 3	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 4	Stephen's day off
Saturday 5	pm.... Christmas Market preparations in the Church Hall 10.00 am-12.00 noon Christmas Market in the Church Hall There will be no Open Church and Vestry Hour today. 10.00 am Licensing of Revd David Knight as Chaplain at Mary Stevens Hospice
<b>SUNDAY 6</b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>
Monday 7	3.00 pm Baptisms Our Open the Book Team visit Oldswinford Primary School
Tuesday 8	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft
Wednesday 9	St Mary's Toddlers' Group to visit church to decorate tree 7.30 pm Baptism preparation
Thursday 10	Copy date for January magazine 10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 11	Stephen's day off 2.30 pm Old Swinford Hospital Carol Service
Saturday 12	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 13</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>
Tuesday 15	2.00 pm Combined Tuesday Tea in the Narthex 7.30 pm Magazine Editorial Meeting
Wednesday 16	2.00 pm Ham Dingle Primary School Carol Service 6.00 pm Old Swinford Primary School Carol Service
Thursday 17	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 18	Stephen's day off
Saturday 19	9.00 am Decorate church for Christmas 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 7.00 pm Got to Sing Concert
<b>SUNDAY 20</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>
Thursday 24	2.00 pm Wedding 6.30 pm Carol Service <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> 10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 4.00 pm Crib Service 10.00 pm First communion of Christmas
<b>Friday 25</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>
Saturday 26	St Stephen's day There will be no Open Church and Vestry Hour today.
<b>SUNDAY 27</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS 1, JOHN APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST</b> 6.30 pm Special Service of Readings and Carols

See page 6 for details of services

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

As I sit and write this message I, like millions of others, have been shocked by the atrocities in Paris, and like so many others I have been stunned by the total disregard that some people have for human life. Atrocities like this make me want to ask the question: 'Is a religious approach to life something which is a force for good or for evil?'

As we ponder the hatred demonstrated by that growing number of fanatical Muslims, how can we even think that religion is a force for good? It is used as the justification for acts which are clearly evil, and which are concerned with the destruction of anyone who stands against your own way of thinking and living. In these terms religion is perceived as a destructive force, and although we might focus specifically on the religion of Islam, we do not have to think too hard of times and places where Christianity has manifested itself in a similar way, and shown itself to be quite as capable of those levels of destruction which we have recently witnessed in certain groups within Muslim society. We could also extend that analysis to other faiths and ways of life as well.

So the question I am left with is: 'Are all religions always tainted? Do all faith communities have a tendency to be destructive?' There are some who would say 'Yes', all religions are tarnished, and in their enthusiasm for convincing us of the existence of a god who demonstrates specific characteristics their adherents deny the value of the creation which those same people say she/he created.

You might not be surprised to read that I don't agree with that point of view, and that I think that so much of the excesses of certain groups within religions are little more than a bid for power amongst those groups, which use particular religious beliefs to further their agenda. At their centre most religions start with a premise which is affirmative, and it is only when particular groups of followers get hold of that affirmative message that it becomes twisted into something negative and destructive.

In the run up to Christmas the Christian Church highlights the affirmative message contained in John 3: 16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.....' The Christian message is essentially about love, as the carol by Christina Rossetti declares 'Love came down at Christmas'. In our Christian lives, at Christmas and at every other time, we must always ensure that we live out that message, the central message of our faith, and not allow it to be contaminated by our own inventions.

May your Christmas be filled with love, and may the world recognise and respond to the power of love as shown to us in Jesus, God's Son, born into the world to bring hope to the world (a hope which we need to hear and see as much now as it was needed 2000 years ago).

With every blessing.

*Stephen Agnew*

## SERVICES IN DECEMBER 2015

<b>6 December Second Sunday of Advent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Philippians 1. 3-11	Luke 3. 1-6
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 40. 1– 11	Luke 1. 1-25
<b>13 December Third Sunday of Advent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER TOY SERVICE	
	6.30 pm	Isaiah 35.	Luke 1. 57-66
<b>20 December Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Hebrews 10. 5-20	Luke 1. 39-45
	6.30 pm	CAROL SERVICE	
<b>24 December Christmas Eve</b>	4.00 pm Crib Service	A service for children when the Christmas story is told as the characters are placed in the crib.	
	10.00 pm The First Communion of Christmas	Hebrews 1. 1-4	John 1. 1-14
<b>25 December Christmas Day</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 9. 2-7	Luke 2. 1-14
<b>26 December St Stephen's</b>	10.30 am	A SAID SERVICE OF COMMUNION	
<b>27 December First Sunday of Christmas</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 John 1.	John 21. 19b-25
	6.30 pm Evensong	SPECIAL SERVICE OF CAROLS AND READINGS	

**ST MARY'S, OLD SWINFORD**  
**We extend a warm invitation to you to our**  
**SERVICES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON 2015**

**Sunday 13 December**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Toy Service (*During which you are invited to donate an unwrapped gift of a toy or toiletries which will be donated to the Dudley Women's Refuge*)

6.30pm Evensong



**Sunday 20 December**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Parish Communion

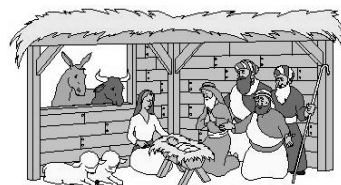
6.30 pm Christmas Carol Service - *A traditional Service of Readings and Carols*  
*There will be a "bucket" collection for the Christian Aid Refugee Crisis Appeal at our Christmas services from the Carol Service onwards.*

**Thursday 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE**

10.30 am Holy Communion

4.00 pm Crib Service - *A family service for children when the Christmas story is told with carols and the characters in the story are brought to the crib.*

10.00 pm Communion with Carols  
*The First Communion of Christmas*



**Friday 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY**

8.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.00 am Family Communion (Common Worship) with Carols

**Saturday 26 December ST STEPHEN'S DAY**

10.30am Said service of Holy Communion

**Sunday 27 December**

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am Parish Communion

6.30pm Service of seasonal carols and readings.

**Sunday 3 January**

4.00 pm Christingle Service



# Christmas Market

**Saturday, 5 December**  
**10.00 am - 12.00 noon**

Do come and join us – we have many lovely things to sell, such as:- Cakes, Books, Jigsaws, Jewellery, Books, Gifts and not forgetting our very popular White Elephant Stall.

Also, there will be games, the fantastic Christmas Hamper Raffle and a big Tombola with many prizes; the Bottle Stall where luck may be with you! Also Treasure Island and much, much more.

Father Christmas will be visiting his Oldswinford Grotto.

When you need to catch your breath, there is  
Coffee and a Homemade Mince Pie.

As always, all help and contributions towards making this a  
successful Market are very welcome.

Cakes and mince pies can be brought in on Friday evening or on the  
morning itself.

Katey Fletcher  
Tel. 01384 378182

## CHRISTINGLE



Every year, for over 40 years at Christmas time, St Mary's Church has offered a special Christingle Service in thanks and support of the Children's Society. This service supplements the on-going work of many local people who fill collection boxes and arrange other fund raising events. The Children's Society is a very important and valuable charity which aims to make a huge difference to the lives of abused and exploited children.

Our Christingle Service for this year will be held at 4.00 pm on Sunday 3 January when a very warm welcome will be extended to all. This is a special opportunity during that quieter period immediately after the Christmas celebrations, at Epiphany, when the whole family can take part in a service for children about children and in support of children.

Please make a note of the date in your diary and do all you can to come along and share a little with the Children's Society.





## THE COACH HOUSE - 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

On Wednesday 14 October the Coach House celebrated its 20th anniversary since it was officially opened by Lord Carey, (the then Archbishop of Canterbury) in 1995. The occasion was marked by a reception and rededication service led by the Bishop of Dudley, the Right Revd Graham Usher.

Chris Davis-Smith, Chairman of the Coach House Committee welcomed guests, including the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Mohammed Hanif, and his wife, together with many other visitors who had been involved with the Coach House project over the last two decades. Introductory speeches reflected on the original vision of the project to provide teaching and leisure facilities with a particular emphasis on people with special needs, and the work that had been undertaken in the realization of its objectives. Bishop Graham commented on the achievements as part of St Mary's Outreach and noted the range of activities that the Coach House had supported. Councillor Hanif acknowledged the contribution that the Coach House made to the Borough of Dudley and thanked everyone engaged in the project for their work in the community.

After a prayer and blessing in rededication of the Coach House, Bishop Graham also dedicated the memorial clock and plaque which had been installed "In loving memory of Doreen Ryan – Founder and tireless worker for the Coach House". The service ended with a rousing chorus of "Happy birthday to you" and guests then enjoyed a tour of the facilities and displays. This was still a 'working day' in the life of the Coach House. Clover Leaf students were engaged in craft activities in the studio making rugs and cross-stitch items while the No Limits music group were performing some of their repertoire upstairs. Songs included 'I'm a believer', originally by The Monkees, and Michel from Clover Leaf joined Adam, Pippa, David and Darren in a memorable encore.



*Bishop Graham Usher, Deputy Lord Mayor and his wife with students from Clover Leaf*



*Members of the No Limits group entertain guests*

A buffet lunch was served from the newly refurbished kitchen area and guests were able to share experiences and recollect memories of the last two decades. It was a particularly happy occasion for Revd Canon Owain Bell whose vision and inspiration led to the foundation of the Coach House project while he was rector at St Mary's, Old Swinford. Much of the discussion focussed on the problems encountered in the formative years which had been recorded in the programme for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. An abstract is printed in the following section.

**Alec Beevers**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **THE HISTORY OF THE COACH HOUSE PROJECT**



The vision of turning the dilapidated Rectory Coach House into an Arts and Crafts Centre was first seen when Gwerin, an Old Swinford Housing Association caring for adults with learning in their homes, was looking for premises where their residents could meet and work alongside other people. Donald Henderson and Revd Owain Bell (then Rector) sought permission from the Worcester diocese to renovate the old building. With approval given, four years of fund-raising resulted in all the main services being connected, surveys done, architects plans drawn up and all paid for. Things were going well.

We then had three blows. The survey revealed structural defects beyond our capabilities. The skilled workers in Gwerin were no longer available. Our fund-raising capacity was restricted by failing to obtain charitable status because the money would go into a building. Everything came to a standstill. It was decided to relinquish the project and return the building.

A discussion on the way to Worcester Diocese office produced new ideas and plans and these met with approval. The Diocese would rebuild the Coach House and the St Mary's project would do the rest. A generous grant from Social Services paid to refurbish the interior. Within eighteen months the Coach House Arts and Crafts Centre opened and received its first students on 1 May 1995. The official opening by the Right Revd Dr George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, took place later in October.

Today many organisations use its facilities as well as those needing care. The vision has been realized.

**Abstract from 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme**

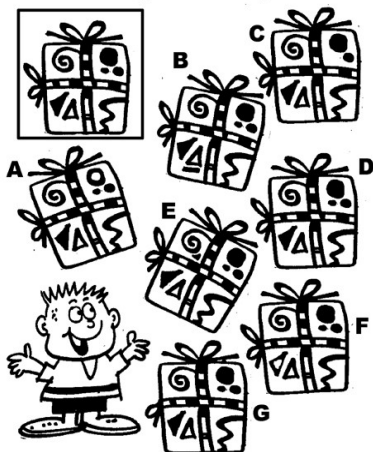
# FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN



## A Christmas Quiz

1. What was the name of Jesus's father? James, Joseph, Jeremy?
2. Can you name three animals that shared the stable with Jesus?
3. What gifts did the three kings take to Jesus?
4. Where was Jesus Born? Buckingham, Bethlehem or Belbroughton?
5. What is the date in December of Christmas Day?
6. Which Reindeer had a very shiny nose? Rudolph, Prancer, Dasher?
7. In the song 'Jingle Bells' was it fun to ride in a car, a taxi or a sleigh?
8. Boxing Day is also Known as: St Joseph's Day, St Martin's Day or St Stephen's Day?
9. What prickly leaved bush with red berries is associated with Christmas?
10. In the Twelve days of Christmas how many swans were swimming?

## Christmas present puzzle

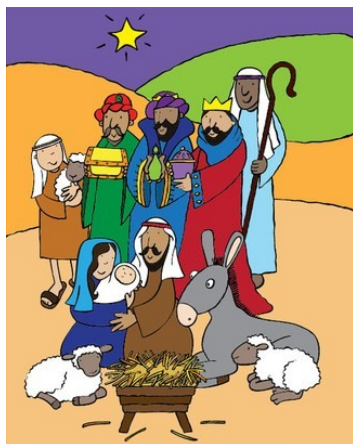


Just one of these presents is the same as the one in the box.  
Can you find which one?

## A Nativity Word Scramble

All these words come from the Christmas story. Can you unscramble them?

1. TRAS
2. MAGREN
3. MYAR
4. SEPHE
5. DOEYKN
6. AEGLN
7. JPHOES
8. JSSUE
9. KIGSN
10. STLBEA





Look at the windows in church and colour this picture to look like a stained glass window

## **AN ALL SOULS EVENSONG FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED**

An important element of the church's work and comfort for the population at large is to provide support at times of bereavement. Almost everyone experiences the sadness and grief that comes with the loss of someone close to them, an experience that can frequently bring long-lasting and deep feelings of personal confusion and regret. Often this difficult time can be eased and solace may be found in the support that may be provided through quiet reflection and the knowledge of one's faith. The positive, direct and personalised contributions of a minister of the Church may be of inestimable importance at such challenging times and in the months and years that follow.

So, for many of those who attended the All Souls Evensong Service on Sunday 1 November, this was an opportunity to bring to mind, with others, in a dignified and respectful service, the memories of those who have died in the past year or before and to remember them with gratitude.

Through the work of our Parish Administrator, a personal invitation to this service is extended to the families of everyone who has, in the past year, had a funeral service at St Mary's or at a local crematorium at which one of our licensed preachers has presided. The response to the invitations is obviously dependent on a number of factors but it is clear from the replies received that a great many of those invited are extremely grateful for the thought and the genuine expression of concern they represent.

Almost seventy people attended this year's service. Each was invited to light a candle in memory of their loved ones and as the words and music of the service filled the church, the light of these flames burned brightly in remembrance. The names of the departed were read aloud during Prayers at the Altar bringing to each person present a personal moment as a memorial to their loss.

On behalf of those who attended and those who were unable to be present, thank you to Stephen and Kanthi and all who contributed to the realisation of this service.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE**

Legacies form an important source of capital funds to enable the mission of the Church to be realised. St Mary's has been remembered in the wills of several long-standing worshippers and we thank them for their generosity.

Often funds are given for the general purpose of enabling the work of the Church and it tends to be for the PCC to determine how these funds may best be allocated. The PCC favours directing these funds towards specific projects, to allow for work which otherwise would be beyond the means of St Mary's. Currently, funds exist to support our work with children, notably elements of the Youth Club and the growing popularity of Messy Church and Open the Book.

Other projects include the provision of a much needed and improved notice board for church and church hall purposes and the replacement of our

aged and temperamental boiler. Even longer term, but a constant concern for our Master of Fabric is the ageing roof, all too frequent leaks and the inevitable need for it to be replaced in the not too distant future.

A key project, that is an important part of the mission of making St Mary's an 'Open Church', somewhere that is available to and accessible by all members of the parish and visitors, is a scheme to improve the entrances to the church. Considerations are at the early stages of discussions with architects and planners but revolve around making the entrances more open, better illuminated, tidily decorated and immediately inviting. The hope is that these entrances will send out a message that says to everyone, "You are welcome here and there may be something special available to you if you care to cross the threshold."

As these plans begin to evolve, details will be published and everyone will be invited to share in the exciting potential of these developments.

## **The Church Wardens**

### **NEWS OF SASI AND MARK**

Sasi and Mark are well. Mark is 11 years old adapting to studying in English Medium in the secondary school. He finds it hard at present and gets extra help in English, Mathematics and Science. His performance has dropped because of the change in the medium of instruction. Mark speaks and learnt in Tamil before. He will soon learn and gain confidence to do well.

He plays football for the second 11 football team at school. Unfortunately their team lost their recent game. All the more they must practice and be determined to win next time! These are lessons in life.

Mark's Aunt (Sasi's sister) has made the family proud by securing a job as a medical attendant (cleaning public areas, wards, etc) at the nearby Hospital. To secure a government job is a great achievement; the family is proud of her. Because it is a government job, banks will lend money for essentials. She has, therefore, got a loan to buy a nearly new scooter to commute to work. Occasionally she takes Mark to school and he is delighted when he whizzes past his classmates!

Sasi continues to work for the same family who are kind and good to her. They also visit school to speak with Mark's teachers regarding his progress. That is a great help to Sasi.

Mum and son attend church regularly. Their pastor visits them when time permits.

They remember us at St Mary's, for our contribution to make their lives better. They send their love and humble thanks to all at St Mary's.

**Kanthi Ariaraj**

## **NOBODY ASKED** **By Patricia Westwood.**

'NOBODY asked me' said the Donkey  
'Whether I wanted to travel this way  
And leave my home in Nazareth-  
Nor plod for miles each day!  
Joseph walked alongside me  
Every long step on the road,  
Sharing that arduous journey  
And helping to carry my load.  
My burden was often heavy,  
For I carried my mistress dear  
As the time for the birth of her baby  
Was rapidly drawing near.  
Joseph explained, as we travelled  
That to Bethlehem we had to go  
I thought it a load of nonsense  
And I brayed to tell him so!  
Caesar didn't ask me  
When he made his royal decree  
That all must go to be counted  
No! Nobody asked me!'

'NOBODY asked us' said  
the cattle  
'If we minded sharing our  
shed  
And giving up our manger  
To make that baby's bed!  
Mind you, they did look weary  
When the innkeeper brought them inside,  
And put fresh, clean straw in OUR corner  
Then moved us to the other side!  
It is not that we mind the intrusion,  
And we're happy to share our shed  
We don't mind the draughts and breezes  
But - Nobody asked us!' they said .

'NOBODY asked me!' said the lamb  
As he settled himself in the hay,  
'Whether I wanted to be a present-  
I'd like to have had my say!'

**With thanks to Kanthi Ariaraj**

## **ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP**

On the 31 October fifteen people set off from the old Himley Railway Station. The station is no longer there but a few remnants show where it used to be.



(Picture of construction in 1914).

In sunshine we walked along the disused railway track, initially on an embankment with views far and wide, later in a cutting with high banks on either side. We passed under a number of bridges and finally through a very short tunnel underneath the road which enabled us to continue our walk. We veered off and headed into the open land of Wom Brook, soon to cross a road and turn down onto the canal towpath. Here were huge open areas with lovely views of all the autumn colours and reflections in the canal. At one point we had to cross a bridge to get to the left hand side of the canal as the towpath had become absorbed as part of peoples' gardens. At another road crossing we were taken back onto the right hand side of the canal where the left side was now part of peoples' gardens. This gave us a variety of things to look at. We later crossed another bridge leading to a stile and walked along a track that led us to the main road. Shortly we turned off along a farm track that took us past the farm shop with lovely fresh things to purchase. We then continued on across long open cropped fields which finally took us to the road and under the railway bridge to return to our car park. Following a short drive to The Dudley Arms we were joined by a few more people where we enjoyed a lovely carvery meal.

**Toni Evans.**

## FRANK'S 'NO LIMITS' CHALLENGE!



As most of you know by now Frank arrived back safe and sound and blister free! Such cannot be said of some of our members but, as ever, Frank was well prepared with numerous Compede blister plasters. Despite this they all had a great time and found it a very positive experience.

The whole event was not without its 'highlights'. One in particular was a 'Titanic' moment, as our 70 foot narrow boat tilted downwards in the lock as the water drained out – happily no need to abandon ship, just refill the lock and start again.

There were a number of mini challenges for our Trustees to resolve to ensure that our members individual needs were met, but otherwise, there were many smiles, new friends made along the way and new skills learned.

A huge THANK YOU to all of our church family who not only sponsored Frank but supported us with best wishes and we are sure a few prayers too. Sponsorship is still coming in as members gathered sponsorship as well. As soon as we have a total we will ask John to include it on the pew sheet.

Our Trustees and members took a fair footage of film and still photographs which we will edit and splice so that when we hold our personal thank you cheese and wine evening for all of you who sponsored us, you will be able to see the group in action!!!

Many thanks to you all,

**Chris and Frank**

### ST MARY'S MISSION CARDS

Thanks to our artist, Elaine, a range of these cards has been available for purchase in the narthex for several years now. Elaine introduces new designs from time to time and the sales bring in income which is used for Mission purposes. They have been on sale at 50p each.

From January 2016 it will be necessary to increase the price to 70p each to cover the increase over the years in the costs of stationery and printing. We are sure that you will feel that they are still extremely good value and continue to promote St Mary's Mission work.

**Pam Scudamore**

#### Children's Page answers

##### A Christmas Quiz

1. Joseph. 2. A cow, a sheep and a donkey. 3. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh
4. Bethlehem 5. 25th. 6. Rudolf. 7. A sleigh. 8. St Stephen's Day. 9. Holly.
10. Seven.

**Christmas Present Puzzle :-** The present is **D**

**Nativity Word Scramble:** The words are: Star, Manger, Mary, Sheep, Donkey, Angel, Joseph, Jesus, Kings, Stable.



## THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

### SAUSAGE DANISH

I made these last year for a Bonfire Night treat and they proved very popular. I thought they would make a tasty addition to Christmas Breakfast when you don't want too much to eat. I have also made them with ready-sliced chorizo in place of the sausage for a tasty nibble with drinks.

375g all-butter puff pastry  
400g breakfast sausages  
1 tablespoon fennel seeds (Optional)  
1 beaten egg

Set the oven at 200C/400F/Gas 6. Lightly flour a pastry board or work surface, then roll out puff pastry to a rectangle about 30 x 20cm/12 x 8in.

Remove the skins from the sausages (slice the skin from one end of the sausage to the other then peel away from the sausage meat.)

Spread the sausage meat over the pastry, leaving a small border around the edges.

Scatter over fennel seeds. Brush the edges with a little beaten egg.

Roll up from the long edge. Brush with beaten egg. Chill if time. Cut into about 12-15 finger thick slices.

Place these flat on a baking sheet and brush lightly with more egg. Bake for 15 minutes approximately until puffed and golden.

*Christmas Tip - I swear by my cooking thermometer. If you haven't invested in one yet, this is the time to do so. It will remove that element of doubt that can accompany roasts and turkey at this time of year.*

*Keep calm and love Christmas*

**Ann Jennings**

\*\*\*\*\*

### AND FOR THE WINE...

Greater feasts lie ahead; finer bottles await to be uncorked. For now it's Christmas breakfast (or a snack after morning service). A tippie too.....hmmm .

If we follow the old adage of pouring something from the region which inspired the recipe, we would probably end up with a shot of aquavit! Not really what we would select at breakfast time! Interesting thought, but like the caraway seed flavoured Kummel, we will leave until later in the day.

Let us assume we are having a day-time snack/nibble and we do fancy a sip of something. Sauvignon Blanc is the natural partner for grassy fennel. However we are dealing with fennel seeds here and let us not lose sight of the fact that our main ingredient is the sausage-meat.

A herby-edged red then? It all points to a farmhouse southern France

blend of Grenache/Carignan/Syrah/Mourvedre from Costieres de Nimes, Cotes du Ventoux or the Languedoc vineyards.

Something lighter perhaps ? Whites face many obstacles : we want a wine neither too acidic, nor too floral, nor highly fruited really ! Doesn't sound too promising ! However, if we dispel the idea that a rosé is a convenient half-way house, we have two strong candidates which you might like to put on your Christmas list. A Spanish Rosado made from the Bobal grape: increasingly available, superb value and with a lovely leafy note. Another delight, and far removed from the 'basket of summer fruits' style of rosé is an Aglianico Rosato from southern Italy - although much more difficult to find. Now that would really help you to "love Christmas" !

Enjoy your wine-sipping .....

**Richard W. B. Ryan**

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Sally Frost led the meeting on Tuesday, 10 October with MU Diocesan and National News. The theme for 2016 will be "A Celebration of Faith" to mark 140 years since Mary Sumner started the Mothers' Union.

Worcester Cathedral will host a Christmas Tree Festival from 4 December 2015 to 6 January 2016. St Thomas's Church, Stourbridge will also hold a display of Christmas trees on 5 to 13 December. Do try to visit them if you can.

Just after our meeting we learned with deep regret of the sudden death of Josie Capewell who had been a member for many years and will be so missed. She had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Oldswinford, St Mary's and the Mothers' Union which was invaluable to us all.

Our speaker, Dorothy Knight spoke on the origin and current links between the diocese and groups from Belarus, following the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. St Mary's and our M.U. supported this link from the beginning and hosted the Primakov family for an 'away from it all' holiday.

Currently, following visa restrictions, only ten children and their leader are allowed a yearly fortnight holiday and are hosted by Malvern. Kinver also host a similar scheme. It was delightful to see pictures of the children having fun in the Safari Park and on the Malvern Hills, and even having dental checks and advice to improve their health.

This reminded us that the need for help and fellowship is global and actively sharing our love and practical aid is more vital than ever. "So be doers of the word, not hearers only"- James 1,22

Next Meeting: Tuesday 8 December, 2.15 pm at the Coach House.

"Christmas Celebrations" with carols and readings

All are welcome.

**Dawn Nex**

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

18 October	Ava Rose Isakovic
1 November	Lucas Aaron Kennedy Rose Lakey

### Weddings

17 October	Karl Gorton and Jodie Stanford
------------	--------------------------------

### Funerals

3 November	Theo Luxton	Aged 90
------------	-------------	---------

## HOLLAND HOUSE – DISCOVER A TREASURE

In an act of extraordinary generosity seventy years ago Mrs Amy Holland gave her riverside home in the village of Cropthorne to the Diocese of Worcester. Her vision was that this black-and-white part-thatched house with Lutyens-inspired gardens would be used for Christian reflection and learning. One nearly-90-year-old remembers first coming here as a Sunday School teacher in her late teens!

Seven decades on, still owned by the diocese but run as an independent trust, with a small dedicated staff headed by the Warden, and a devoted band of Friends some 130 strong, Holland House thrives as a house of hospitality open to people of all traditions and faiths. It can accommodate up to thirty guests in single and twin-bedded rooms for mid-week or week-end retreat and conference stays. Day-guests – we can feed up to forty five – are welcomed for individual or group visits, either to create their own spiritual space or to take part in the House's own programme.

Originally a seventeenth century cottage, extended early in the twentieth-century to become a gentleman's residence, the House now has added bedrooms with modern facilities, a conference room, suite with enhanced disability access, and a Chapel where the worship space looks out beyond the altar to the garden through a huge cruciform window. Our motto is 'In harmony with creation' and from the food prepared in the kitchen to the themes of quiet days and retreats we seek to be true to that claim.

Visit our web-site [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org) or telephone 01386 860330 to request that information be sent to you. Individuals and groups are equally welcome. Maybe you and your friends would like to sample our winter afternoon teas or pre-Christmas lunches. To celebrate God's gifts in life or to be still in the presence of the Lord, this is a special sacred space.

**Canon David Rogers,  
Chairman of Friends of Holland House**

## LETTER FROM ARCHDEACON NICKI GROARKE

There was no-room for the refugee family. Everywhere was full to overflowing. The last inn they tried was packed, so they had to make do with a shed, camping out, making a home as best they could, finding somewhere dry at least, so the baby could be born under the shelter of a barn roof.

No room for the refugees. It's been an ongoing theme of our news cycle this year as the plight of families fleeing Syria has worsened. We have witnessed millions of people fleeing war and violence in what has become one of the largest refugee crises ever recorded. And it has been the pictures of child refugees which have most impacted us.

Jesus, as a child, was a refugee, unwelcome and homeless. No wonder then that as he grew up and began his earthly ministry, he called outcasts friends, invited those on the edges to come closer. Many of those who were comfortable and settled continued to reject him, or simply missed the opportunity to welcome him into their homes, their lives, because they did not grasp who he was.

We easily sanitise our recounting of the birth of Jesus as we celebrate Christmas. The stable becomes a homely scene, softly lit, populated with wise men, shepherds and cute donkeys. We forget it was a last resort: a dirty shed occupied because young refugee parents were shut out of all the more suitable accommodation. Let's allow ourselves to engage with this part of the story differently this time, perhaps allowing ourselves to consider whether we would have welcomed a refugee family into our homes then, and whether we would now.

Let's also reflect this Christmas on whether we are really ready to welcome Jesus into our homes, our lives, not just at Christmas, as a baby, but the rest of the year, as our Lord and Saviour, and one who invites us to love and welcome those who are outcasts, as he loves and welcomes us.



### OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

Anne, Howard, Helen and Lesley are overwhelmed by the love and support of everyone at St Mary's. We are all very grateful for all the good wishes, for help arranging visits and getting Howard to and from the hospital. Anne is destined to be in hospital for a while yet and will probably need 24 hour care when she comes home. Anne is thankful to you all for your prayers, she needs all the help she can get and it is a great comfort to her to know you are there for her.

We all send you our love and every Blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

**The May Family.**

**We are grateful for the sponsorship of the following businesses.**



**Rachel Clark Chiropodist**  
Fully qualified and registered with the Health Professions Council CH17310  
Visiting Chiropodist - professional footcare in the comfort of your home - 20 years experience  
For an appointment call  
**01384 873938 or 07860771442**



**The Coach House**  
Rectory Road,  
Old Swinford.  
**Tel: 01384 828890**  
Available for Hire evenings / weekends. Small parties up to 40.  
Contact Parish Office—**01384 441003**



**H. PORTER & SONS**  
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS  
Funeral Directors for over 160 years  
**H. PORTER & SONS**  
Old Church House,  
60 South Road, Stourbridge,  
West Midlands, DY8 3UJ  
**01384 395048**  
[www.hporter.co.uk](http://www.hporter.co.uk)

170 YEARS 1843 - 2013

**COMPUTER REPAIRS**  
PC & Laptop repairs at your home or office



- PC Repairs and Upgrades
- Viruses Removed
- New & Used Computers
- Annual Servicing
- Web Site Design

**Contact [mike@1stservices.co.uk](mailto:mike@1stservices.co.uk)**  
**Tel: 0783 460 1097 or 01384 838 594**

**Chris Genner**  
**FOREVER LIVING PRODUCTS**  
Natural Aloe Vera health drinks, beauty and nutritional products.  
Free advice, samples, talks and demonstrations.  
BUY DIRECT [www.genner.net](http://www.genner.net)  
Chris Genner **01384 371336**

**J Vernon Kendrick**  
Vernon House, Cemetery Road, Lye.  
DY9 8DB **Tel: 01384 422123.**  
Funeral Directors.  
Golden Charter Pre-payment Plans.

**Davis Memorials Ltd**  
Monumental and Masonry Contractors  
Established 1841 Suppliers of all forms of memorials.  
56A Station Road, Old Hill, Cradley Heath,  
West Midlands, B64 6NU  
**Tel: 01384 566958 Fax: 01384 569708**  
**Website [www.davismemorialsLtd.co.uk](http://www.davismemorialsLtd.co.uk)**

**R B Porter Heating Ltd**  
*For all Central Heating and Plumbing needs.*  
*Servicing , Repairs and New Systems*  
**Gas Safe Approved**  
191 Hagley Road, Old Swinford  
**Tel : 01384 396719**

**Top Team Tutoring**  
Maths & English One-to-One Tuition  
David and Joanna Evans - a family business providing a personal service.  
All Key Stages, GCSE, 'A' Level, 11+ & 13+ Selection. Free advice.  
**Visit [www.topteamtutoring.co.uk](http://www.topteamtutoring.co.uk) or**  
**Tel: 01384 392553**

**Swinford Pharmacy**  
90 Hagley Road, Old Swinford.  
**Tel: 01384 440030.** We offer a free collection and delivery service for elderly and housebound patients.

**J & J Upperdine**  
*High Class Private and Commercial Painting and Decorating*  
82 Birmingham St. Stourbridge  
DY8 1JH  
**Tel: Day 07969 864131**  
**Evening 01384 827281**