

**ST MARY'S
OLD SWINFORD
Parish Church Magazine**

**JUNE 2016
Online edition**



ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

Parish Church Magazine



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

JUNE 2016

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
Priest in Charge Day Off:	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	

Reader:	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
Church Wardens:	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
Organist / Choirmaster:	Mr Graham Davies	07845968025
Treasurer:	Mr Russ Fowler	442684
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Magazine Editors:	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
	Miss Gemma Sutton	0121 360 0933

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	
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/stmaryschurcholdswinford	
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 JUNE 2016

Wednesday 1	7.30 pm Deanery Synod at St Thomas'
Thursday 2	Parish Office closed 10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 3	Parish Office closed Stephen's day off
Saturday 4	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 5	SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 5.00 pm Final Planning Meeting for Queen's Birthday Celebrations
Monday 6	7.00 pm Admission of Warden's Service at St Mary's, Kidderminster
Tuesday 7	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 1.15 pm Mothers' Union Meeting in the Coach House
Wednesday 8	Meeting for Wardens and Treasurers at St Michael's, Norton
Thursday 9	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 7.30 pm Coach House Committee Meeting
Friday 10	Stephen's day off Copy date for July/August magazine Preparation Day for Queen's Birthday Celebration Event
Saturday 11	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour Oldswinford Community Queen's Birthday Celebration Event
SUNDAY 12	THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 11.30 am Baptism Open the Book Team visit to Oldswinford Primary School.
Monday 13	9.00 am Full Staff Meeting
Wednesday 15	7.30 pm Magazine Meeting
Thursday 16	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 7.00 pm King Edward's Charter Day Service
Friday 17	Stephen's day off
Saturday 18	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 19	FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 7.30 pm Mary Stevens Hospice Summer Service in Church
Monday 20	2.30 pm Tea in the Coach House
Tuesday 21	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Wednesday 22	European Referendum-Church Hall in use as Polling Station
Thursday 23	10.30 am Mothers' Union Corporate Communion in Church Stephen's Day Off
Friday 24	9.30 am St Mary's Walking Group
Saturday 25	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 26	FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 2.30 pm Ordination of Deacons at Worcester Cathedral Open the Book Team visit to Oldswinford Primary School
Monday 27	2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex
Tuesday 28	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Thursday 30	7.30 am Service of Commemoration for the Battle of the Somme
Friday 1 July	

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends

As I write this we are preparing to celebrate Pentecost, the festival which remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit, bringing new life and confidence to the first disciples of Jesus. As part of our preparation for Pentecost we have been involved in praying for our nation, and in particular the community in which we as a church are set, and have been thinking about our confidence in declaring our faith in Jesus and sharing that faith with other people.

During this last week it has been a joy to welcome people who have joined me for Morning and Evening Prayer, and together we have shared the responsibility of praying for God's people in Old Swinford. As you may be aware I seek to say Morning and Evening Prayer in church each day (9am and 5pm), and I am always pleased to welcome others who would like to join me as we pray for our parish and people.

Another part of our preparation for Pentecost is the preparation for Messy Church which at the time of writing is being undertaken by Jean in our Dining Room, the room being littered with crafts and pieces of coloured paper, glue and felt pens ready for the 20 – 30 families who will be celebrating Pentecost with us later today.

Preparation has already taken place for the services for Sunday, as those who are leading the singing, the playing, the reading and the preaching have already prepared themselves. Preparation will soon be taking place for the arranging of flowers in church for this festival weekend.

Just a few thoughts about all the things which go on at St Mary's in readiness and preparation for Pentecost reminds me of how much so many people do for our church, from wardens to holy dusters. At our Annual Church Meeting I always make a point of thanking all those people who give of their time and energy for the church; and I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for all of your efforts on behalf of the church and for the furtherance of God's Kingdom here in Old Swinford.

Stephen Stgrew

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5.16

SERVICES IN JUNE 2016

5 June Second Sunday after Trinity	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Galatians 1. 1-12	Luke 7. 11-17
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 8.15-9. 17	Mark 4. 1-20
12 June Third Sunday after Trinity	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Genesis 13.	Mark 4. 21-end
19 June Fourth Sunday after Trinity	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Galatians 3. 23-29	Luke 8. 26-39
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 24. 1-27	Mark 5. 21-end
26 June Fifth Sunday after Trinity	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 pm Parish Communion	Galatians 5. 1, 13-25	Luke 9. 51-end
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 27. 1-40	Mark 6. 1-6

ORDINATION OF DEACONS SERVICE WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

This service will take place at 2.30 pm on Sunday 26 June, when Alex French, who will join us for his curacy, will be ordained Deacon. If you would like to join the party from St Mary's attending this service to support Alex please sign the list at the back of church. Lifts available and offers of lifts appreciated.

A NEW ALTAR CLOTH

It is a real privilege to visit Oldswinford Primary School regularly and share in the acts of worship as a member of the Open The Book Team. The school is very keen to promote and celebrate its Christian distinctiveness and as part of the act of worship the assembly is opened by raising the cross, lighting the candle and opening the Bible.



The Worship Group in school that is made up of children and led by staff was keen to improve and enhance the altar that is used and so they set about designing a new front for the cover that is used on the altar. Dawn Nex and Margaret Ager very kindly volunteered to assist the children and share their needlework and quilting expertise. After several meetings with the children a design was worked out using ideas that the children had suggested

based on Christian symbols. The children cut out the shapes and Margaret and Dawn used their expertise to stitch everything together.

The result, as you can see, looks wonderful and at a recent assembly the new altar cloth was formally unveiled to the school. Other than the team members nobody else had seen the final result and there was a momentary stunned silence in the hall as the children saw the cloth for the first time.

A huge thank you must go to Dawn and Margaret for their involvement and support in creating this and for the children who gave up their time to help with the design and manufacture.

The cloth is now being proudly used at every assembly and is providing a real visual focus for the children during their acts of worship.

John Sutton



In your prayers and thoughts please remember those who are infirm or unwell and unable to attend church events as they may wish. If you are able, a telephone call or a letter to someone you always mean to get in touch with is a wonderful form of ministry for the housebound. A new Prayer Diary for the months of June, July and August will be available in church by the beginning of June. Weekly prayer notes are available for collection from the narthex.

ARCHDEACON NICKI GROARKE VISITS OLDSWINFORD

It was a pleasure to welcome to the 10.00 am service on Sunday 1 May, Archdeacon Nicki Groarke who had come to worship with us and to preach. It was, she said, good to be back at St Mary's and no longer to be in need of a sat-nav to find her way around the diocese. She shared with the congregation that this day was the first ever official, 'National God-parents Day' and she joined in prayer for God-parents and God-children everywhere, especially those known to us.

Nicki chose to direct her preaching on the New Testament reading of Acts 16. 9-15, the story of Lydia and how she was converted by Paul, was baptised and opened her home to followers of Christ. 'Acts' is, said Nicki, one of her favourite parts of the Bible as the texts reflect the experiences and lives of real and ordinary people in the early days of their encounters with Jesus and how these encounters changed lives. She equated this with her desire that modern day encounters with the stories and actions of Jesus may lead to others knowing Jesus better and coming to faith.

Nicki encouraged the congregation to reflect on times in their lives when they experienced a significant change in their lives, maybe something of a 'Damascus moment' as with Saul's conversion from persecutor of Christians to one of the greatest Christian missionaries, or perhaps some rather less sudden and eventful, yet equally meaningful recognition that something in their life had changed.

We reflected on the story of how Lydia, a trader, someone of independent means, someone of some standing in her community experienced her conversion, of her baptism and public declaration of her faith. The openness of her declaration of her faith, the hospitality she offered to others, her serving to convince others of the truth she had discovered for herself was displayed in her life from that time on.

Perhaps few of us experience anything quite as dramatic as a 'Damascus moment'. For many their faith has been something that has evolved over time, often from the early introductions provided by a caring parent or other relative. Often, faith is treated as a private element of one's life, something that we may not deliberately hide, something we display in our presence in church, but something we do not overtly declare to others, especially those we may not know well.

In Nicki's sermon there was a challenge, a dare, an encouragement to reflect on the way in which we present our own following of Jesus. A challenge to be more daring, more open in the way we share our beliefs, our own knowledge and knowing of God, and, above all, to help others to understand, to come to know and to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Thank you Nicki, for your visit, your warmth, your prayers and how you made us think.

**Tony and Judy
Churchwardens**

ST MARY'S QUESTION: "WHAT IS THE STORY OF SAUL OF TARSUS BEFORE HE BECAME THE APOSTLE PAUL? "

It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the apostle Paul. He is known worldwide as one of the greatest Christian missionaries. His inspired writings cover a large portion of the New Testament, and it is safe to say that he remains one of the most read authors in human history. His abrupt turnaround from zealous persecutor of Christians to one of Christianity's greatest proponents surely shaped the history of the early Christian church. But who was Saul of Tarsus before he became the apostle Paul? What do we know about his life prior to meeting Christ on the Damascus Road?

Saul of Tarsus was born in approximately AD 5 in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (in modern-day Turkey). He was born to Jewish parents who possessed Roman citizenship, a coveted privilege that their son would also possess. In about AD10, Saul's family moved to Jerusalem. Sometime between AD15—20 Saul began his studies of the Hebrew Scriptures in the city of Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel. It was under Gamaliel that Saul would begin an in-depth study of the Law with the famous rabbi.

There has been some debate over whether Saul was raised in Jerusalem or in his birthplace of Tarsus, but a straightforward reading of his own comments indicate that Jerusalem was his boyhood home (Acts 22:3). We know that Paul's sister's son was in Jerusalem after Paul's conversion (Acts 23:16), which lends weight to the idea that Paul's entire family had moved to Jerusalem when he was young.

It is quite possible that Saul was present for the trial of Stephen—a trial that resulted in Stephen becoming the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54–60). The historian Luke tells us that Stephen's executioners laid their garments at the feet of Saul (Acts 7:58), who was in full approval of the mob's murderous actions (Acts 8:1). Saul later ravaged the church, entering the homes of believers and committing them to prison. Saul's anti-Christian zeal motivated him not only to arrest and imprison male Christians (the "ringleaders") but to lock up female believers as well (Acts 8:3).

Paul's post-conversion correspondence to various churches reveal even more about his background. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, Paul describes himself as a Hebrew, an Israelite, and a descendant of Abraham (2 Corinthians 11:22). In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul says he was a Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5)

While on his way to Damascus to arrest and extradite Christians back to Jerusalem, Saul was confronted by the very One whom he was persecuting

(Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). What followed was one of the most dramatic conversions in church history. Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul, an ardent missionary to an unbelieving world and a fine example of faithful service in the face of fierce persecution (Acts 14:19; 16:22–24; 2 Corinthians 11:25–26). Saul's education, his background as a Pharisee, his Roman citizenship, and his unflagging zeal all contributed to his success as a missionary, once those credentials and traits had been subjugated to the lordship of Christ.

MUSIC NOTES

May I firstly take this opportunity to thank you all for such a warm welcome to St. Mary's as your new Director of Music, I will do my best to uphold the musical standards left by Robin and would like to thank him for all his help in the handover. These days, maintaining a choral tradition such as ours is not easy when set against competing interests, sporting and academic commitments.

Therefore it is important not to take our eye off the ball when it comes to recruitment for singers. Naturally I will be seeking new members outside St. Mary's Church Community, but would like to invite you all to think about who you may know who is musical and enjoys singing. I am determined to maintain a top line of trebles, but this does not exclude Sopranos with youthful voices!! The choir would also welcome additional Tenors, Basses and Altos. Please introduce yourselves to me with any contacts you can recommend - I will do the rest. I shall of course be visiting the schools in the area where we have good relationships to see what can be achieved.

I have already been speaking to Stephen about "refreshing" the music used for the 10.00 am Eucharist and, in time, make some changes/additions which will enhance our worship. I am a great advocate of strong congregational participation in the Eucharist through uplifting music and I hope this will be welcomed.

As part of my work in previous posts I have encouraged the use of the church as a concert venue and I am keen to explore the possibilities at St Mary's. Please look out for "Music Notes" which will appear as a monthly feature in the church magazine.

Finally - Hymns! We all have our favourites, but for the people responsible for choosing the hymns we sing each week, lack of familiarity can sometimes mean fine hymns have to be passed by. Therefore I will be introducing "Hymn of the Month" which will enable less well known hymns to be learned over a four week period.

Graham Davies
Director of Music

CELEBRATING READER MINISTRY

As this edition of St Mary's Parish Magazine is being prepared we have received the most encouraging news that, following an intensive discernment process, Roger King has been recommended for training as a Licensed Lay Minister. We are delighted for Roger and send the warmest of congratulations to him on this wonderful news.

In a few days time we will be celebrating Pentecost and on this special occasion we will be celebrating with Roy Peacock, Kanthi Ariaraj and Roger King, and Readers everywhere, 150 years of Reader Ministry. At the 10.00 am service, the readings, intercessions and preaching will be shared by Roy, Kanthi and Roger as we are invited to reflect on how Readers serve through the sharing of God's will.

Part of Roger's discernment process required him to present a written response to the following question concerning the Kingdom People values. Roger has kindly provided details of the task and his response which is printed below for us to share as one example of how the team at St Mary's is working to share God's Kingdom.

As a diocese we are encouraged to think about what it means to be 'Kingdom People'.

Question

Choose any ONE of the eight characteristics outlined in the Signs of the Kingdom material and explain how you see your church community making this characteristic visible through its life and work

How does what you have described help you personally understand more about mission? (500 words)

Answer

WC Fields famously said 'Never work with children or animals'. But what would he have said about working with children pretending to be animals?

That is the question that is going around my head as I prepare to lead my first family service at St Mary's. The service is based around the Creation Story from the Storyteller Bible that is used by our Open the Book group. The children will act out the flying, splashing, walking, and climbing things described in the story, wearing masks and costumes made by the Open the Book team and our Youth Group.

This is all a long way from the reassuring familiarity of Evensong which, so far, is the only service that I have led regularly. I am hoping that the family service will be an opportunity for people of all ages to worship together as part of God's family but there is a risk it could become an unstructured free-for-all. Then, as I am nervously peeping around the vestry door to see who is in the congregation, the sun comes out and the Music Group start to play. The church is instantly filled with light and singing and I feel the Spirit reassure me that 'all will be well ...'

St Mary's Open the Book (OTB) group is one of the main ways in which our church community has responded to Kingdom Value (4):

Dedicated to helping children and young people to belong and be nurtured in faith.

Every few weeks the OTB group go into a local primary school in Stourbridge to involve the children in a dramatic reading of one of the stories in the Storyteller Bible. This is followed by a moment for reflection and a short prayer. The stories have been well-received by the children which is why one had been incorporated into the family service, to bring the work of the OTB group to a wider audience.

Being involved in fresh expressions of Church, such as OTB, came as something of a shock to me. Up to this point, my thinking had been focussed on the traditional liturgy and how best to deliver this to the established congregation at St Mary's. However, if the Church is to achieve its vision of *'every child and young person having a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ'* then I can see that both ministers and congregations need to become more confident in alternative approaches to mission. In particular, worship that is based on more than just words, which reaches children not only in church but also in the places where they learn and play. The challenge is how to maintain the liturgy that our current congregation value, whilst seeking alternatives that are relevant, enjoyable and energising for children (and those new to the Christian faith).

I pray that our church community has the courage to ask fundamental questions about our current approach to mission, the humility to change things that create barriers to others and the wisdom to recognise what is good and carry it into the future.

On Sunday, 15 May, Roy Peacock presented a short history of the role of Readers in the Church of England since 1866, with particular reference to the Diocese of Worcester where Readers were not admitted until 1891. This was due to a concern that they would challenge the authority and autonomy of the parish priest. Slowly the role evolved for men to teach in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes and to lead worship in Mission Halls. Not until 1970 were women admitted as Readers. Now they make up almost half of the 10,000 Readers that serve today.

Kanathi reflected on her recognition of service to God and His people, of how the role has grown and of the challenges that the role may bring. Her anecdote of relating the job of the biblical tax collector with that of a modern-day traffic warden served to illustrate the potential pitfalls of good intentions inadequately explored.

Roger shared a brief insight of the past two years during which his intentions have been tested, his faith reviewed and he has come to accept that the Holy Spirit has supported him and brought him to the start of his training.

In echoing Stephen's thanks the congregation joined in applause in appreciation of all past, present and future service of Readers at St Mary and elsewhere.

FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN



CARING FOR OUR WORLD

Do you know the story of how God made the world in six days? It is told in the book of *Genesis*. Read it or ask someone to help you.

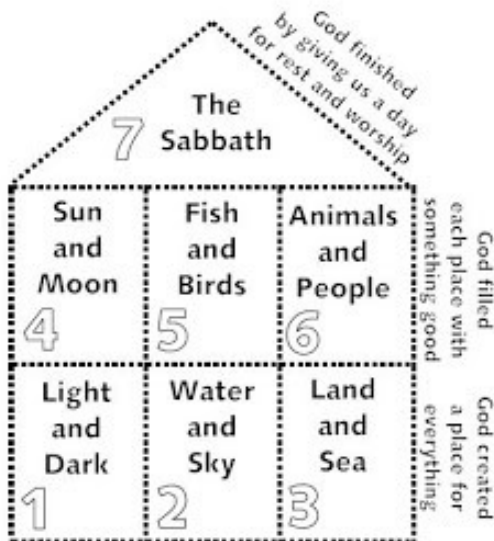
God created the heavens and the earth. What other things did he create? L _ _ _ T, D _ Y, N _ _ _ T, S _ Y, L _ _ D and S _ _ S.

In six days God made everything on the earth, the animals, the plants, the trees, the stars, fish in the seas and birds in the air.

What did God do on the seventh day?



God Created a Beautiful Home for Us!



Can you colour this drawing of God's work?

You might like to make your own drawings for each day of the week.

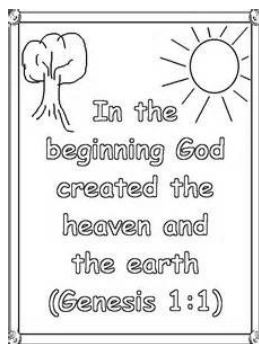
What might you draw for day four?

On what day did God make mankind?



God wanted mankind to look after the earth....

Can you think of things you can do to look after the world we live in?



Be Happy

Find the words hidden in the grid below.

Earth Day Word Search



R Q L X D D R L E C R D B M F O C A P H
S Q J V A I P N H G W L R I D I J O V O
Q J R X F E E Y B G V W A J N Y L E K V
C O N S E R V A T I O N V A Z L K L T Q
D H G U G N V X T R I L G I U E R C Q Z
Q G Q Y X H V E M V I R U T Y N G Y O B
T S O P M O C I Z Y O V I P A D G C X X
C L I M A T E H R A G O N V D A A E G Z
R E S U E R Z T T O N O T V R N R R K W
M E S G S B E W G R N V L Z G G D U G Y
X P D R B O B O D N A M P O S E E Q J I
D S J U S T O W N S X E E H C R N Y P B
U E F R S W A I L Q Z Z H N W E F T N O
H N S T P E F D M O Y G E Q T D Q Q Y X
K Y N S M J H P P D K O Z G K N I V B X

CLIMATE
DAY
ENDANGERED
GARDEN
RECYCLE

COMPOST
EARTH
ENERGY
ORGANIC
REDUCE

CONSERVATION
ECOLOGY
ENVIRONMENT
POLLUTION
REUSE



Do something special, take care of your world.

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME AND ITS FIRST DAY, 1 JULY 1916

The diocese has prepared some readings and prayers for the Battle of the Somme and is encouraging their use for commemorating the first day, Friday, 1 July, of this long and devastating campaign. It lasted four months and on its first day more than 19,000 British soldiers died. Our plan is to hold a short service with talk starting at 7.30 am to coincide with the opening of the battle on that devastating day. Our church war memorial has the name of one soldier who was killed on that day in the assault on the Heidenkopf, the German redoubt near

the village of Serre. Christopher Wassell was born in the parish and his family lived in Beech Road in what is now Norton parish. We shall invite Norton to join us although the time is somewhat ambitious for most people. We suggest to those attending that they bring 'iron rations' for after the service.

Look out later for detailed arrangements.



CELEBRATING WITH THE QUEEN

On page 19 we print the promotional poster we hope you will have become familiar with on display throughout Oldswinford. This community event has gathered momentum over the weeks and has been adopted by many generous and considerate people who have got involved and helped to organise various fun activities and which will support Mary Stevens Hospice.

We now have the makings of a very enjoyable and worthwhile event. Soon everything will be ready for the final preparations and for our visitors on the day. We hope the weather will be kind to us and the sun will shine. We also hope people will come forward to help with the final arrangements during the Saturday morning and that lots of people will come along to take part and enjoy the fun during the afternoon.

Please play your part as you can. Encourage family and friends, neighbours and their friends to join us and make this a real Oldswinford Celebration. Entries for the 'Bake Off' and the King and Queen Fancy Dress will do much to make the event a day to remember. A visit to view the displays in church will reveal the talent of the ladies of the Flower Guild and some fascinating facts and views of Oldswinford in the past.

Above all come along and enjoy yourself in good company.... A very warm welcome awaits you.

THE DEAN'S CHALLENGE

The Dean Of Worcester, The Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, has thrown down a challenge associated with his personal target to cycle 1000 kilometres in northern France during his three month sabbatical this summer. The Dean will follow the route taken in 1897 by a famous English clergyman, Percy Dearmer, who was a follower of Ruskin and Morris, and a friend of Woodbine Willie and Lord Beauchamp. The great Benedictine monasteries of Le Bec and Le Mont St Michel are included in the itinerary.

However, there is a double challenge, one for the Dean to complete his cycle ride, and one for the Friends of Worcester Cathedral, because for every kilometre sponsored it is hoped that a new Friend will be recruited.

Peter says: *"The Friends of Worcester Cathedral is an excellent organisation, founded in the 1930's to raise funds for the Cathedral. One of their earliest members was Sir Edward Elgar, who conducted so much of his music in the Cathedral at the Three Choirs Festival.*

Today the Friends number about 700, but we could do with more members. So I have challenged the Friends to recruit new Friends, by giving away one year's membership at a discounted rate of £10 (it's usually £15) for every kilometre I cycle in France. My target is a thousand kilometres, which means that the Friends' target is a thousand new Friends. I am glad to say the Friends are responding splendidly, and many new Friends have already been recruited."

Recruiting 1,000 new friends will raise £10,000 and this money will contribute towards the repair of the Edgar Tower, first built by King John.

To find out about becoming a Friend or to simply sponsor the Dean's cycle ride, please visit www.worcestercathedral.co.uk

NEW BISHOPS CERTIFICATE COURSES

This is the perfect time to start thinking about joining a Bishop's Certificate course in the autumn, and encouraging others to do the same. This inspirational diocesan course is open to anyone who wants to dig deeper into understanding Christianity. It explores the bible and the great themes of faith and helps people reflect on their own life experiences as they learn alongside others. To register an interest in joining the course contact Sue Gromski on 01905 732812. As soon as dates and locations of the new courses are available we will get in touch with information about how to book a place. Full details about the Bishop's Certificate is available on the website.

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/mission-and-ministry/your-christian-calling/bishops-certificate/

Diocesan News

THANK YOU ROBIN

A larger than usual congregation assembled in church at 6.30 pm on Sunday, 8 May to share in the final Choral Evensong to be led by our Director of Music for the past nine years, Robin Walker. Earlier in the day, Robin and Graham Davies, our new Director of Music, had shared the musical lead at the 10.00 am service when Robin's pending retirement had also been recognized by the congregation with good wishes and a specially resounding round of applause at the conclusion of the Voluntary. The tradition, so much observed at St Mary's, of remaining seated to listen to the Voluntary in its entirety, has been a special way of saying, each week, 'Thank you for our music'.

Choral Evensong is always a special service, particularly enjoyed by those with a special understanding and appreciation of the intricacies of Anglican chant, and so it was this evening. The congregation had recognized that this evening was a special evening and Stephen ensured it was in his carefully considered lead of our worship. The choir followed their direction in a manner that befitted the occasion, if possible, with even greater attention to detail than usual, and with a voice of song and praise that carried so many messages alongside that of worship. Our choir always sings in praise of God, but on this evening especially, they also all sang for Robin, a message which seemed to say, "You directed us well and showed us how to do this to the best of our ability. Tonight we will show just how much we learned from you, how much we have enjoyed working with you and how much we appreciate all you have done for us."

With musical accompaniment on the organ from Richard Hall and George the service reflected all that has been valued and appreciated during the years of Robin's leadership.

At the end of the service, after the choir had re-assembled in pews, Stephen expressed on behalf of us all our thanks and appreciation of the direction given to our music during Robin's time at St Mary's. Alongside 'Thank you' words such as support, encouragement, enthusiasm, concern, interest for, consideration and professionalism were used in describing Robin's work at St Mary's, words which aptly help to describe the esteem in which Robin and his contributions have been held by all. As a mark of this appreciation, Robin was presented by the congregation with a set of glass tumblers made at the Ruskin Centre, Stourbridge and a substantial sum he may use as he chooses to bring him some much deserved enjoyment during his retirement.

The choir presented their own gift of appreciation to Robin accompanied, on behalf of them all, by words from Molly Butcher. Molly so eloquently expressed the good wishes of all members of the choir in her reflections of how Robin had guided her into and through her developmental years as a chorister. She recognized the support, direction and encouragement provided by Robin to her and all others which had enabled them to achieve the level of competence they have mastered to date. Molly also acknowledged the fun that there had been along the way and



the enjoyment from which the choir had benefited.

As Robin leaves, so after many years of loyal support, Mark Wilson has decided to leave the choir and Janet Peart has decided that now is the time to move on from her loyally given time and concern as chaperone and 'Mistress of the Wardrobe'. The thanks of all, for the immense contributions so quietly given by Mark and Janet to the St Mary's community, echoed in applause through church.

Eventually the microphone reached Robin's hands and he was able to reply. With obvious sincerity and appreciation he acknowledged the support he had been given as he has worked to recruit, encourage and to challenge the choir in its singing. With much satisfaction and enjoyment he reflected on the considerable achievements of the choir and, with some justified pride, he recalled some of the very special times when the choir has sung at festivals and in the Cathedral, to fulfil his role. Much moved by what he described and the overwhelming kindness and generosity of people he expressed his thanks for the gifts he had received.

With the warmth of mutual appreciation flowing through the proceedings, the celebration was concluded with light refreshments.

The Editor

.....AND A MESSAGE FROM ROBIN WALKER

The few words of thanks I gave to you on Sunday night could never be enough to express the massive amount of gratitude I owe you following your amazing kindness and gratitude in the form of gifts presented to me on Sunday evening. Judy Hall explained the source of the glass tumblers ... and I am delighted to say that I have just tested one! They are absolutely stunning and will remind me of the many friends, choir, congregation and clergy, made at St Mary's during the last nine years.

I have met some truly wonderful people at Old Swinford; on my arrival there was Greville and Jennifer at the helm, and going behind the scenes was Marjorie Ferguson. Also in official posts were Edward Haden and Richard Harris who are, sadly, no longer with us. It was the first time I had ever been welcomed by a PCC Treasurer! Latterly Russ has been supportive in the Treasurer's post too. Ruth was great to work with and I feel that Kanthi and Roy have always been around; and now the team is led by Stephen and we know that Roger will be training in the lay reader role. These folk have always been very grateful and praising of the musical contributions by the choir from the chancel. The strength of support offered by other musicians is also invaluable; Richard Hall, William Peart, Peter Thomson, Tim Morris from Kidderminster, Michael Jones from Pedmore and others. The support has been fantastic. Janet Peart's work as a robes mistress cannot be forgotten either – another invaluable job!

There were other people who deserved a thank you too – John Sutton in the office, nothing was ever too much trouble, Marjorie who has continued always to offer so much support and help even now she isn't a warden, and so many former choir members and their families too. The families were particularly

important in the transporting department – especially when we had away fixtures. These are times when the choir really shone through, rising to the extra challenges created by vast buildings such as Worcester Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey. Tony Tatford is always supportive and so many other people who show appreciation are all supporting the work of the choir and its part in the life of St Mary's. Thank you all so much; Mark and I have so very many memories which will stay with us. Stephen and Molly's kind words we will both remember too.

Robin

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

Nine walkers took part in the April walk that commenced at The Navigation Pub just off the Stratford Road at Wootton Wawen. The pub is adjacent to the Stratford Birmingham Canal and the walk commenced by following the canal towards Birmingham. After passing two bridges along the canal we left the towpath and followed a bridle way, which is also part of the Monarch's Way through woodland, -the Monarch's Way also passes St Mary's! This part of the walk was quite muddy in places, however, the effort was rewarded by the most spectacular show of blue bells, at their best in dappled sunshine. Those with cameras on their mobile phone took the opportunity to photograph the display.

As we came out of the wood at the top of the hill onto pasture we took a coffee break and admired the view. It was then a walk down the hill and through a farmyard onto a metalled track, then climbing once more towards more woodlands and bluebells but also primroses and anemones. Coming out onto a lane we turned left and followed it to a farm and more pastureland, walking on more comfortable and flat land, across a bridge and back onto the canal towpath for the walk back to the pub for lunch.

There is some dispute about the distance covered but it was probably five to six miles. It was a lovely sunny day with just enough breeze to make it comfortable for walking. Although there was a short shower of rain/hail it was not enough to force us to put on waterproofs as we proceeded to the pub. Kindly, the rain held off until we were eating.

Sue Solly

CHILDREN'S PAGE ANSWERS

Things God created included.....LIGHT, DAY, NIGHT, SKY, LAND and SEAS

On the seventh day God RESTED. Day Four.....The sun and the moon

God made mankind on the sixth day.

OLDSWINFORD CELEBRATES THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

SATURDAY 11 JUNE, 12.00 Noon - 4.00 pm
in the grounds of St Mary's Church,
Rectory Road

All welcome, free admission

Flower Festival...
"90 Years of Oldswinford and Her Majesty"
Bring and Share Lunch, Barn Dance
Raffle, King and Queen Fancy Dress,
Safe Children's Play Area and lots of activities
Dancing Display by Spring Dance Academy,
Afternoon Tea,
Queen's Birthday Cake 'Bake Off'

And lots more for all the family.

Please see further details on display at the back of church and
in many shops in Oldswinford

We would welcome the offer of gazebos or picnic chairs and
tables.

If you are able to help to prepare the site during the Saturday
morning your help will be very much appreciated.

PROCEEDS IN SUPPORT OF MARY STEVENS HOSPICE

Contact 01384 441003, e-mail -st.mary.os@btconnect.com,
facebook -facebook.com/StMarysChurchOldswswinford, Text 07801 241114

The church will be open during the morning and afternoon of Sunday 12 June
when visitors to the Flower Festival will be most welcome.

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE UPSIDE DOWN CHEESECAKE SHOTS

The sherbet and popping candy is optional. The little shot glasses are great for entertaining large numbers. I sometimes do chocolate pots and cheesecake shots they are ideal for informal entertaining when you have a crowd.

50g digestive biscuits	25g melted butter
2 heaped tablespoon full fat cream cheese	
Juice 1½ lemons, and zest of ½	
2 tablespoon condensed milk	150ml double cream
2 tablespoon lemon sherbet	1tablespoon popping candy

Process

1. Place digestives in a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin, or blitz in a food processor. Transfer to a bowl and mix in the melted butter. Empty the mixture out onto a plate and separate into large crumbs. Place in the fridge to cool.

2. With a hand whisk, mix together the cream cheese and condensed milk until fluffy. Gradually add the cream and lemon juice. Gently mix in the lemon zest with a spatula. Place in a piping bag with a large, plain nozzle.

3. In a small bowl mix together the lemon sherbet and popping candy. Divide the mixture between 8 shot glasses. Pipe the cream cheese mixture into the shot glass, making sure to leave ½ cm gap from the top of the glass.

4. Sprinkle each with digestive mix and chill. Makes 8-10

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE...

In a world of baked cheesecakes and deconstructed cheesecakes, what a wonderful idea this upside-down variant is! And presented in small shot glasses : perfect. We will focus on the prominent lemon flavour, and I'll try not to spoil it with too much chemistry!

In keeping with the small shot theme, we could reasonably select a glass of Limoncello: a liqueur with clean, rich, zingy lemon-zest flavourliterally! And this is important : Limoncello is made from the zest of lemons. In the world of wine, things are very different. Wine is made from wellgrapes ! Yet really only a glass of Muscat tastes of grapes! A sweet Muscat can be a delight, but here we are wanting something with citrus notes.

Riesling - perhaps a medium-sweet Beerenauslese would work nicely, bringing an attack of tangy fruit. But we might best look to the Semillon grape. It finds fame in Sauternes, where - along with its partner Sauvignon Blanc - it undergoes botrytis/noble rot to start its path towards the sweet delight of many a cellar. However, Semillon makes dessert wines elsewhere around the world, sometimes following this same process, sometimes simply as a late-harvest wine - its sugars heightened by prolonged ripening. These latter have a lovely clean citrus zing - just what we are looking for.

Back to a little chemistry : grapes contain many acids, but it is tartaric and malic acid which predominate. Citric acid is present only as a trace. The citrus flavour which we often speak of in a white wine is just that : a flavour sensation realized by the fermentation process. OK, let's put the chemistry aside now and savour that bright citrus zing of a sweet Semillon!
Enjoy your wine-sipping.....

Richard W. B. Ryan

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

At our April meeting we were delighted that Anne May was able to join us and take the Chair.

Brenda Selby led our prayers and reflected on the Archbishops of Canterbury's and York's invitation for all Churches to engage in a week of prayer in the hope that the Christian message will be spread throughout the land.

Our speaker, Louise Rees, talked about "Side by Side", which was formed in 1997. It is an independent theatre company giving learning disabled actors the opportunity to develop their skills in performing arts. Her own son, Ben, is a member of the company and it is amazing what confidence and self esteem the performers gain from their involvement. They have performed, to great acclaim, at the Edinburgh Festival and also abroad in Sweden and Prague. Their next production, currently in rehearsal, will be "Myth in Store", which will be performed at Stourbridge Town Hall in June.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th June at 2.15pm in the Coach House. Our speaker Liz Green, Diocesan President - "Celebration of Faith".
Sue Clark

INDOOR MEMBERS PRAYER CIRCLE

The IMPC Is for all members of The Mothers' Union who, for whatever reason, can no longer get to meetings. They remain members of their own branches and value keeping in touch with the wider organisation. Some IMPC members continue to help the work of The MU by knitting and making cards, but above all they are respected and valued for their prayers. Each Diocese has a co-ordinator who sends three letters to the members during the year at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

As Deanery rep I send cards to the twenty members in Stourbridge Deanery at Christmas, Easter and on their birthdays. Many of these members are in their 90's and still live in their own homes. Rose , Betty and Evelyn are in their 98th year and are also living independently. I visit them when I can and enjoy listening to their accounts of past activities within their local church, Mothers Union, and with their families and friends.

Brenda Selby

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

1 May Joshua Timothy Fowkes

Weddings

24 April Lee Reid and Louise Millward

Funerals

21 April	Alexina Hix	Aged 96
28 April	Joan Willetts	Aged 81
4 May	Stanley Hingley	Aged 87
4 May	Rachael Smith	Aged 45
5 May	Robert James	Aged 76

ORDINATION OF PRIESTS AND DEACONS

14 candidates will be ordained in Worcester Cathedral on Sunday 26 June to serve in parishes across the Diocese. Seven candidates will be ordained Deacon and will enter their first year of training as a curate. A further seven candidates have completed their first year and will be ordained Priest, after which they will be able to preside at the Holy Communion.

To be ordained Priest:

Rachel Akers serving in Kidderminster East

Josie Calam serving in Areley Kings

Allison Davies serving at Holy Trinity, Redditch

Ian Evans serving in the Ipsley Team, Redditch

Laura Handy serving in the Droitwich team

Philippa Mary Sargent serving in Kempsey & Severn Stoke with Croome d'Abitot

Andrew Todd serving at St Stephen's Church, Barbourne

To be ordained Deacon:

Kalantha Brewis, who will serve at St Barnabas with Christ Church, Tolladine in Worcester

Alex French, who will serve at St Mary's, Oldswinford, Stourbridge

Rick Tett, who will serve at Holy Trinity, Eckington and St. James, Defford cum St. Peter, Besford

Orion Edgar who will serve in the Benefice of Pershore with Pinvin, Wick and Birlingham

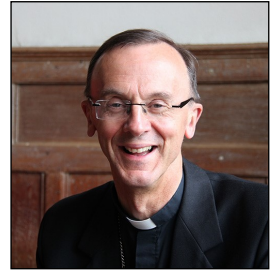
Chris Enwerem, who will serve at St John the Evangelist, Dudley Wood and Cradley Heath

Sue Hale, who will serve at St Mark's, Pensnett

Sallie Butcher, who will serve in Teme Valley North, Shrawley and Witley with Abberley

The Bishop of Worcester will preside at both ordinations, assisted by the Bishop of Dudley, and the Revd Catherine Pickford, Adviser for Continuing Ministerial Development in the Diocese of Newcastle, will preach.

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER



During June the British people will decide whether or not to remain in the European Union. The decision is significant not only for this country but for the rest of Europe and the world. I hope and pray that people will reflect very carefully before casting their vote.

Much of the argument has centred on whether we would be better or worse off economically if we were to leave. The consensus seems to be that we would be worse.

Then there is the question of migration. Every alternative scenario for our relationship to the other countries of Europe should we leave – the Swiss model, the Norwegian model – would not change our obligation to allow free movement of people from Europe. In any event, this country has consistently benefited from immigration: Economically, culturally and spiritually.

Yet there's much more at stake than issues of economics or migration. A vote to leave could well precipitate the beginning of the breakup of the European Union. That would be very risky from a geopolitical perspective: it would make the world a much more dangerous place. That's why Barack Obama and most world leaders are so exercised about the prospect – and why Mr Putin would love it to happen.

There is, of course, much about the European Union that is unsatisfactory. It is in need of a great deal more reform. However, even with its faults it has been described as the Twentieth Century's dullest miracle. Because of the EU, it is now unthinkable that the countries of Europe, which fought each other so fiercely a couple of generations ago, should now go to war with one another. It continues to have a hugely important part to play on the world stage. It will be much stronger with us in.

Some may feel it is wrong for me to comment on politics. To them I would quote Archbishop Desmond Tutu: 'When people say that politics and religion don't mix I wonder which Bible it is that they are reading.' This question is far too important to be left to politicians.

As a Christian I want the world to be a safer, more peaceful place and believe that our membership of the European Union contributes hugely to that. You may not agree with me but I hope that I have encouraged you to think, reflect and pray before casting your vote if you have not already done so. Please don't underestimate the importance of voting or the implications of where you put your cross. And may God bless you and our country at this crucial time of decision.

+John

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**

ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL
Rectory Road
Oldswinford
Available for hire for private functions
Club events and meetings
Contact the Parish Office
01384 441003

J. Vernon Kendrick
Funeral Directors
Vernon House Cemetery Road, Lye DY9 8PB
01384 422123
Greenfield House 11 Greenfield Avenue
Stourbridge DY8 1SU
01384 442111

R B Porter Heating Ltd
For all Central Heating and Plumbing needs.
Servicing , Repairs and New Systems
Old Mill Garage, St John's Road,
Stourbridge DY8 1YS
Tel : 01384 396719

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



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
170 YEARS
1843 - 2013

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**
Chris Genner **01384 371336**

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

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 or
Tel: 01384 392553