

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

NOVEMBER 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

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

NOVEMBER 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 (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
Priest in Charge Day Off:	Friday
Curate's Day Off	Monday



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	

Reader:	Mrs Kanthi Ariaraj	395115
Church Wardens:	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
Director of Music:	Mr Graham Davies	01905 353939
	st.mary.os.dom@btconnect.com	
Treasurer:	Mr Russ Fowler	442684
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Magazine Editor	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
Church Hall and		
Coach House: - Bookings	Parish Office	441003
Parish Administrator and		
Publicity Officer:	Mr John Sutton	441003
Parish Office:	Open 9.00 am -12.00 noon Monday to Friday	441003
Church website address:	www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk	
	E-mail: st.mary.os@btconnect.com	
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 NOVEMBER 2016

Tuesday 1	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Rectory
Thursday 3	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 4	Stephen's day off
Saturday 5	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour.
SUNDAY 6	THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT
	3.00 pm Baptisms
Monday 7	2.00 pm Pastoral Care Group meeting
Tuesday 8	9.30 am Open the Book team visit Old Swinford Primary School
	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft
	2.15pm Mothers' Union meeting in the Coach House
	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House
Thursday 10	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
	7.30pm Coach House Committee Meeting
	Copy date for December magazine
Friday 11	Stephen's day off
Saturday 12	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
	RSCM Choir Festival at Worcester
SUNDAY 13	SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT
	Remembrance Sunday
	3.00 pm Worship Review Group meeting
Monday 14	7.30pm PCC meeting
Tuesday 15	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House
	7.30 pm Christmas Market planning meeting in the Narthex
Wednesday 16	9.00 am Morning Prayers and full staff meeting
	10.00am Prayer Group meeting
Thursday 17	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
	7.30 pm Churches Together in Stourbridge
Friday 18	Stephen's day off.
Saturday 19	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
	2.00pm Eucharistic Assistants renewal service at Belbroughton
SUNDAY 20	CHRIST THE KING - SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT
	3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 22	9.30 am Open the Book team visit Old Swinford Primary School
	2.15 pm Tea in the Coach house.
	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House
Wednesday 23	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 24	10.30 am MU Corporate Communion in Church
Friday 25	Stephen's day off
Saturday 26	9.30 am Walking group
	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
	4.00 pm Mary Stevens Hospice Tree of Light Service at St Mary's
SUNDAY 27	ADVENT SUNDAY
	6.30 pm Advent Carol Service
Tuesday 29	2.15 pm Tuesday Tea
	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course - visit

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends

This last weekend has seen us holding our services in the Church Hall as we try to cope with the challenge of a Church boiler which seems to be in terminal decline. Whilst we do not know how long we will have to use the Church Hall for our worship, it will certainly be for a number of weeks.

The experience of holding services in a Church Hall is a novel one for many people, and the response to worshipping in that context has been one of surprise and in some cases even delight. On Sunday last we held 8.00 am Communion Service, 10.00 am Sung Eucharist, an afternoon Baptism and Evensong in the hall, and members of the congregations of all of those services have commented on the friendly and intimate nature of the worship. For the person leading the worship it is certainly a positive experience to be able to see and hear the congregation, and to feel that we are sharing in an act of worship.

As St Mary's is such a large church it is certainly not geared to intimacy, and the sense of sharing in an act of worship is much less pronounced than in the Church Hall. Generally the congregation in any large building will tend to sit as far away from the centre of worship as they possibly can, the reasons for this are obscure, but the effect is that to some extent the close corporate nature of worship can be lost. However in the case of the Church Hall it is impossible to sit any distance away from other worshippers, or from the person leading the worship, and so there is naturally a much more intimate experience of worship.

Whilst I would not advocate that we choose to use the Church Hall for worship on a regular basis I do think that we should look at our enforced migration from the Church to the Hall as an opportunity to experience something different in our worship. This is an opportunity to draw close to one another as together we worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, I am sure, does not have a particular preference of one place over another, as long as the worship itself is worthy and heart-felt.

So whilst our move into the Church Hall is inconvenient, and creates a great deal of work for those who set up and dismantle the 'church' every weekend, we can look forward, not only to the physical warmth of the Church Hall, but also to the warmth and intimacy of the worship which the hall makes possible. And while we are doing that we can also give thanks that we have a suitable hall which is in a good state of repair and in which we can worship.

Stephen Agnew

SERVICES IN NOVEMBER 2016

6 November 3rd Sunday before Advent	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	2 Thessalonians 2. 1-5, 13-end	Luke 20. 27 - 38
	6.30 pm Evensong	1 Kings 3. 1 - 15	Romans 8. 31 - end
13 November 2nd Sunday before Advent Remembrance Sunday	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Daniel 6.	Matthew 13. 1 - 9, 18 - 23
20 November Sunday before Advent Christ the King	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Colossians 1. 11 - 30	Luke 23. 33 - 43
	6.30 pm Evensong	1 Samuel 8. 4 - 20	John 18. 33 - 37
27 November Advent Sunday	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Romans 13. 11 - end	Matthew 24. 36 - 44
	6.30 pm Evensong	Advent Carol Service	

THE SOMME REMEMBERED

On the 18 November the last day of the 141 days of the Battle of the Somme will be commemorated at Thiepval, France and in other places around the world.

We remember those who made the great sacrifice during the two World Wars; We remember those who have given their lives in the service of their country in other conflicts; We pray for those who suffer at this time; We pray for those who have been bereaved; We pray for peace; We pray that we may be worthy of the sacrifice made on our behalf.

ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN'S VISIT

On Saturday Justin Welby led a Quiet Morning in the Cathedral for Clergy and Readers within the Diocese. The communities of Glasshampton and Mucknell Abbey also supported the morning with their worship, presence and insight. Justin spoke part way through the morning on 'Prayer Life and Ministerial Life'. However he was really speaking about the transformational impact that prayer has on all of us irrespective of the context or type of ministry we may have; prayer can't help but fill us with the Spirit of God, reforming whoever we are.

Prayer is always the sense of something new. When it becomes the foundation, the centre and the subject of what we do it always opens up new possibilities for God to act in us and in the world. Growing in prayer isn't simply about acquiring a special set of spiritual skills that operate on a particular aspect of our lives, rather prayer transforms us into the kind of humanity that Christ shows us; we grow as people of God.

We will always come into prayer with baggage, with minds full of thoughts, with hearts reflecting joys and heavy with pains. It is tempting to think that we should shift or clear away all this baggage before we can pray, but we should resist this temptation. By starting prayer by recognising and praying through whatever is on our hearts and minds we root our prayer within our individual context which has immense transformative power. If we pray through the particular personal context that we find ourselves in, we can then focus our prayers on situations and contexts which aren't personally known to us.

There is no correct way to pray. Prayer can be as simple as telling Jesus that we love him (which makes an extraordinary difference, try it) but it is important that we find methods and times of prayer that work for us. By becoming 'spiritual magpies' through finding prayer practices from different denominations and religions, we can keep our prayer lives fresh and enriching. We shouldn't feel nervous about exploring and finding methods of prayer which work for us.

It is through prayer, the bending of the ear of our heart to God, that we practise the presence of God in the moment, that we don't get distracted by the past or the future. Through prayer we open up ourselves to co-operate with God's work, we make room in the busyness of our lives for grace and mercy to dwell within us.

Revd Alex French

"THE POWER OF HOPE"

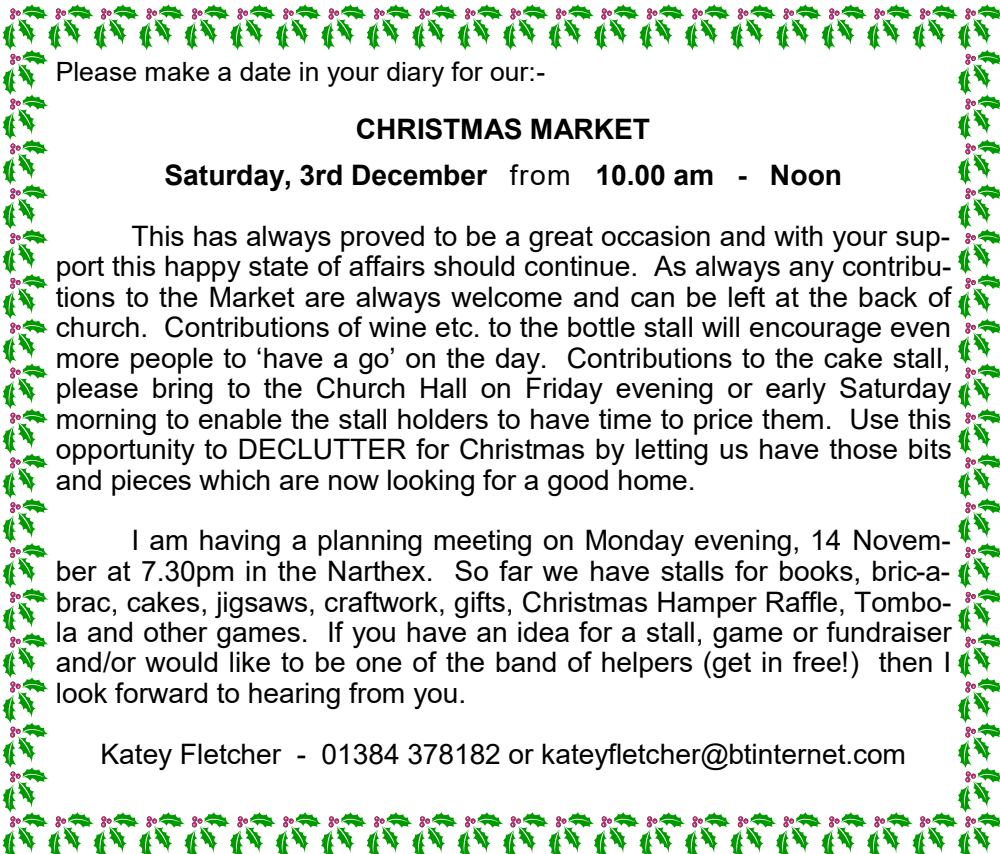
The Archbishop of Canterbury in conversation with Malala Yousafzai

During the Archbishop's visit to the Diocese, he paid a visit to Dudley College. It was here that he hosted a conversation with Malala Yousafzai, for which he extended invitations to clergy and to younger members of the Church. I was very fortunate to be invited and attended with Stephen and Alex.

It was remarkable to sit in a local small hall with the Archbishop and Malala; both are hugely prolific and influential people, and yet we were sat only a few dozen yards from them. After some music from the College's performance arts students, the Archbishop introduced Malala and asked her questions about her life (the 19-year-old told us nonchalantly in the same breath about how she had been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, and how she had submitted her UCAS application earlier that day!), and this was followed by a Q&A session from the floor.

Malala talked very openly about her unquenchable drive to achieve education for all. Her Nobel Peace Prize is incidental to her rather than a measure of success, and the Archbishop wasn't alone in feeling struck by the maturity of her sentiments toward major world issues. What surprised me most of all about the event, however, was how normal it felt to witness this conversation. And this matched Malala's message: hope is a power that we can all access, share and practise in our lives to make the bring God's kingdom to earth.

Chloë Hancox



Please make a date in your diary for our:-

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Saturday, 3rd December from 10.00 am - Noon

This has always proved to be a great occasion and with your support this happy state of affairs should continue. As always any contributions to the Market are always welcome and can be left at the back of church. Contributions of wine etc. to the bottle stall will encourage even more people to 'have a go' on the day. Contributions to the cake stall, please bring to the Church Hall on Friday evening or early Saturday morning to enable the stall holders to have time to price them. Use this opportunity to DECLUTTER for Christmas by letting us have those bits and pieces which are now looking for a good home.

I am having a planning meeting on Monday evening, 14 November at 7.30pm in the Narthex. So far we have stalls for books, bric-a-brac, cakes, jigsaws, craftwork, gifts, Christmas Hamper Raffle, Tombola and other games. If you have an idea for a stall, game or fundraiser and/or would like to be one of the band of helpers (get in free!) then I look forward to hearing from you.

Katey Fletcher - 01384 378182 or kateyfletcher@btinternet.com

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

We welcomed back Anne May, our branch leader, who explained that, through intensive medical treatment and family, church, friends and M.U. love and prayer, she was able to preside over our October meeting. The meeting was opened with prayer.

Our speaker, Stephen Agnew, led the opening service with the theme of Joy. He reminded us that Christians are people of the Resurrection and a joyful heart is the same as one burning with love, prayer and praise. Consequently our witness should be joyful.

The subject of his talk was 'Liturgical Colours.' He explained the significance of colours used in vestments, stoles and church furnishings which included altar frontals, coverings for communion elements, lectern and pulpit falls and a set of church stoles.

The church year begins with Advent through to the end of Trinity and the changes are shown by the change of colour.

- Purple for penitence - used in Advent and Lent.
- Red for martyrdom and Pentecost
- White for celebration - Easter, Christmas, weddings and non-martyred saints.
- Green for life in nature – grass, leaves, trees - used after Trinity Sunday to Advent and any other Ordinary Time.

These are the colours used at St Mary's but at Salisbury, this pattern is not followed. The Sarum System is different, - Blue for Advent, white for all saint's days, red (an earth colour) for Ordinary time and gold for celebrations.

Stephen then showed us his personal stoles and two chasubles used over the last 38 years. Some were made by his wife Jean, others came from Jerusalem, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, one was a pilgrim gift, others were special commissions.

Alex, our Curate, had sent four stoles and, as deacon, his are worn across one shoulder until he is ordained priest.

We admired the beautiful workmanship and rich significance of the patterns shown and thanked Stephen for his informative talk.

Refreshments were then served.

Next Meeting - 2.15 pm Tuesday 8 November at the Coach House - Reflections on Salcombe with Alan Sanders. All are welcome.

Dawn Nex

MACMILLAN THANK YOU

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to our Macmillan Cake Sale in September.



From the bakers (those known to us, and the anonymous ones too), to the buyers and all who supported, you all helped us to raise a very grand total £127.48. This will help Macmillan provide much-needed support to cancer sufferers and their families.

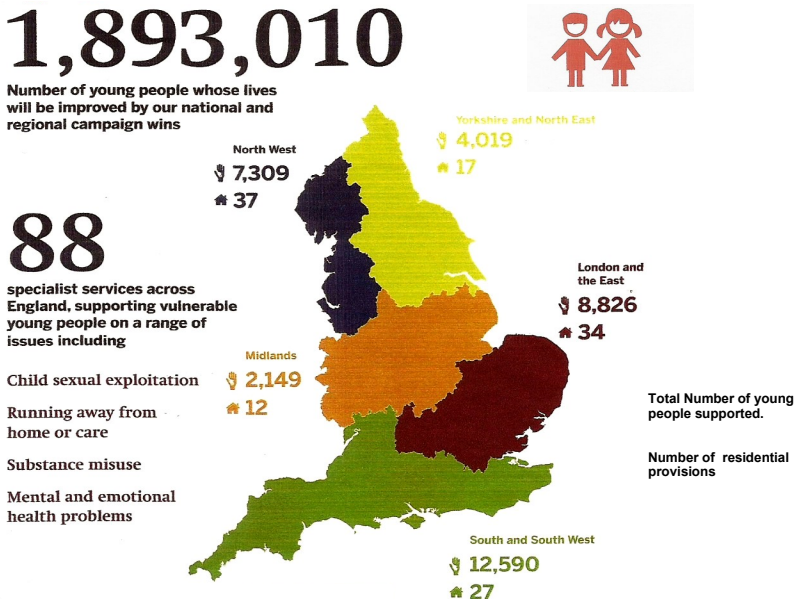
Chloë Hancox

CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHILDREN’S SOCIETY

Box opening this year has resulted in another record collection of £1030.44.

The society has asked me to pass on their heartfelt thanks to you all for faithfully collecting throughout the year. The box collections help change young lives every day, in fact thanks to wonderful supporters like you all regularly collecting pennies in a house box, the society have been able to extend their work to teenagers at risk of child exploitation and other forms of abuse. A child's teenage years are often when they are most vulnerable and many turn to The Children's Society when they have nowhere else to go.

You can see from the following diagram what the money the Society raised last year has been spent on.



Again, thank you so much everyone

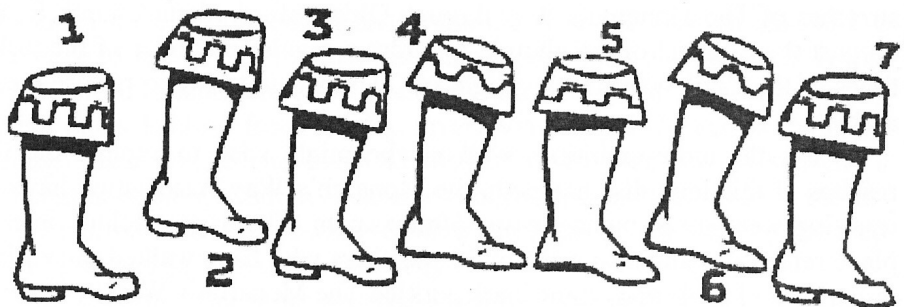
Maggie Abbotts

FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

BOOTS AND SHOES

PANTOMIME BOOTS

How many pairs can you spot?



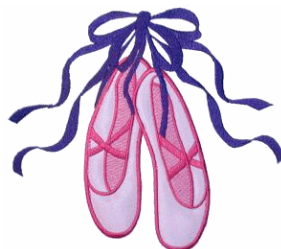
Look carefully for tiny differences.

A PILE OF JUMBLED SHOES

Can you sort out the types of boots and shoes?



- 1) SSIRPLEP
- 2) OPPIFFLLS
- 3) RESTIRAN
- 4) SALECUP
- 5) FLOATLOB
- 6) TABLE
- 7) NASSLAD
- 8) STOLWENGLIN



T	N	O
I	O	T
F	R	P

ALEPPO

Today the plight of Aleppo is very much in the news and in our minds. The crushing of half this ancient city and its people is no less than barbaric. It might seem strange but St Mary's church has historic links with this city dating from the seventeenth century and possesses a very important property as a consequence. Two men were involved. John Foley (1631-84) was a 'Turkey merchant' who worked there for several years and William Hallifax (Rector 1699-1722) was Chaplain to the Levant Company 'factory' based in the city. John Foley is buried in the Foley vault under the church and William Hallifax paid for the rebuilding of the Rectory in the latest style. It remains the finest in the diocese still functioning as a clergy house.

John Foley was the youngest of the 14 children of Richard Foley. He turned to trade since his older brothers had all the main jobs in the family iron business. He went to London and became involved in the Levant – the name for the eastern Mediterranean at that time – and lived at Aleppo. It was a fascinating place and a surviving Foley bill shows the import of exotic items like mohair, silk, satin, lusterine, as well as the more usual loads of currants and wine picked up from Italy and Spain. It was possible to make a fortune but it was also dangerous. The 'Barbary corsairs' from Algiers were quite ferocious and European ships sailed in fleets for protection. John Foley made much money and eventually returned to live in Stourbridge, probably at today's 'Talbot'. He did not marry and his will is remarkable for 82 bequests, many to his family, some to sea captains and one even to the Lord Mayor of London.

William Hallifax became Rector of Oldswinford in 1699 but had earlier been the Levant Company chaplain at Aleppo. The Company was concerned about the 'temptations' of the East and thus appointed resident chaplains. Hallifax was a scholar and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and at Aleppo and Constantinople he found many opportunities for scholarship and study. His special concerns were the study of antique Islamic manuscripts and making a collection of gold coins. It was a prosperous post and he returned in 1695 a



Aleppo before the present destruction

wealthy man at a time when Foley influence in national politics was at its peak. The three brothers, Thomas II of Witley, Paul of Stoke Edith and Phillip of Kinver were leading MPs and in this year Paul was elected Speaker of the House of Commons. He chose Hallifax as his Chaplain, a significant post,

entailing a London residence. Paul was not re-elected as Speaker in 1698 and Hallifax retired. As he was not voted any tangible mark of thanks by the Commons, Thomas Foley presented him to Oldswinford. After living in London Hallifax did not appreciate the old timber-framed ‘parsonage house’ and was prepared to use his fortune in a good cause. The new rectory was built in 1701 in the distinctive and fashionable late Jacobean style of Christopher Wren, whom he knew well from his Parliamentary role and who probably inspired the design. When he died, his collection of gold coins was given to his old college and is now in the Ashmolean Museum where it is a reminder of the people and culture admired by Hallifax and which are so sadly being destroyed today.

Roy Peacock

HARVEST SUPPER

On Saturday 1 October our Social Committee once again provided a splendid Harvest supper celebration with a 3-course dinner in the church hall.

About 40 guests enjoyed paté, beef casserole and a selection of trifles, with table service provided by the committee members. In addition to the food we had a mental challenge of trivia quiz sheets prepared by Mike Blaxland. There was much puzzlement and amusement as we tackled the questions between courses, particularly the sheet of ‘ding-bat’ style clues. One question apparently defied solution by all but one guest – can you solve it? See foot of page.



Mike’s after-supper game got us on our feet to tackle a railway journey puzzle – rather like a treasure hunt. About twelve lists of station names were positioned at various points around the hall and we had to find a route through different towns to arrive at our unknown destination in the fastest time. As we rushed around the hall for our next station clues there were many comments on the loss of pre-Beeching tracks and the poor services on many routes. Perhaps we needed Michael Portillo and his Bradshaw guide of great British railway journeys to help us. 1st and 2nd place prizes were presented to Sue Clark and Janet Hampson.

Thank you to the Social Committee and Mike Blaxland for a most enjoyable evening.

Alec Beevers

Dingbat answer - Bermuda triangle

CHURCH LINEN

A report in last month's magazine referred to a donation to the church which is enabling the provision of new church linen. The article illustrated some of the items which are used during Communion and named the individual pieces as pall, corporal and purificator. These were names I was not familiar with so I explored further.

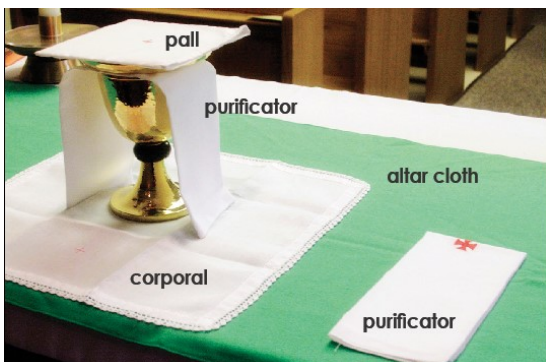
While observing the preparation and final folding of the linen after distribution of the Communion in silent meditation, it is evident that there is much formality, tradition and symbolism deriving from The Last Supper. The use of linen may reflect the wrapping of the body and blood of Christ while resting in the tomb.

Purity of the linen is important for the Communion service. At St Mary's the washing of the linen is undertaken by a group of volunteer 'linen ladies' who work on a rota which ensures that clean linen is available for each Communion service. The instructions issued to the linen ladies describe the individual pieces as follows.

Purificator. A small cloth generally with a cross in the centre. It is used to place over the chalice before communion then to clean the chalice between communicants and to wipe the chalice at the end.

Corporal. A larger cloth with a cross generally in the centre. It is placed below the bread paten and wine chalice during communion. It is kept in a burse (thicker coloured 'pocket'.)

Pall. A square white 'pocket' with a plastic infill to make it firm. It is used to put on top of the paten which is placed over the purificator when it is over the chalice (to keep insects out).



Additional linen pieces include the lavabo which is a small cloth embroidered in the corner, used by the celebrant to dry his/her hands after washing them before preparing the bread and wine, and the veil which is placed over all the above items with the burse on top.

Alec Beevers

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of The Somme

Earlier in the year, Worcester Cathedral marked the opening day of the battle and it will be marked again as part of the Remembrance Day commemorations. Canon Georgina Byrne explains why it's important to remember:

"The Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916 and ended on 19 November, the same year, as winter closed in. In the space of 141 days over a million soldiers from Britain, the British Empire, France and the German Empire were dead or wounded. The British and French had taken seven miles of German territory.

"Apart from the sheer loss of life on both sides, the Battle of the Somme remains significant in British history because of the involvement of volunteer recruits who took part alongside the regular army. These were enthusiastic, fit young men, drawn to fight for their country and recruited by Lord Kitchener. Many of these men came from the same towns and villages, or from the same factories, and had joined up in 'Pals' battalions', with no experience of warfare.



The Thiepval Memorial, October 2016

"We can no longer 'remember' the Battle of the Somme: there is no one living who does remember it. Instead we commemorate – and it is important that we do so. We come together in prayer to acknowledge the horrors of war, the loss of a generation, the grief that still resonates a hundred years later, and to reaffirm our determination to work for peace."

The Cathedral will mark Remembrance Sunday in the 10.00 am service, with an act of remembrance at the county war memorial outside the cathedral at 10.55 am. Please pray for all those who continue to be affected by war.

Diocesan News

Footnote

During a visit to Thiepval in early October this year Sue and I walked among the headstones and crosses that mark the mostly unnamed graves of 300 each of Commonwealth and French soldiers who are buried here. They lie at the foot of the Thiepval Memorial which commemorates the 72,246 Empire servicemen who have no known grave. On a beautiful, sunny day the peace and significance of this poignant place was somehow enhanced by the occasional arrival of coaches bringing French school children for their personal lesson in an event in their country's history.

Tony Tatford

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

Pedro Ximenez, fig and ginger Semifreddo

The Pedro Ximenez sherry is a sweet aged sherry from Spain and goes well with the dried fruit: a perfect dessert to make in advance. I drizzle it with a little chocolate sauce and decorate the plate with a few slices of fresh fig. A great dessert for getting ahead with. I served it last New Year's Eve.

75 ml sweet sherry
175g semi-dried figs roughly chopped
3 large eggs separated
50g caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
250ml double cream
100g ginger nuts, crushed roughly

Soak the figs in 3 tablespoons of the sherry for an hour or two.

Line a large loaf tin with cling film so it overhangs the sides, I find wetting the tin first helps the cling to stick.

Add the sugar to a mixer bowl with the yolks and whisk until pale and thick, add the vanilla paste.

In another bowl whisk the egg white to stiff peaks

In another bowl whisk the cream with one tablespoon of the sherry to the soft peak stage.

Fold the cream into the egg yolk mixture, then fold in the egg whites, biscuits, figs and any remaining sherry.

Spoon into the lined tin, cover with cling film and freeze.

For ease of serving I usually take it out of the freezer, remove the cling, leave for 10 mins. then slice it using a hot knife, putting the slices on a tray and popping it back into the freezer until ready to serve. When ready to serve remove from freezer leave it to thaw for about 10mins. I do this in the fridge, make sure your tray will fit in your fridge in advance.

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE....

If I were to create my dream menu, it would certainly feature a game dish - and for dessert I would probably look no further than this luxuriously rich treat. Yes, I would omit, or minimize, the ginger flavour - but that's just a personal dislike. The main set of ingredients: the cream, biscuits, figs and the flavours of raisins and molasses produced by the sweet aged Pedro Ximenez combine to create a true culinary delight. Made from grapes dried in the sun and then aged for many years in cask, this is the celebrated wine which, although crafted from white grapes, develops over time into an opaque black-treacle colour !

Whilst the Sherry producers of Jerez focus on the Palomino Fino grape, elsewhere in Andalucía, Pedro Ximenez (PX) is the speciality. It is King in Malaga and Montilla-Moriles and it is here where we will find the finest examples. Soaring above all others is the Toro Albala Don PX, a Gran Reserva which ages gloriously for 30 years or more. The market is not awash with bottlings of sweet PX, but any you find should be worth sampling - especially if it is a Gran Reserva. As for alternatives? The Australian Muscat liqueurs and the wonderful Samos Nectar from the sun-drenched isle bring all the intensity and richness required, but a glass of PX still reigns supreme. I have written previously that it is like liquid Christmas pudding, so with Nativity celebrations approaching, it would be well worth getting a bottle or two in stock !

Enjoy your wine-sipping.....

Richard W.B. Ryan

MUSIC NOTES



At its best, music can lift the spirits and help to create the appropriate atmosphere at important points in an act of worship. However, I would suggest that when the music to be sung has not been varied for a number of years, making it sound fresh and spontaneous week by week can be a challenge!

Therefore, on alternate Sundays in November we will be introducing a different way to sing the Gloria in the morning Sung Eucharist. We will be using a French responsorial setting, where the congregation sing a refrain, whilst the cantor or choir sing verses. The words and music for the congregational part will be printed on the weekly pew sheet.

You will have already noticed we are now singing the Alleluias for the procession of the Gospel.

You are warmly encouraged to join in the singing of these congregational settings. The existing setting of the Gloria by Malcolm Archer will continue to be used in alternation with the responsorial setting.

**Graham Davies,
Director of Music**

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

18 September Georgia Grace Hopkins
Olivia Grace Bishop
Felicity Ellen Hitchman

2 October Ava Louise Priest
Sebastian Jack Massey
Freddie Jason Robert Davies

Weddings

10 September James Webster and April Wyatt
16 September Phillip Macdonald and Samantha Calvert
17 September Christopher Ellis and Rebecca Robinson
1 October Richard Lander and Stacey Tromans

Funerals

23 September Robert Burrows Aged 79
1 October Interment of ashes of Richard Tatler

CHRISTMAS AT ST MARY'S

The reminder from Katey about Christmas Market preparations (see page 8) serves to illustrate that Christmas is fast approaching. Planning is already underway for Christmas services and events at St Mary's, a time that is always busy and creates much demand on the time and care provided by our clergy.

Please remember St Mary's in your prayers and preparations for Christmas. Try to find time to set aside to help with the many tasks we undertake. The delivery of a Christmas card to every home in the parish is an important but challenging task that can only be achieved with the help of as many as are able..... If you need a short road make sure you choose yours early!

And above all remember that the welcome at our Christmas services is for you and all your families and friends. Make time for Christmas!

CHILDREN'S PAGE ANSWERS

BOOTS

There are two matching pairs: 1 and 3, 4 and 6

JUMBLED SHOES

1. Slippers 2. Flipflops 3. Trainers 4. Laceups 5. Football 6. Ballet 7. Sandals 8. Wellingtons

SANDALS IN THE BIBLE

1. God to Moses 2. John the Baptist 3. Father of the Prodigal Son

WORD SQUARE

The nine lettered word is FOOTPRINT

LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF WORCESTER

It's a celebrity world, and whilst we may look down on that, I suspect we are all a bit addicted to it too. I bumped into an erstwhile Dr Who in an Oxford pub once (the actor, not the character), and was more excited than I probably should have been!

The Church has its own set of celebrities. We like to put people like archbishops on pedestals, and sometimes we quite like to knock them off too. Our main celebrities are the ones we celebrate on All Saints Day. Some may well have been commemorated locally, but others are just gathered up into this wonderful 'catch all' festival on 1st November. They are the often unknown, unnamed and unsung heroes of the faith who have simply got on with living out their faith in their own time and place, people who know that God loves them.

Each church has its own particular heroes. This year the Lutheran church worldwide celebrates the man who made the Reformation happen in Germany 500 years ago, a monk called Martin Luther. He was a complicated man – bad-tempered and intense, and he made some dodgy political comments about the Jews and about the poor, which were to have unintended consequences years later. But he also changed the German language for ever, in the same way Shakespeare, the Book of Common Prayer and King James Bible did for English, and he turned the church upside down in a way that affected us all. As one commentator puts it, Luther had one really good strong central idea, that God loves us anyway.

It should not surprise us that Luther had a complex personality. Recently Mother Theresa has been raised to the altar and named a saint in the Roman Catholic Church. We all know the good works she and her sisters did with the least of the least in Kolkata and elsewhere. But we discover that she too was complex – in some of her alliances and opinions, and not least, amazingly, in the fact that for many years her spiritual life seemed barren and dry, more like a wilderness than a fount of living water, a dark night of the soul.

Celebrating the saints is a great idea: it can really inspire us to fresh vision and purpose. But as Fr Harry Williams once wrote, have you ever had to share a house with a saint? We might find their foibles every bit as annoying as our own. None of us are perfect. Celebrities and pedestals are risky, because all of us are complex – it goes with the territory of being human.

So maybe we need to hold on to Luther's core idea as the most important one, the one that saints have known of old, namely that God loves us anyway.



The Venerable 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
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



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