

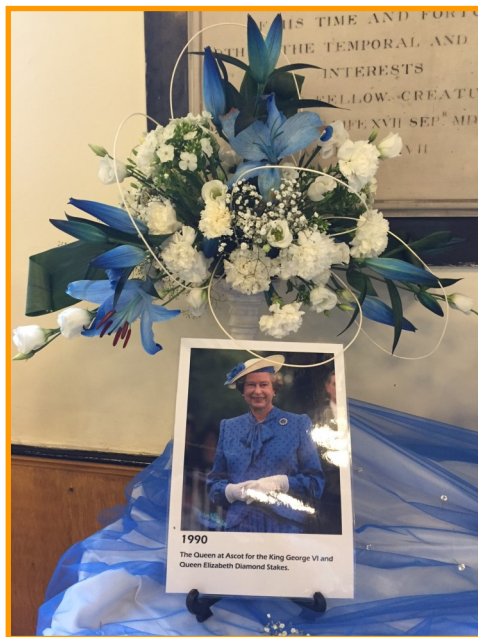
**ST MARY'S  
OLD SWINFORD  
Parish Church Magazine**

**JULY/AUGUST 2016  
Online edition**



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

## Parish Church Magazine



### OLDSWINFORD CELEBRATED THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY

**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)

**CURATE** The Revd Alex French, 58 Arlington Court,  
Oldswinford, Stourbridge, DY8 1NN  
Tel 01384 622400  
E-mail: [st.mary.os.curate@btconnect.com](mailto:st.mary.os.curate@btconnect.com)

## 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 (weekdays)
Daily:	5.00 pm - Evening Prayer (weekdays)
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



Prayer Group	Third Wednesday in month, 10 -11 am	393454
Mothers' Union:	Second Tuesday at 2.15 pm	392951
St Mary's Walking Group:	Last Saturday of the month. Depart 9.30 am	

<b>Reader:</b>	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
<b>Church Wardens:</b>	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
<b>Director of Music:</b>	Mr Graham Davies	01905 353939
	st.mary.os.dom@btconnect.com	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr Russ Fowler	442684
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	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>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 JULY 2016

Friday 1	7.30 am Service of Commemoration for the Battle of the Somme Stephen's day off.
Saturday 2	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 12.00 Wedding 2.00—4.00 pm Messy Church
<b>SUNDAY 3</b>	<b>SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b> Bring and Share lunch to welcome Alex French 3.00 pm Rotary Club of Stourbridge Service
Monday 4	7.30 pm Standing Committee
Tuesday 5	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft
Thursday 7	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 7.30 pm Coach House Committee Meeting
Friday 8	Stephen's day off. Youth Club Away Weekend
Saturday 9	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 3.30 pm Wedding
<b>SUNDAY 10</b>	<b>SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b> Open the Book Team visit to Oldswinford Primary School.
Monday 11	1.15 pm Mothers' Union Meeting in the Coach House
Tuesday 12	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Thursday 14	Stephen's day off
Friday 15	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
Saturday 16	1.00 pm and 3.00 pm Weddings
<b>SUNDAY 17</b>	<b>EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b> 3.00 pm Baptisms
Monday 18	7.30 pm PCC Meeting
Tuesday 19	2.30 pm Tea in the Coach House
Wednesday 20	7.00 pm OSCEPS Leaver's Service
Thursday 21	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 22	Stephen's Day Off
Saturday 23	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 24</b>	<b>NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b> 3.00 pm Baptism
Monday 25	
Tuesday 26	2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex
Wednesday 27	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 28	10.30 am Mothers' Union Corporate Communion in Church 3.00 pm Wedding
Friday 29	Stephen's day off
Saturday 30	9.30 am St Mary's Walking Group 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 31</b>	<b>TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends

A friend posted a message on facebook last year when we were on holiday in Scotland, it read: "I love Summer in Scotland – it was last Wednesday!" The day she was referring to was the day that the temperatures soared at Wimbledon and everyone talked of a long hot summer (the sort we used to enjoy when we were younger). Of course it never came about!

There is the sense that these same conversations might be had this year. At the time of writing I have just returned from spending a week away in West Wales where the dry warm weather was most conducive to pleasant walks and sitting out in gardens of tea shops. But as soon as I returned the weather broke, just in time for the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations, not that the weather in any way reduced the celebrations, certainly in Old Swinford

We so often talk about and reflect on the weather in the UK. That is not surprising really, because it is always changing. As the weather changes so frequently there is the sense that if you blink you can miss a season (usually Summer), and we spend the rest of the year yearning for that Summer season. Sometimes I get the feeling that we approach life in a similar way; we look forward to a time when everything will be perfect in our lives, but then we never quite reach that point, or if we do it is such a short and transient stage that it has passed before we realise it, and so we then look back with a sense of sad wistfulness on that perfect time, and yearn for it to come again.

Whenever I catch myself thinking like that I try to stop and instead of yearning for something else try to value the life that I have and the moment of life that is now. It is not always easy to do that, but if we as Christians believe that life is a gift, given by God, then we should always seek to appreciate what we are given and make the most of it, seeing it in the most positive light.

There are probably too many times in all our lives when we feel grumpy about our lot because we don't have what we want, or our health has let us down or we just carry with us a sense of *ennui*. When you become aware of these tendencies in your own demeanour, just stop and remind yourself that this life is God's gift to you, and try to appreciate it and live it to the full. And if you approach your life in that way you may be surprised at how enjoyable it can be, and also how your sense of enjoyment seems to be contagious and infects those around you.

*Stephen Agnew*

## SERVICES IN JULY 2016

<b>3 July Sixth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Ephesians 2. 19-end	John 20. 24-29
	6.30 pm Evensong	Job 42. 1-6	1 Peter 1. 3-12
<b>10 July Seventh Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	<b>WORSHIP TOGETHER</b>	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Genesis 32. 9-30	Mark 7. 1-23
<b>17 July Eighth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Colossians 1 15-28	Luke 10. 39-end
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 41. 1-16, 25-37	1 Corinthians 4. 8-13
<b>24 July Ninth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 pm Parish Communion	Colossians 2. 6-15	Luke 11. 1-13
	6.30 pm Evensong	Deuteronomy 30. 11-end	Mark 5. 21-end
<b>31 July Tenth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 pm Parish Communion	Colossians 3. 1-11	Luke 11. 13-21
	6.30 pm Evensong	Genesis 50. 4-end	1 Corinthians 14. 1-19

## SERVICES IN AUGUST 2016

<b>7 August Tenth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Genesis 15. 1-6	Luke 12. 32-40
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 11. 1-12, end	2 Corinthians 1. 1-22
<b>14 August Eleventh Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Isaiah 28. 9-22	2 Corinthians 8. 1-9
<b>21 August Twelfth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Isaiah 58. 9b-end	Luke 13. 10-17
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 30. 8-21	2 Corinthians 9.
<b>28 August Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 pm Parish Communion	Hebrews 13. 1-8, 15-16	Luke 14. 1, 7-14
	6.30 pm Evensong	Isaiah 33. 22-36	John 3. 22-36

## WELCOME TO ALEX FRENCH

Alex French will have been ordained Deacon on 26 June and by the date of publication of the next magazine, he will have already been busy at St Mary's for several weeks as Curate. We extend a very warm welcome to Alex, congratulate him on the completion of his training to date and his ordination as Deacon and present our best wishes in anticipation of sharing with him and supporting him in his curacy at St Mary's, Oldswinford.

Do try to join as many as can attend at the Bring and Share luncheon on Sunday, 3 July when we will formally welcome Alex and all will have the opportunity to meet him.

## DIARY FOR AUGUST 2016

Thursday 4	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 5	Stephen's day off
Saturday 6	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 7</b>	<b>TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
	3.00 pm Baptism
Wednesday 10	Copy date for September magazine
Thursday 11	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 12	Stephen's day off
Saturday 13	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 14</b>	<b>ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
Tuesday 16	Tuesday Tea in the Coach House
Thursday 18	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 19	Stephen's day off
Saturday 20	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 21</b>	<b>TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
	3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 23	Tuesday Tea in the Narthex
Thursday 25	10.30 am MU Corporate Communion in Church
Friday 26	Stephen's day off
Saturday 27	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
	1.00 pm Wedding
	4.00 pm Wedding
<b>SUNDAY 28</b>	<b>THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>
Monday 29	Summer Bank Holiday

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AT ST MARY'S

During recent months our Master of Fabric, Tony Lloyd, has been consulting with our church architect and others to consider ways in which the church building might be made more welcoming to all, new visitors and life-long worshippers alike.

The initial focus of this project, something that has been under consideration for a long time, has been made possible by a legacy generously bequeathed to St Mary's. The project would almost certainly have received the full support and approval of the benefactor and consequently the application of funds for this highly desirable purpose seems the right thing to do.

Church funding is always a difficult matter, something that relies on the goodwill and generosity of those who support the church whilst also being a clear business consideration for those who have responsibilities for the administration of the parish. There is clear guidance provided in many contemporary writings that address the matter of church finances, care and maintenance, which recommends, where possible, that bequests should be directed towards the achievement of special projects rather than applied to the



meeting of day-to-day running expenses. Clearly there is a balance to be maintained in all such decisions and we hope the right decisions will be made here at St Mary's.

There is an important role in this project for all who share an interest in this church building. The result of initial consultations with our architect have now been presented and these will be on display in church for several weeks. Please make an opportunity to study them and, if necessary, to ask questions or to present your opinions and ideas. No decision has yet been taken other than to investigate what might be possible, reasonable and acceptable in terms of improvements to the North and West porches. The plans present an indication of what is proposed at this time. In due course these plans and the observations of you all will be considered and weighed, and a policy determined that will provide for the most appropriate and best possible outcome for St Mary's.

To help put this project and other issues in some perspective, it may be worthwhile to illustrate some of the other matters currently under consideration. The PCC has approved the replacement of the central heating boiler that serves the church. The present 30+ years old, unreliable and inefficient boiler, has broken down several times in recent years and now essential parts are no longer available for repairs. In a perfect world it would be beneficial to replace the 1946 central heating system in its entirety but this would only be possible at very high cost. It would be extremely uneconomic and impractical to replace the heating pipes without addressing the concerns that exist with uneven and eroding floor surfaces or vice-versa. Equally, the controversial issue of whether to replace the existing, original pew seating with something that is both more comfortable and provides for greater adaptability of the building would need to be considered as the pews would have to be moved for piping and flooring to be replaced.

We know we have an old and tired slate roof that is not insulated in any way and leaks in at least three places at times of heavy or persistent rain. The cost of replacing the roof is a huge capital outlay, something for which both a significant fund-raising programme and a grant-seeking process would have to be undertaken. Currently this is something of which the PCC is aware, is undertaking careful monitoring and has begun the process of investigating the potential sources and qualifying expectations of grant providers.

There are several other items that feature in the overall consideration of maintaining the church and its grounds in a safe and appropriate condition. The stability of boundary walls and fences, the security and maintenance of monuments, the safety of the footpaths and the health of the trees in the churchyard are always matters for consideration. A recent review and upgrade of the church electrical installation has ensured that we now meet current legislated standards and even our lightning conductor has had to be upgraded. There are bound to be other matters that do not immediately spring to mind.

The range of tasks under consideration never seems to get smaller. The search for the best possible solutions is an on-going process that challenges all with a responsibility and interest in a building that means so much to so many.

## **TROUBLE IN THE TOWER**

You may have been aware that the bells were unable to be rung for a few days in the middle of May. For reasons that are still not fully understood the clapper on the fifth bell became tight on the pin that allows it to pivot and swing freely to strike the bell. Attempts to resolve the problem in situ brought no success and so the clapper assembly had to be removed from the headstock to enable our in-house bell technician to inspect and determine the problem. We are very fortunate to have available to us the excellent services of Ray Drew, an engineer who seems able to lend his hand to almost everything technical and to find a solution in one way or another. This most recent problem arose whilst Ray was recovering from an operation to correct a fracture of the hip and clearly Ray was not going to be allowed to climb into the tower despite his desire to ensure the bells should ring.

With the clapper removed and passed on for Ray's inspection in safer surroundings, the problem was soon resolved by a minor adjustment of the bearings and now the clapper has been re-installed to ensure the bells of St Mary's can ring once again to remind everyone of the Church's presence in Oldswinford.

A big thank you is due to all who helped to resolve this issue, especially Ray.

We are pleased to report that Ray's recovery continues steadily under the care and restrictions overseen by Jean, Ray's wife. It was wonderful to see both Jean and Ray at our Queen's Birthday Celebrations.

**The Churchwardens**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **FAREWELL AND THANK YOU**

I have been working with Tony Tatford as co-editor of St Mary's Church Magazine since 2008. Over the years we have written many articles, edited many more, created hundreds of children's pages and printed thousands of editions. Eight years ago the magazine was almost in danger of folding at one point; Tony and I stepped up and made sure that it didn't happen. The balance of work load has often bounced between us, varying on holidays and other personal or family commitments but Tony really came into fruition two years ago when I moved home to North Birmingham and got a job promotion which unfortunately stopped me from playing such an active role as I had done previously. Even with all these time and workload pressures I have still enjoyed being able to contribute to editing such a wonderful magazine for our community alongside such a fantastic co-editor who has been so understanding and supportive. But my time has now come to sadly resign and hand over the full reigns to Tony, as James and I look forward to the birth of our first child in November this year.

Thank you so much to all the past and present magazine committee members who have given up their time every month to help us ensure that the magazine has always been produced to its highest standard. The magazine is such a wonderful resource that is provided to the whole community because it helps us to share what we are about as a church; it's not just about what happens in the building but how we take that energy and faith out and share it with others.

## **MR SELFRIDGE VISITS WORCESTER CATHEDRAL**

This August Worcester Cathedral presents a new and specially designed event for visitors.

Dressed for Drama costume exhibition will feature around 35 period costumes from British television and film, including Downton Abbey, Mr Selfridge, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Scandalous Lady W, The Crimson Field, Wolf Hall and The Danish Girl. It will include some beautiful costumes worn by stars such as Cary Mulligan and Natalie Dormer, Eddie Redmayne and Damien Lewis.

The costumes will be displayed in the stunning early 12th Century Chapter house at Worcester Cathedral, which is thought to be the first round chapter house in the world. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to get up close to the costumes to see the designs and craftsmanship that they have enjoyed on screen.

The exhibition runs from 1 to 29 August. Individuals and groups can pre book to come to the exhibition by contacting Worcester Cathedral office on 01905 732900.

Exhibition tickets cost £6.50 for adults, £4.50 for children and young people, under 5's are free. A family ticket for two adults and two children will be £15.00.

For more details visit [www.worcestercathedral.co.uk](http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk)

**Diocesan News**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **WORCESTERSHIRE AND DUDLEY HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST**

### **Ride and Stride 2016**

The annual fundraising event, Ride + Stride, will take place on Saturday 10 September when churches all over the region will be open to welcome visitors and encourage those taking part. Active involvement invites people to participate in a sponsored travel by whatever means, from church to church, to raise funds in support of the Trust. The Trust would like to thank all those who have contributed to this event in the past and welcomes participants for this year's event, both individuals and churches.

St Mary's will participate as usual, with the church being open at least between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon, when visitors may sign in and benefit from our welcome, refreshments, fellowship and facilities. As in previous years, all the information you need is on the Trust website at:

<http://www.worcesteranddudleyhistoricchurches.org.uk> and all the necessary documents and a poster can be downloaded from there.

**Diocesan News**

## THE ADMISSION OF WARDENS SERVICE AND THE ARCHDEACON'S CHARGE

The Admission service was held at St Mary and All Saints, Kidderminster, on Monday, 6 June, where a large congregation filled the church and created a joyous sound. Archdeacon Nikki Groarke's 'charge' acknowledged the work of churchwardens and the many people who assist them in a huge variety of ways to ensure that our parish churches function as places of worship, mission and community care. With reference to the recent, widely observed Wave of Prayer in churches throughout the country, she reflected on the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, "It is impossible to overstate the life-transforming power of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that is reassuring enough to be on the lips of the dying and yet dangerous enough to be banned in cinemas. It is famous enough to be spoken each day by billions in hundreds of languages and yet intimate enough to draw us ever closer into friendship with Jesus Christ. It is simple enough to be memorised by small children and yet profound enough to sustain a whole lifetime of prayer. When **we pray** it with sincerity and with joy, there is no imagining the new ways in which God can **use us to his glory**."

A deliberate and conscious determination to find time for prayer is, said Nicki, of immense importance to all who find themselves in busy lives when it can be all too easy to blame being busy for not finding time to pray. Praying is a responsibility, is about being with God, hanging out with Him, talking with Him, sharing with Him, listening for Him, in church buildings, outside, alone or with others. However it works for you, that is where, when and how you should pray. Prayer is about building and developing and maintaining a relationship with God and without such a relationship, we can only be strangers to God. Nicky ended her charge with the words of a well-known prayer by St Augustine:

Almighty God,

You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see your face; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Unusually, but adding a special element to the service, the Commissioning of two Rural Deans was included within the Admission Service. Paul Lawlor, Rural Dean of Bromsgrove and David Hoskin, Rural Dean of Kingswinford received their charges as the Archdeacon read the commission from Bishop John before loud applause expressed future support for them in their new roles.

The evening concluded with light refreshments and the opportunity for Churchwardens and others to renew acquaintances.

**The Churchwardens**

# FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

## Summer Holidays



As schools close for the summer holidays we look forward to a time of rest and change.

God rested on the seventh day, a holiday, a day when the thoughts and activities of mankind could be turned towards other things.

Every nation has its own patron saint who people call upon to help save the country from its enemies.



The countries of the United Kingdom and Ireland have special national days which remember their national saints. These days may or may not be an official holiday. Can you name the saints of these countries?

Can you match the picture with the country? And the saint to the flag?

ENGLAND

SAINT G \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



WALES

SAINT D \_ \_ \_ \_

SCOTLAND

SAINT A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



IRELAND

SAINT P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Can you find the dates of each saint's day?

Many people go to a different country for a holiday.

Many important festivals are linked to important holidays we celebrate together....  
Can you name these?

CH \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ S  
E \_ \_ \_ \_ R  
H \_ \_ \_ \_ T

Can you name a country beginning with ....

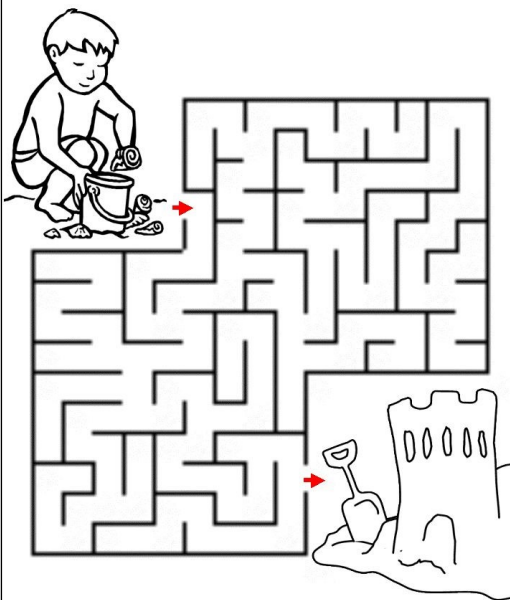
F \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



Lots of summer fun

## Summer at the Beach Maze

Help the little boy find his sand castle.



Can you find these words.....Beach, Swimming, Sea, Music, Sun, Hat, Relax, Lotion, Fun, Sunbathe, Tan, Volleyball, Friends, Holiday,

# THE ARCHDEACON'S VISIT TO MAGDEBURG

April 2016

I was invited by Bishop Ilse Junkermann to represent the Diocese of Worcester at the ordination service in Magdeburg Cathedral, and as it was my first visit to our partner diocese, arranged to spend a few days familiarising myself and learning about church life in the former East Germany.



Jens Latke, who oversees partnerships for the EKM, (the Evangelical Church of Central Germany) organised a rich programme for me, centred around exploring the ways people have adapted their church buildings to make them fit for purpose in a changing context. Like us, in rural areas the diocese is facing the issue of vast numbers of crumbling church buildings, with shrinking elderly congregations, clergy covering vast areas with responsibility for many parishes, and scarce resources in terms of both people and money.

So, here is an account of my visit, with some reflections and observations, and photos to illustrate what we saw, which may be of interest to those in the Diocese of Worcester seeking to grow in our Kingdom People characteristic related to buildings:

- ☐ as a spiritual and community resource the church building is accessible during daylight hours
- ☐ prayers are offered in the church building on a daily basis
- ☐ buildings have been sensitively adapted so that they offer hospitality to all kinds of groups, meetings and activities
- ☐ there is a strategy for encouraging and welcoming visitors to the church

## Friday - A church within a church

I arrived on Friday around lunchtime, had a walking tour of the area, seeing the impressive cathedral for the first time, and experiencing what a beautiful city Magdeburg is. The river is a major feature, of course, but I was struck by the immense variety of the buildings here, due to the destruction of many wars. There is a real juxtaposition of old and new, and quirky! My first formal visit was to a church



where, in a huge building, two congregations (Reformed and Lutheran) meet in different ends of the church, both so huge they feel like two massive churches stuck together, but in one, a revolutionary new church has been constructed within the shell of the old church. It is completely reversible, having done no damage to the original church. The only permanent change is a trench under the floor in which the plumbing, electricity and air extraction is channelled to the outside. It

has enabled a small, elderly congregation to continue meeting in a purpose built 'capsule', complete with upstairs kitchen and small meeting rooms with offices, all accessible by lift as well as stairs. For special events the doors can be fully opened so the whole church building can be used. It had to be seen to be believed!

## **Saturday - The Golden Church Tower Awards**

Saturday was spent at a symposium for 'Friends Groups'. Opening worship was led by retired Area Bishop Reinhard Werneburg, who preached an inspiring sermon based on Peter telling the man begging at the temple gates to "Get up!", saying we needed to speak life in the same way into many of our buildings. Silver and gold we may not have, but with God's help miracles can happen. The keynote talk was about the factors facing rural communities, which are similar, but more extreme than those we face, as the area east of Magdeburg is vast and sparsely populated, with much longer distances between communities. The high point of the day was the award-giving ceremony, where the winner and runners up received large cheques towards their innovative projects to restore their church buildings. The event was filmed and shown on local TV that evening, as there is much interest in the prize, awarded by a jury who visit all the shortlisted projects and evaluate their work. It is an idea I will explore in our diocese, as it engenders local interest, inspires imagination, and enables sharing of good practice, with interesting stories of transformation. On Monday I would be visiting some of the prizewinning churches. The afternoon was spent in a variety of workshops, and ended with Kaffee und Kuchen in true German style.

## **Sunday - Ordinations in the Cathedral**

I was made to feel like a very honoured guest, and I think it meant a great deal to the ordinands, and to the Bishop, that Worcester was represented. Some of the ordinands had visited Worcester last summer, and had been at our equivalent service, so the bond is strong. I read one of the readings, helped administer communion, and gave a greeting at the reception afterwards. At the communion two of the newly ordained pastors presided, which must have been nerve-racking for their first time, in a packed cathedral! The Catholic Bishop gave a wonderful greeting during the service, which felt profoundly gracious, as there was not one, but two, female bishops ordaining. The church in this part of Germany seems further on in the area of ecumenical partnerships and women's ministry than we are, but as someone pointed out to me, under the former East German regime it was more important for Christians to stand together, so internal differences mattered less.

## **Monday - rural restorations**

A series of visits had been arranged by Susann Bähre who drove Jens and I, together with Reinhard Werneburg, on a two day tour of the area. Certain amounts of funding are available from the EU for church buildings in Germany if groups can develop a unique concept, a clear plan for specific new uses which will benefit the whole community, not just the church congregations. So Friends Groups are springing up in many rural communities, usually comprising a mixture of church folk and villagers who would not describe themselves as Christians, but care about the building. The balance of these groups varies from place to place, and can give rise to tensions! It was projects run by such groups that we visited. Gollwitz, the first village we visited, has a population 70, about half of whom are in the Friends Group, and a good number of whom were there to meet us! This group, although at the earliest stage of their project, had won second prize in the Golden Church Tower Awards, and were hugely proud and delighted. They have plans for their tiny church which involve multiple uses by the community, for example film shows and concerts, even without toilets. But this is all to enable the church to stay as a living building,



and the pastor was very engaged in helping people make faith connections. They have also created a cycle route linking this and several other churches, accessible from a mainline rail station, which brings many visitors, and is well publicised and sign posted. We next visited a church in Karo which has been beautifully restored on the outside, and work was beginning on the inside. In Kade we met a very strong Friends Group with a charismatic and engaging leader who passionately gets the whole village involved and is able to motivate working parties by sheer strength of personality, seemingly holding lightly to regulations - there was an issue about some restoration to a roof and guttering which had to be redone as it did not comply with the desires of the conservation societies - but they had pushed on regardless! The church is used for weddings mainly, with people travelling for miles to be married there, but the worshipping life of the congregation seemed less important, and fewer church members were involved. The emphasis here was more on the building and the community, than the church as a place of worship. There was press coverage of my visit here, as they are very connected in to ways of publicising their work. Our final visit of the day was to Isterbis. The unique concept here is that the church is one of several in the area with an unusual winged altar. The Friends Group have designed a trail, starting at this church, where one end of the building has been turned into a trail information centre, with beautiful information boards, kitchen and toilet facilities, and a wonderfully restored church interior. This was my favourite of all the buildings we visited.



## **Tuesday - climbing walls, baptism angels and pilgrim lofts**

Our first stop was Bebertal, a village with three churches, where they have closed one, and have ambitions plans to turn it into a climbing centre; all but closed a second, used only for baptisms due to its spectacular baptism angel, and focussed on making the third a useable church for regular worship. Next we visited Schwanefeld, where much work is being carried out on restoring a medieval church near the former East/West border. Here the Friends Group is very active in putting on medieval fairs to raise awareness of the church's history. Our final visit was to Hodingen, where people have realised the potential of the roof space in their church, and are in the process of transforming it into pilgrim lodgings for youth groups. It was interesting that many of the churches we visited, (including the Cathedral!), have 'winter church' meeting locations in other venues.

Either they have no heating, or can't afford to use it. It is now normal practice, and something worth considering for some of our churches perhaps .... In the evening I met with area bishop Christoph Hackbeil, and talked about his upcoming visit to Worcester with a group of people in roles similar to our rural deans, who are interested in visiting some Fresh Expressions of church here. It was a wonderful visit, where I experienced the warm hospitality of our partners in ministry, met some wonderfully enthusiastic and visionary people, and realised I had never learned the German for gutters or medieval stonework!

**Nikki Groarke**  
**Archdeacon of Dudley**

## **MUSIC NOTES**

Last month I mentioned the need to recruit additional singers to our choir. But I now want to address those who attend our Worship Together service held on the second Sunday of the month, where the Music Group sing and play.

The singers and players under the direction of Tina and Les Timms are integral part of the Music Team at St Mary's and I therefore want to encourage an inclusive approach when it comes to recruitment.

If you sing or play an instrument and would like to join us in either the Choir or Music Group or both, please don't be put off if you can only attend some of the services and rehearsals. Your contribution will be welcomed and appreciated. If you can let us know what times you can offer, we can plan our music around the people we have.

It is recognised that when people's lives are so busy a more flexible approach is needed, if our strong musical tradition is to be maintained.

It is that strong tradition which over the years has encouraged students, who have gone on to win music scholarships, following membership of St Mary's Choir. One current student is George Nicholls, who on Saturday 30 July at 5.00 pm will give an organ recital at Great Witley Church. Support him if you can. Admission is free.

**Graham Davies, Director of Music**

\*\*\*\*\*

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

On Saturday 28 May nine people set off for a five and a half mile walk around Bourneheath and Dodford. We started our walk from the New Inn public house at Bourneheath, where the licensee had very kindly allowed us to leave our cars, and headed uphill. We soon picked up the way-marked path that led us along undulating buttercup meadows to join the Monarch's Way near the Royal Content Farm. We continued along this route, crossing Warbage Lane and further, until we arrived at Dodford Church Hall. We followed the path alongside the hall which led through a small spinney, up and over a wooded area, and on, until we emerged into a field of sheep and lambs. Here we stopped for our refreshments.

Moving on again we walked through verdant green fields until we arrived at the Park Gate public house. From this point we had a short walk along the road to a marker that set us off again along really well-defined paths to the top of a hill called Alfred's Well. On a previous walk in this area I was told that until the building of the M5 motorway there was indeed a well where, much as at Malvern, water had flowed continuously and where people used to come and fill their containers. Sadly after the M5 was built the water ceased to flow because the watercourse had been altered.

At the bottom of Alfred's Well hill we turned into Sunnyhill Coppice and crossed Valley Wood, both lovely paths through dapple-shaded woods, and eventually joined the road that would take us back to our starting place. On the way we passed the birthplace of A.E. Houseman, author of "A Shropshire Lad."

Due to unforeseen circumstances we were unable to take lunch at the New Inn so we returned 'home' and enjoyed a good lunch at the Crabmill in Oldswinford. We all agreed it had been a lovely walk and a good day out.

**Sylvia Cooper**

## HAPPY AND GLORIOUS

### The Queen's Ninetieth Birthday Celebrations - 11 June 2016

As the nation joined in many different activities to celebrate The Queen's Official Birthday weekend, the community of Oldswinford came together in a joyous 'street party' in the grounds of St Mary's Church. After much planning our churchwardens, Tony and Judy, had coordinated many ideas into an ambitious programme which brought much enjoyment on the day.

The event was formally opened by the Revd David Knight, chaplain of Mary Stevens Hospice, who acknowledged the contribution which the event might make towards the hospice charity. An early shower at the start of proceedings threatened to dampen the occasion but the beech tree and gazebos provided a brief shelter and visitors were able to enjoy the great variety of food from 'Bring and Share' lunch tables. Surely this could not be bettered by the M&S hampers to be served at 'The Patrons' Lunch' in The Mall on the following day.



The Spring Dance group were already assembled in the church hall for their regular weekly rehearsals and they took time out to provide colourful performances including a routine by the younger members dancing as princesses to music from 'The King and I'. Outdoors the rain had cleared and Eve and John Evans led a happy session of barn dancing with all age groups joining in. Our archdeacon, The Venerable Nikki Groarke, called in on her tour of parish events across the diocese and observed that her next visit was to be in Sedgley where she expected to be invited to take part in a Morris Dancing display.



As the bells rang, children were engaged in various activities – being entertained by a magician and balloon sculptor, looking for corgis, making crowns and jewel boxes before an enthronement of the King and Queen of Oldswinford. The safe play area was also popular with children and families.

The focus of the later afternoon attractions shifted in to the church as visitors came to enjoy a very special flower



festival. Coordinated by Sally Frost, members of St Mary's Flower Guild presented a wonderful display of floral arrangements reflecting events during the Queen's life, which were illustrated in accompanying photographs. Clearly the theme offered plenty of scope but the selected topics and their interpretation in colour and shape were most inspiring. Ranging from overseas tours – Oman in 1975 and South Africa in 1995 – to childhood events, Royal Ascot and Maundy celebrations,

the spectrum of the Queen's life was as broad as the colours in the displays. Further illustrations and examples of the Queen's duties and service were presented in a fascinating tableau of documents and memorabilia.

And it wasn't just the floral arrangements that attracted craft skills. The bake-off competition for 'a cake fit for a queen' also demonstrated colourful and imaginative ideas. However it was 'tea and cakes' in the narthex which were the next attraction and provided the opportunity for visitors to sit, chat and reminisce. Memories were rekindled as Stephen led the assembled visitors in a communal sing-along which included songs from performers known to be enjoyed by the Queen – George Formby, Flanders and Swann, and Vera Lynn's ever-popular patriotic 'White Cliffs of Dover'.



The event ended with the sale of cakes from the 'bake-off' competition and the raffle of the many gifts donated by the Oldswinford business sponsors in aid of the Mary Stevens Hospice charity. It truly had been a grand community occasion - a happy and glorious way of acknowledging with gratitude the service and dedication to duty made by Her Majesty during her reign.

Many thanks to Tony Tatford for his vision, time and commitment which contributed to the success of this event.

**Alec Beevers**

There is so much to be grateful for in this celebration. The event was the product of a real team-effort that enabled so many to contribute in whatever way they were able, to provide an occasion that was enjoyed by so many. It was specially encouraging to observe the talent, goodwill and enthusiasm of all who took part applied in order that pleasure was provided for others. May we find further ways of sharing in such generous gestures in the future.

**The Editors**

## **THIS MONTH'S RECIPE**

### **CORN SOUP WITH PARMESAN AND ROSEMARY LOLLIPOPS**

#### **CORN SOUP**

I make this when I am fortunate to have freshly picked corn cobs. Supermarket corn has usually passed its best and is turning to starch. Much better to buy frozen cobs, thaw slightly and use those. These can be smaller so use more. This only makes a small amount of soup so feel free to double it up for larger portions.

Oil, 1 finely chopped onion, 1 tablespoon tomato puree, 4 corn on the cobs, vegetable stock, dash of cream (optional), seasoning.

Heat the oil and soften the onion. Add the puree and cook for a further minute. Meanwhile, cut the corn from the cobs by scraping down the cobs and add to the pan. Cover with stock and simmer until softened. Blitz until smooth and add a little cream or milk. Season, to taste. If you are entertaining you may want to pass it through a sieve for a smoother soup.

#### **PARMESAN AND ROSEMARY LOLLIPOPS**

This makes 20 plus, I often use half the mixture and make 10.

150g/5 oz plain flour, 100g/4oz butter, 50g/2oz finely grated parmesan cheese, 1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary, 1 egg yolk.

Rub the butter into the flour and add the parmesan and rosemary. Bind together with the egg yolk to make a soft dough. Roll out on a floured surface to 1.5cm thickness and cut into rounds. Press a lolly stick into the biscuit. I usually chill them at this stage for at least half an hour if I have time. Bake at 160/Gas4 for 15 minutes. Leave to cool on the tray for a few minutes.

To serve, I usually have a container of sea salt, then I stand the biscuits up in the salt, it looks good with a few sprigs of fresh rosemary in with them.

**Ann Jennings**

\*\*\*\*\*

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

We have met these parmesan and rosemary lollipops before - delightful aren't they? I commented then that they bring a green touch to the table. However, a light herb-tinged white - something like Verdicchio or Arneis would be altogether too faint a flavour for this dish. It is rare that the solution to our wine quest is Chardonnay, but I certainly think that is where we should be looking here. Indeed, our main event is the flavour of the corn and this will require a wine with body and weight. The soup can take a degree of oaking and this creamy note would also work well with the parmesan. However, we should

be mindful of Ann's remark that fresh corn can carry a lovely definition of flavour - too heavy a level of oak will only mask this flavour. So not too much tobacco and cinnamon: French oak rather than American therefore.

Where for our wine? We could stay in France, although this is probably not the time for a top Cote d'Or cru - a lesser Burgundy appellation would suit perfectly well. So too a Limoux Chardonnay. We could venture into the new world, but try to avoid a hot climate Chardonnay : melon, guava and tropical fruits are less well suited here compared with the more classic apple and citrus rounded by oak.

Just a sipper perhaps, if we are taking the soup as a starter to a four course meal? A measure of dry Montilla would be good; and a lovely drop for a summer's day too!

Enjoy your wine-sipping.....

**Richard W. B. Ryan**

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Our meeting In June was held just after the celebrations weekend for the Queen's official 90th Birthday. Betty Taylor, one of our indoor members was born two days after the Queen and had discussed her 90 year life experience and faith with Revd Stephen Agnew. We read this report to members during our service.

Celebrations of Faith is the theme for Mothers' Union 2016 as we mark 140 years since our foundation by Mary Sumner. Now, our membership and work is worldwide and Worcester diocese has direct links with overseas groups: one of these is East Ankole in Uganda.

Our speaker, Liz Green, is the diocesan President and recently visited East Ankole following an invitation by the bishop and members of Mothers' Union there.

She also discussed that, this year, our diocese is strengthening work and funds to give holiday breaks to stressed families in the "Away from it All" scheme. We are also supporting refugees from the Syrian conflict with new bedding and equipment as the authorities set up new homes.

After the meeting and refreshments some members visited St Mary's Church to see the beautiful flower arrangements prepared for our celebrations weekend.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 12 July, 2.15 pm, Tea at 8 Eton Drive, hosted by Sally Frost.

Tuesday 13 September, 2.15 pm in the Coach House  
.....Speaker Alma Organ.

**Dawn Nex**

### **Children's page answers**

**Saints** George, David, Andrew and Patrick

**Festivals** Christmas, Easter, Harvest. Countries France, Spain, America or Austria.

## PARISH REGISTER

### Baptisms

12 June

Richie Jones  
Vicky Smith  
Freya Jones  
Finley Jones

### Weddings

No weddings this month

### Funerals

16 May  
17 May

Robert Colin Wilson  
Clara Joyce Preece

Aged 74  
Aged 93



In this Branch of St Mary's with St John's Mothers' Union, we have over the years supported many projects, both at Diocesan and National levels. These projects are designed to help those less fortunate than ourselves, or whose lives have met with adversity. One of the most successful of our projects has been providing "Toiletry Bags" for Women on Remand, for the Women's Refuge and more recently for Teenage Mums.

These 'Little Bags of Self-respect' contain the basic requirements, - soap, a flannel, toothpaste, a toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, shower gel, sanitary products and a 'treat', in fact everyday things that we all take for granted. Over the year our Branch can send between 30-40 bags to the Diocese. We have already sent over 20 so far this year.

We are able to achieve this in part by donations from our members. However, we could not maintain these numbers without the continued generosity of the congregation of St Mary's who place various toiletry items in the Mothers' Union box at the back of Church.

St Mary's has always been known for its generosity whenever there is a crisis and help is needed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all, on behalf of our members and the recipients of the toiletry bags. Thank you so much for helping us, to make a difference, to the lives of those in need.

**Anne May**  
**Branch Leader**



## LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF WORCESTER

By the time you read this we will know whether the UK has voted In or Out, though at the time of writing I'm still being assailed from both sides wanting my vote! However, as we saw in the Scottish referendum, the results aren't the end of the story. There are always further negotiations to take place and, perhaps more importantly for us all, relationships to be built and even re-built.



This process also happens within churches and in families. Opinions are one thing, but relationships count too. Often it comes down to key individuals going that one extra step and reaching out to the other side. As Christians we are surely in the business of taking the extra step, and more if needed.

We saw this in the negotiations over the Good Friday agreement about the future of Northern Ireland, where sworn enemies sat down together for what they perceived to be a greater good. We see Pope Francis reaching out to all sorts of people who feel alienated from the Church and using the media to great effect in doing so. I guess for him it was not so much a case of the greater good as the greater God! He seems to rest at peace and with integrity within his understanding of a God who gives him space to take such courageous steps and live up to one of his titles, pontifex or bridge-builder.

God is always greater than we can imagine or conceive. Our words can only hint at who this God is. That is why the Church has worshipped Him down the centuries in the beauty of holiness, using poetry and music, liturgy and architecture to express that to which our words cannot do full justice. This beauty is not a sort of cultural captivity: there is a powerful Christian tradition of beautiful worship in beautiful settings leading to beautiful lives being lived to the full.

Those who have worshipped Him in the beauty of holiness have discovered that same holiness in the rough and tumble of daily life. Bishop Frank Weston, speaking at an Anglo-Catholic congress nearly a hundred years ago, told his listeners: 'You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the Tabernacle, if you do not pity Jesus in the slums. It is folly, it is madness, to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the Sacraments and Jesus on the throne of glory, when you are sweating him in the souls and bodies of his children.'

Love of God goes hand in hand with love of neighbour. Finding space for our spacious God surely enlarges our heart enough to go out to those we love and those we find it hard to love, and maybe makes us those bridge-builders and reconcilers which the world needs.

**Robert Jones**



**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



**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

**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

**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)

**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



**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