

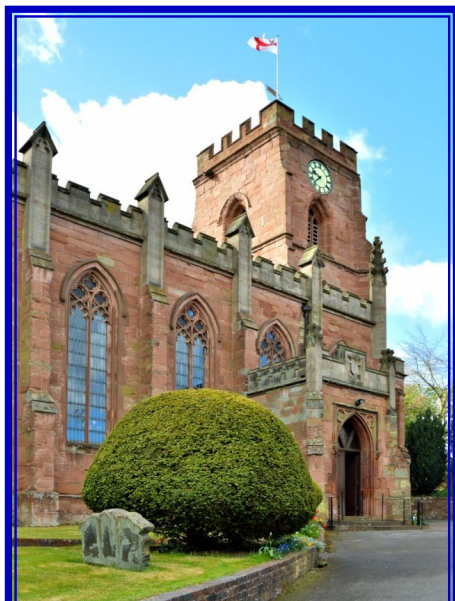
**ST MARY'S
OLD SWINFORD
Parish Church Magazine**

**JANUARY 2017
Online edition**



ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

Parish Church Magazine



HAPPY NEW YEAR

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

JANUARY 2017

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 JANUARY 2017

SUNDAY 1

Monday 2

Tuesday 3

Wednesday 4

Thursday 5

Friday 6

Saturday 7

SUNDAY 8

NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS

Bank Holiday Parish office closed today

School Spring Term begins

7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the rectory

7.30 pm Standing Committee Meeting

10.30 am Holy Communion in Church

Stephen's day off

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Worship Together

The Fair Trade stall will be available after the 10.00 am service

Tuesday 10

Copy date for February magazine

11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft

2.15 pm Mothers' Union Meeting in the Coach House

7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House

Thursday 12

10.30 am Holy Communion in Church

Friday 13

Stephen's day off.

Saturday 14

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

SUNDAY 15

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

3.00 pm Baptism

Tuesday 17

2.15 pm Tea in the Coach house.

7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House

Wednesday 18

Prayer Group meeting

Thursday 19

10.30 am Holy Communion in Church

Friday 20

Stephen's day off

Saturday 21

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

SUNDAY 22

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

6.30 pm Service for Christian Unity

Tuesday 24

2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex

7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House

Wednesday 25

11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge

Thursday 26

10.30 am Holy Communion in Church

7.30 pm PCC Meeting

Friday 27

Stephen's Day Off

Saturday 28

9.30 am Walking Group to Alcester

10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour

SUNDAY 29

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

6.30 pm Epiphany Carol Service

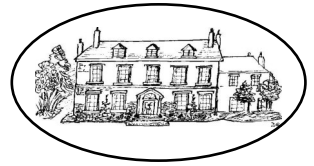
Tuesday 31

7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House

FAIR TRADE

A Fair Trade stall will be available at the 10.00 am service on the second Sunday of each month and, hopefully, at a Thursday morning service. If you might be available to help with the stall at either service please contact Maggie Abbotts.

FROM THE CURATE



Dear Friends

Last week I happened, quite by accident (I was watching an Australian crime drama on BBC4 when they mentioned him) to stumble across the writings of the 13th Century Persian poet Jalaluddin Rumi. Given that I had been wrestling since the start of Advent with the question of what it actually means for God to love us so much that he took on human form to bring rescue, I was surprised by the coincidence. There was one particular quote which grabbed my heart and has stayed with me, reshaping my Advent wrestling. Rumi said that “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”

I would imagine that some of you have entered into the tradition of the New Year and made yourself a resolution to try something new or be someone with an alternative outlook during 2017. If you have I hope that your resolve is still strong, if you haven't I wonder what might have held you back? Did it feel that there was just too much to change? Was it difficult to determine the steps that you needed to take to achieve your goal? Was it due to a lack of motivation or maybe a sense that there was nothing which needed changing? Either way the New Year can bring to the surface in all of us a feeling of restlessness, a sense that we can be more than we currently are, that we can gain a richer experience from the daily pattern of our lives.

During Advent our church services have been focused on the coming of Jesus in three different ways; historically when he was born over 2000 years ago, as Judge at some point in the future and how he can come to us between these two points, if we allow him to be born in our hearts. As God is in control of the first two, the third coming is unique as it requires a response, an engagement on our part.

By allowing Jesus to be born in us, we don't have to wait for the beginning of a new year to become different people. Jesus offers us each and every day the peace, contentment and satisfaction of a life well led if we will only attend to his presence in us. This consideration is not an individual quest to find or win the love of Jesus, for it is already there. Rather this is an exercise in self-reflection as we seek to find and remove all the self-imposed barriers that we have placed in the way of recognising that we are unconditionally loved and cherished by God.

I pray that at the start of this new year, we may all have the resolve to change our lives by exposing our personal discontentments, frustrations and dreams to the love, the radiant light of Jesus. By removing our barricades we will discover that this love will gently form and mould us to be more Christ-like in how we act and live. Being powered by the love of Christ, the light which radiated from that manger in Bethlehem is like having a glowing core inside us. Only this core brings peace to our restlessness, wholeness to our shortcomings and fullness to our sense of purpose.

Grace and peace,
Alex

SERVICES IN JANUARY 2017

1 January Naming and Circumcision of Jesus	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Galatians 4. 4-7	Luke 2. 15-21
	6.30 pm Evensong	A New Year Service	
8 January First Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Josh 3: 1– 8, 14 –end	Heb 1: 1—12
15 January Second Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 Corinthians 1. 1-9	John 1. 29-42
	6.30 pm Evensong	Ezekiel 2.1-3, 4.	Galatians 1. 11-end
22 January Third Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 Corinthians 1. 10-18	Matthew 4. 12-23
	6.30 pm Evensong	A Special Service for Christian Unity	
29 January Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 Corinthians 1. 18-end	John 2. 1-11
	6.30 pm Evensong	Epiphany Carol Service	

CHURCH HEATING

Hopefully, by the time you read this, all of you will have enjoyed the return to a reasonable level of warmth in the church building following the replacement of the heating boiler. At 8.30 am on Friday, 2 December the engineers fired up the new system for the first time and soon the pipes and radiators in church were beginning to warm the air. For the next several days the heating warmed the church gently, to test the system and to avoid damage to the organ. By now we can declare the process to be complete and successful, and one more tale of the seemingly never-ending saga of church maintenance reaches a conclusion.

It is important to recognise that this has been a considerable undertaking in many ways, something that has involved hours of work by many people, not least by our Master of Fabric, Tony Lloyd. The church team has worked with heating engineers and advisors, consultants and fitters to see the installation correctly designed, planned and carried out, always in the hope of achieving the dateline set to ensure the vast majority of our Christmas events could proceed as scheduled. A very big thank you is due to everyone who has contributed to this process.

Alongside the work directly to do with the heating equipment, 'Thank you' needs to be said to all members of our congregations who have coped with the challenges of changing routines during the past several weeks and to all those who have moved items back and forth in order to ensure the church or the church hall have been prepared for services. For the leaders of our worship services there has been much uncertainty, but always they have responded to whatever challenge has arisen and ensured that services have proceeded without interruption in a meaningful and appreciated form. These events have had an impact on everyone in some way or another and we thank you all for your understanding and patience.

We also wish to record our thanks to those who had events planned for 'in church' and have patiently kept track of our updates in hope that there would be no need to seek an alternative location at the last minute. Key to this process has been our Parish Administrator, John Sutton, as he has maintained contact with our many user groups to keep them informed and cared for. We look forward to the success and enjoyment of these events by all who attend and take part.

A special 'Thank you' must be recorded to the team from RHF Heating who have helped us throughout the process and who responded with considerable support once the final go ahead could be given. It was with remarkable speed, skill and precision that the old equipment was removed and the new installed. Several teams and individuals contributed to the whole task, each playing their part to ensure the outcome we so earnestly anticipated. Well done everyone.

The Church Wardens

CHRISTMAS MARKET RESULTS

Like being in a warm church, this year's Christmas Market proved to be another good portent for the future. A wide variety of stalls and things to see, to buy and lots of games to play and chances to win prizes – the Tombola was pretty well emptied by closing time. Our Curate, Alex, opened this year's Market and the hall was immediately filled with eager buyers, some of whom had queued for a good half hour. From the start there was much chatter and laughter and this continued throughout the event. We are so lucky at St Mary's as the continuing generosity ensured a vast range of things for sale, lovely prizes to win on the Tombola and a Christmas Hamper that grew to five prizes, not to forget the chance to win an interesting bottle on the Bottle Stall.

At the end of the day many of our visitors went home clutching jigsaws to make up and a good book to read during the winter months. All the stalls did very well, as is shown in the fantastic sum we made, just under two thousand pounds. The only sad note was that so far no-one has taken home George, the large teddy bear who was shivering in the open entrance hall and desperately in need of tlc having lost an eye in a previous life.

This event was very successful in bringing together the many communities of church and parish and I would like to thank everyone for their kindness in providing donations, time and those who worked behind the scenes beforehand and in the hall on the day. All our work was made worthwhile by the happy buzz in the hall.

Donations of monies are still coming in and the various stalls raised:-

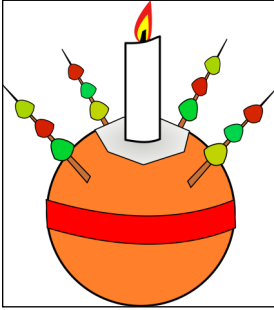
Books	£34.60	Brought forward	£1,064.45
Bottles	167.85		
Cakes	205.00	Raffle for Mum & Pup Pugs	38.90
Christmas Hamper	194.00	Raffle for Scottish Ted	30.00
Christmas labels	10.50	Red & Green Christmas	242.00
Entrance Fees	179.00	Refreshments	112.20
Jewellery	37.00	Tombola	146.50
Jigsaws	62.50	Treasure Island	184.00
Plants and Decorations	122.00	White Elephant	97.30
Quiz for Christmas	<u>52.00</u>	Youth Club	24.50
	1064.45		
		Total	£1,939.85

Katey Fletcher

Thank you Katey for all your hard work and organisation for this event and thank you to all who contributed in any way. It really was a great success.



CHRISTINGLE 2016



The return to services in the church building on 4 December was celebrated by a wonderful experience during the afternoon when, at 4.00 pm, a congregation assembled for the 48th Christingle Service at St Mary's.

There is significance in the number 48 for two reasons at least. Firstly, for an organisation to have consistently supported a particular project for 48 consecutive years is, in itself, a remarkable achievement.

In recognizing the importance of the work of the Children's Society, for which Christingle is a major celebration and opportunity to seek financial support, we

help to contribute to the care of children who otherwise may suffer in extreme need.

Secondly, 48 represents the number of such services at St Mary's organised and coordinated by Wendy Tranter (every year since the idea first appeared) and represents a very substantial achievement by a kind and generous lady who holds the care of children close in her heart and actions. On behalf of all those who will have benefited from Wendy's concern and good work and everyone who has been moved by the wide-reaching importance of the message of Christingle, 'Thank you Wendy'.

But, as Wendy would rightly insist, the biggest recognition of this service should be reserved for the children at its heart. Christingle is a service which puts children in the focus, a service for children at the core, children encouraging support for children, in a manner that is so distinctly child-centred. The delight provided by the musical presentations of talented and growing musicians who played items as part of the service was clearly evident in the applause so generously given.

You can still contribute to the Children's Society at childrenssociety.org.uk



BELL-RINGING

In February 2016 St Mary's Youth Group were invited to a guided tour of the church to explore its history and learn about its activities. When we arrived at the bell tower I was particularly interested to know how the bells were rung and I decided to commit myself to learn to be a bell-ringer. I was only 11 years old when I started and quite small for my age so I knew it would be a struggle. However with the patient teaching of John, Chris and Ray I have progressed to ringing rounds and called



changes. My progress is recorded in my bell-book and I have earned the blue badge. The first service I rang for was the All Souls evensong service and I also rang for the Remembrance Day service. This was very different for me as the bells were muffled so that alternate strikes were softer and sounded like an echo. This provides a more sombre effect which is lovely for occasions such as Remembrance.

Thank you to all the campanologists for sparing their time to teach me and my friend Saffron. We thoroughly enjoy bell-ringing and hope to continue in the future.

Georgia Hawkins

CHRISTMAS BUCKET COLLECTION



In keeping with our normal practice we will be holding a bucket collection throughout the Christmas and Epiphany season. This year the proceeds of this collection will be given to Christian Aid in support of the important work this organisation undertakes throughout the world in areas of need. Thank you for your support.

The Churchwardens

THE COACH HOUSE

The Coach House is a thriving charitable provision that supports several organisations that provide activities, social opportunities, educational challenges and training, recreation and life experience for many people including those with disabilities and special needs.

The Annual general Meeting of The Coach House will be held on **Thursday 30 March 2017** in The Coach House. You are welcome to attend.

TOY SERVICE GIFTS

A letter received from the Churches Housing Association of Dudley and District (CHADD) has acknowledged with thanks the generous donations of toys and gifts collected at our Toy Service on 11 December.

CHADD supports many of the most vulnerable people in our society and the items donated by worshippers at St Mary's will ensure that the true spirit of Christmas giving will provide the best possible Christmas for those in need.

Once again, thank you for your generous support.



FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

NEW YEAR

2017



At the beginning of a New Year many people make **NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS**- Things they hope to do or not do, promises to keep for the coming year. Adults resolutions often involve things like giving up chocolate or losing weight and exercising more.

Here are four Christian New Year Resolutions you might like to try to keep as much as you can.

Write in each box what you might do to help you to keep each resolution. Good luck!

* To say my prayers



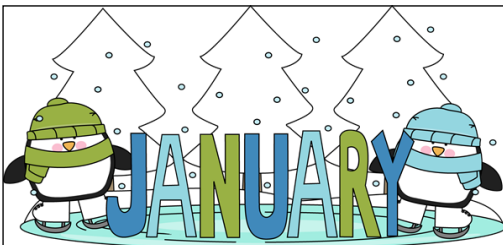
* To go to church



* To help other people



* To read from the Bible



January is a winter month. Can you think of things you can do in January that you couldn't do in the Summer?

CROSS WORD 2

B
O D N O E
L
L
I

How many words can you find having at least 4 letters and using each letter only once. No plurals, No foreign words, no proper nouns/names but verbs ending in 's' are allowed.

You must use the centre letter in every word.

There is 1 nine letter word.

15 is average, 20 is good, 25 very good 30 or more is brilliant!

See page 15 for answers

WORDSEARCH 2

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

CAN YOU FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS?.....



EPIPHANY, ICY, MAGI,
 NEWYEAR, CHILLY,
 LOGFIRE, GIFTS, WINTER, HOPE,
 JACKFRFOST, HEROD, CHILD,
 KING, GOD, STARRY



MUDDY BOOTS

Muddy Boots is the very apt name given to the group that helps to care for our churchyard. To give the organisation its full title, this is Muddy Boots Ground Care Community Interest Company. In the formal language of the company registration, Muddy Boots seeks to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which people with challenging mental health issues or learning difficulties may develop personal skills and seek to maximise their potential. In practice, people with their own special needs are supported to work in activities where they can find success, self-respect and recognition for their learning, achievements and employment.

Muddy Boots came about when the group which previously operated under the umbrella of a much larger charity was closed when the charity ceased to operate. Lesley Tite, who had been employed to lead the ground care team then set out to create a new company, of which she is a director, to ensure the continuation of this much-needed provision and to keep the group operational.



At this stage, the continued support of organisations that bought into the scheme was of great importance. The PCC at St Mary's undertook to reaffirm our contract for ground care for 2016 and has been very pleased to note the success of this new venture.

Muddy Boots is employed at St Mary's to cut the plant growth in a large area to the west end of the church yard. Our contract is for three cuts per year, with the intention of maintaining some degree of control of the plant growth, a relatively neat and tidy presentation of the area and ease of access for those wishing to visit graves in this part of the churchyard. The work team is always very approachable and considerate of other users of the paths. They complete their tasks to a good standard and enable us to achieve a level of churchyard care that would otherwise not be possible.

Other activities feature in an extensive programme of employment for the Muddy Boots team. Various horticultural tasks are undertaken and produce is sold. Wood is cut for kindling and is marketed and a variety of garden seating, bird feeders and insect lodges are built to be sold. The benefit of such activities for those so employed are enormous and the aims of the project are to be commended.

In the hope of expanding the opportunities for making saleable products Muddy Boots is undertaking an appeal for funds to meet a £3000 target to provide new woodworking tools. If you feel able to support this appeal please send you gift to **Muddy Boots Ground Care CIC**, Leapgate Farm Wilden, Stourport-On-Severn. DY13 9JH. If you prefer, Tony Tatford will forward it on your behalf.

NEWS OF JONATHAN BRYAN

A recent letter to Judy Hall provided the following update of Jonathan who has severe cerebral palsy and has learned to communicate using a spelling board.

Dear Judy,

I thought you and people at St Mary's might like to know that Jonathan was confirmed earlier in the month at Malmesbury Abbey by Bishop Lee, the Bishop of Swindon. It was a very moving service, during which Jonathan's testimony (which he had written the previous week) was read out by his godfather, to be met with a 3 second silence and the Bishop muttering 'wow' under his breath.



Jonathan has written about the service and put a copy of his testimony on his blog (under any more recent posts, it's called My Confirmation and was written on 3rd November).

We have a big week next week as Jonathan is going to meet the Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families in London to present his petition for children like him to be taught literacy in special schools, and to talk about it with him. At the end of the week he is meeting his literary hero Michael Morpurgo in Exeter.

I hope all is well at St Mary's. All the best,

Chantal

And this is Jonathan's blog.....

My Confirmation

Last night was the best service of my life, when I publicly dedicated myself to Jesus Christ; and I was particularly honoured that so many friends and family could share my special service with me. During the service my wonderful godfather read out the testimony I had written:

Living Life in all its Fullness

With Jesus as my saviour, companion and friend, I have lived my hours here with happiness in my spirit and content calm in my soul. Knowing He is with me; cradling me in pain, sheltering me from darkness and beckoning me forward, has given me the strength and serenity to look life in the eye and smile. Like the constancy of the second hand of a clock, Jesus inhabits the quaver beats of my life; and as that beat slows, I look forward with excited anticipation to the day I will see Jesus; and live together with Him in His garden forever. In the meantime, I cleave to Jesus: my faith and my life.

The Author of Life

Beauty breathing through my soul,
Cradling arms tending my frail frame,
Sheltering rock whilst life's storms rage,
Dancing with quaver beats of joy,
Anticipating Love's beckon,
Home in the garden forever.

© Jonathan Bryan

MUSIC NOTES

A bumper edition of Music Notes this time. Sadly the problems with the heating postponed our plans to introduce some changes to the music of the Sunday Eucharist. So during January 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. Also sung Alleluias for the procession of the Gospel will be introduced, to be sung by all.

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.

A special Service of Evensong for the Season of Epiphany will be held at 6.30 pm on 29 January. The service will include seasonal readings and anthems. Music not often heard, composed by Mendelssohn and Eccart is included and the choir will sing a choral setting of the Nunc Dimittis. Do please support this addition to the calendar.

Thanks to a most generous bequest from Wilf Lewis who was a chorister some year's ago, it has been possible for St Mary's to purchase a new hymn book. It is the latest edition of Ancient and Modern. This excellent publication contains not only the familiar, but a good selection of the best hymns composed in recent years, examples of which we have been using recently as Hymn of the Month. The editorial standard is very high and the texts and music have not been tampered with as is sometimes the case. A good proportion of the congregational copies will have the melody line included which I know you will find helpful. The books have been ordered and will be introduced for worship early in the New Year.

**Graham Davies,
Director of Music**

CHILDREN IN NEED



Thanks to all the Thursday Morning Communion Group on Thursday 17 November for helping NO LIMITS member Pippa Williams to raise £49 through buying her home made cookies to raise funds for Children in Need.

We are very proud of Pippa's efforts and thank all of the members of our church family who made Pippa so welcome and made her effort a success.

Thank You.

Chris Morgan



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

We were delighted to be joined by Stephen, Jean and Alex for our annual meeting of readings and carols.

Our readings with Christmas themes covered such varied topics as decorating the tree, bells, sending and receiving Christmas cards and a spider's web. Sally played us a carol that was new to many of us called "Mary did you know?" sung by Aled Jones.

We sang some favourite carols and under Stephen's expert guidance, we attempted to learn a new piece of music. It was a round with six sections each with different words and different music. Sadly we did not manage all the sections....Maybe next year?

We all enjoyed home made mince pies with our tea, provided by Janet Shaw and Sally Frost.

Sally presented a plant to Anne May to thank her for being Branch Leader. We all expressed our delight at seeing her health improve greatly over the year and wish her continued progress.

It was a very pleasant afternoon and a lovely way to end our year. We look forward to welcoming everyone in the New Year with our first meeting on 10 January when we will have Tony Maidment speaking about his work in the Church Army and the Magic circle.

Margaret Ager

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18 - 25 JANUARY

Later this year the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation will be commemorated across Europe. This provides the backdrop for the 2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which runs from 18 - 25 January.

Prepared by the Council of Churches in Germany, the theme under the heading Crossing Barriers is 'Reconciliation - the love of Christ compels us,' based on the Biblical text 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 and prompted by Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation Evangelium Gaudium.

A prayer for the week:

Almighty God,

you sent your son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself.

*We praise you because through your Gospel, in all parts of the earth
a community of love has been gathered together,*

and that in every place your servants call upon your name.

May your Spirit awaken in every community a hunger and thirst for unity.

Amen

Our St Mary's service will be at 6.30 pm on Sunday 22 January. We will be very pleased to welcome you and to share this hope for unity.

Answers to Cross Words 2

Bend, bind, blend, blind, blond, blonde, BLOODLINE, bond, bone, boned, boon, dine, done, ebon, eidolon, enol, lend, lien, line, lined, Lino, lion, loden, loin, lone, loon, noble, node, noil, noodle, olden

CONGRATULATIONS IF YOU FOUND MORE

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

MARMALADE PUDDING (Celebrate Burns Night on the 25 January)

Knob of soft butter, to grease the dish
About 300g marmalade
2 large eggs, separated, plus 2 extra egg yolks
200ml double cream
100g caster sugar Icing sugar, for dusting
1 teaspoon orange flower water, whisky or Drambuie (optional)
150g white breadcrumbs, slightly stale is fine

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/Gas 4. Butter a 1.5 litre ovenproof dish.

You want the marmalade to have a loose consistency, like a thick compote. If it is very thick, 'let it down' a bit by mixing with a little boiling water, then leave it to cool completely. I often make half the quantity and bake it in a shallow pie dish, bake for 30-40 minutes.

Mix the marmalade with the 4 egg yolks, the cream, caster sugar and orange flower water or alcohol, if using, until creamy and thoroughly blended. Set aside a heaped tablespoonful of the breadcrumbs and stir the rest thoroughly into the mix.

In a separate, scrupulously clean bowl, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks. Gently fold them into the batter with a metal spoon. Carefully pour into the prepared dish and sprinkle the reserved breadcrumbs over the top.

Stand the dish in a roasting tin. Pour boiling water from the kettle into the tin so it comes halfway up the sides of the dish, then carefully transfer to the oven. Bake for 50-60 minutes until set – it should have a little quiver about it, and not be too solid.

Remove the dish from the roasting tin. Dust the pudding with icing sugar and serve with cream, yoghurt or ice cream.

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE...

Burns' Night will bring haggis with whisky - but this marmalade pudding with Drambuie sounds every bit as appealing. Strong arguments to stay in Scotland for a traditional tippie. We can have great fun touring the country's distilleries and doubtless you have your favourite malt.

Although I love the smoky, peaty Islay whiskies, perhaps on this occasion we should eschew this style in favour of something more fruited. Wick's Old Pulteney scores well here. Talisker certainly has the sweetness; and the heather with honey whiskies of Balvenie and Dalwhinnie deliver those classic flavours of Scotland - but it's not really orange marmalade! Maybe a small measure of Drambuie can not be bettered. I often find its rival Glayva too sweet, but it could give Drambuie a run for its money here. Grand Marnier heads the field in the range of liqueurs which carry a genuine orange flavour.

Meanwhile, what do we find in the world of wine? A marmalade pudding begs a lovely intense dessert wine really doesn't it? Perhaps not a dried-grape wine with its raisined, figgy flavours. Indeed, noble-rot botrytized wines will answer the call better; and none finer than Tokaji Aszu : always a delight. Cadillac, one of the smaller Bordeaux appellations for sweet wines will also fit the bill - and is much friendlier on the purse than nearby Sauternes. And step forward Aldi, whose Germanic origins bring to our shelves a Trockenbeerenauslese dessert wine from Austria. It is produced near Neusiedlersee, the famed sweet wine area of the country on its border with Hungary. Reasonably priced too, it's a gem.

Enjoy your wine-sipping.....

Richard W. B. Ryan

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

A group of sixteen walkers met on Stourbridge Junction station on Saturday 26 November for the 09.48 train. We hadn't realised we were travelling on one of the busiest Saturdays of the year. (Think Christmas markets, cancelled trains and 'black' shopping days.)

After changing trains at Galton Bridge we got off at Dudley Port and, once out of the station, crossed the usually busy dual carriageway to walk up a flight of steps on to the Birmingham Canal tow path. After several hundred yards we turned right on to the Netherton Tunnel Branch and walked towards the entrance to Netherton Tunnel. This is a surprisingly wide tunnel with a tow path on either side and room for two canal boats to pass. It is almost 2800 metres long.

As requested, everyone had brought a torch and so, off we went, through the tunnel. It is reassuring that, right from the beginning, you can see light at the other end! There were several ventilation shafts on route and lots of puddles, but none very deep. We were fortunate to see a boat coming towards us in the tunnel, although it was a strange experience to have a conversation with the occupant who you couldn't see for the bright light of his headtorch.

The end of the tunnel brought us out at Bumble Hole Nature Reserve where we stopped for drinks at the cafe run by an army of volunteers. We then continued along the tow path, turned by Lodge Farm Reservoir into Saltwells Wood and walked down to the Saltwells Inn where we enjoyed a very good meal.

After lunch we walked down to Coppice Lane/ Saltwells Road and crossed over to walk through Mushroom Green and Mousesweet Nature Reserve emerging on to the road opposite Cradley Heath railway station where we had only a few minutes to wait for the train back to Stourbridge Junction.

Sue and Tony Wakeley

See note on page 18

Just a note about the walk in February.

There has been a change to the order of leaders for February and March. The February walk will be led by Sue and Tony Wakeley and will be different from the one on the programme. We will be taking the 09.48 train to Dorridge and walking via Hockley Heath and canal to Whitlocks End. Travel passes or day rover ticket required. For lunch there is a very short diversion to Wedges Bakery where there is a small cafe selling sandwiches, soup, fruit, cakes etc. No main meals are available here.

The walk for March will be as advertised for February.

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

20 November Harry Thomas Meade

Weddings

No weddings this month

Funerals

21 November	William Charles Freeeston	Aged 97
14 December	Gerald Malcolm Hale	Aged 85
14 December	Harry Molineux	Aged 86

PLOUGH SUNDAY

Plough Sunday, the Sunday after the feast of Epiphany or "Twelfth Night" marked the end of the mid-winter Christmas festivities. The twelve days of partying and celebrations finished. Plough Monday was back to work. But before work started, the plough (often a communal one for the whole village) was brought to church to pray for a blessing on it and the work it would do. After the service it was taken (often with dancing) round the village and villagers were invited to make contributions to the cost of its upkeep and the upkeep of the Church that had blessed it.

This year the Chaplaincy for Agriculture and Rural Life will be joining the annual Plough Sunday service at Tibberton Church at 10.30 am on 8 January. All are welcome to come along to share in this service, during which a traditional plough will be blessed.

In medieval times some ploughs were kept in the parish church, and some churches kept a 'plough-light'. In days when work was scarce in winter, the observance of Plough Sunday looked forward to the time of sowing with the promise of a harvest to come. It has been reintroduced in some parishes as a focus for asking a blessing on human labour near the start of the calendar year.

Diocesan News

LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF DUDLEY

It is the time for New Year's resolutions again. I wonder if you have made any, and whether if so, they have been broken already! Last year I resolved to lose weight, regain my fitness, and train to run a 10k, which I hadn't done for a few years. I'm proud to say I did it! As the pounds fell off, I completed the Worcester City 10k in September, and knocked seven whole minutes off my personal best. An enjoyable achievement, but one for which I had to work very, very hard.



Resolutions about health and exercise are good to make and keep, but even more important is maintaining our spiritual health, our journey of discipleship. In the letter to the Hebrews we read,

“... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Just as we can only run a physical 10k if we train for it, we can only run the race set before us spiritually if we exercise spiritual discipline. The New Year is a good time for a spiritual health check, and an opportunity to resolve to build some good training patterns. To strengthen our discipleship muscles, we may wish to commit to reading a Bible passage each day, and meditating on it, using notes, a commentary, or one of the wide range of apps now available. We might try a new pattern of prayer – perhaps lighting a candle for an allocated time each day in a regular place, creating space to encounter God, or booking in a quiet day or retreat at Mucknell Abbey or Glasshampton Monastery. It might even be a good time to find a ‘training partner’ with whom you can pray, or join a group in your church seeking to grow together.

In this season of new beginnings, let's commit to run our race with perseverance, knowing we have Jesus as our coach and Personal Trainer.

Nicki Groarke

DUDLEY CLERGY MEET AND PLAN

On Thursday 17 November, members of the clergy from across Dudley Borough were invited by Bishop Graham to gather together to discuss the opportunities and challenges of working in their particular part of the Diocese and what a future vision for ministry in Dudley might be. Amongst the speakers were ministers from other localities and Sarah Norman, CEO of Dudley MBC who presented the Council's vision for Dudley and suggested five challenges for the Church of England locally. The opportunity was welcomed by the clergy who took part and provided a positive outlook for Christian outreach in the area.

We are grateful for the sponsorship of the following businesses.



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



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



H. PORTER & SONS
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS
Funeral Directors for over 160 years
H. PORTER & SONS
Old Church House,
60 South Road, Stourbridge,
West Midlands, DY8 3UJ
01384 395048
www.hporter.co.uk
170 YEARS 1843 - 2013

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
A positive philosophy of care

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**

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

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

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

**Sponsors are invited to use this
space to advertise their business.**
**For more information please contact
the editor-see page 3**

FAIR TRADE
St Mary's fair trade stall will be
available at the 10.00.am service each
month on the second Sunday.
Items will also be available at the
Thursday morning service.
Look out for details.