

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

FEBRUARY 2017
Online edition



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Parish Church Magazine



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FEBRUARY 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
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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 FEBRUARY 2017

Wednesday 1	9.30 am Full Staff Meeting
Thursday 2	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 3	Stephen's day off
Saturday 4	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 1.00 pm Wedding
SUNDAY 5	FIFTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY
Tuesday 7	Open the Book Team visit to OCEPS 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House
Thursday 9	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 10	Stephen's day off. Copy date for March magazine
Saturday 11	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 12	THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT Worship Together The Fair Trade stall will be available after the 10.00 am service
Tuesday 14	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
Wednesday 15	10.00 am Prayer Group meeting
Thursday 16	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 17	Stephen's day off
Saturday 18	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 19	SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT
Monday 20	Half Term week
Tuesday 21	2.15 pm Combined Tuesday Tea in the Coach House
Wednesday 22	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 23	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 24	Stephen's Day Off
Saturday 25	9.30 am Walking Group – Dorridge to Whitlocks End 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 26	SUNDAY BEFORE LENT Church Action on Poverty Sunday
Tuesday 28	SHROVE TUESDAY Open the Book Team visit to OCEPS 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

I always think of February as a bit of a dreary month. The days are still quite short, and the weather can either be gloomy and wet or clear and icy. There's really not much to look forward to. There are however two things which I have considered over the years to work in favour of February: firstly it is a short month, and secondly it has Valentine's Day in the middle of the month.

Valentine's Day is a ray of sunshine at the centre of this dark month. I know that it is fantastically over commercialized, and many of the cards are over-sweet or perhaps over-saucy for our tastes. And yet I would wish to champion the day because it is a day which focusses on love, and in a world which seems to have the focus of its attention on dark and destructive things, a day which has at its centre the idea of love, cannot be a bad thing.

Of course love comes in many forms, and can sometimes be twisted and manipulated to show itself as self-centred and controlling. But that is not the fundamental understanding of love which many people share on this day. Instead they celebrate an appreciation of another person for who they are, and the love they declare for that person is outward looking and essentially giving rather than grasping in nature.

It is this idea of love which is at the centre of the Christian faith. We have just celebrated the gift of Jesus to the world as an act of the love. At Easter we celebrate the natural consequence of that loving gift which is rejected by the world as Jesus is crucified, and yet death cannot hold back the power of love and Jesus is raised from the dead.

In the New Testament we read a great deal about love as the key to living a good life. Jesus, and many others, distil the law into two phrases: 'love God and love your neighbour', whilst in his first letter John clearly states that your love of your neighbour is an expression of your love of God, the two must go together as they complement each other.

So perhaps in the middle of this rather dark and dreary month just take the time to think about who you love, and perhaps tell them. That demonstrates your humanity, your love of your neighbour and also your love of God.

Stephen Agnew

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY 2017

5 February Fifth Sunday of Epiphany	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	1 Corinthians 2. 1-12	Matthew 5. 13-20
	6.30 pm Evensong	Amos 2. 4-end	Ephesians 4. 17-end
12 February Septuagesima Third Sunday before Lent	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Amos 3. 1-8	Ephesians 5. 1-17
19 February Sexagesima Second Sunday before Lent	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Romans 8. 18-25	Matthew 6. 25-end
	6.30 pm Evensong	Proverbs 8. 1, 22-31	Revelation 4.
26 February Quinquagesima Sunday before Lent	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	2 Peter 1. 16-end	Matthew 17. 1-9
	6.30 pm Evensong	2 Kings 2. 1-12	Matthew 17. 9-23

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

We continue to provide the means for people to save their used postage stamps. A new, strong box has been placed on the cupboards at the back of church for this very purpose. The stamps are sorted, some being sold to stamp collectors, and the proceeds going to charity. We have been asked to leave a large border of the used envelope around the stamp as without this the stamps are unusable for philatelic purposes.

PREPARING FOR EASTER 2017

Activities available during Lent 2017

Lent Course - Are you able to attend and/or help lead?

We are in the process of putting together a Lent course which will run throughout the five weeks of Lent, looking at and reflecting upon specific female figures from the bible. Each session will last between 75-90 minutes and will be set up as a home group, with a variety of groups running throughout a week at various times and in various locations. To this end we are looking for friends to volunteer to host a group (you just need to be able to offer your lounge and refreshments) and also to lead a group (a thorough briefing will be given before Lent begins). It doesn't matter whether you can commit to leading or hosting to mornings, afternoons or evenings as we are hoping to get a spread over a week.

You don't need to be either a host or a leader to get involved in the course. We will be looking for people (you don't need to come to St Mary's or attend any church) to come along and join a group. Once the days, times and venues for each group are finalised there will be information available about how to join in.

If you feel that you could offer your house as a host venue, or would like to lead a group (leadership can be shared between two people or more) or would just like further information please speak to either Stephen or Alex. Further information about the course content and times of groups will be circulated in due course.

Quiet Day - Praying farewell

We will be running a quiet day at Holland House on Wednesday 15 March from 10.00am until 4.00pm.

The day will be structured around a series of reflections on the spirituality of change; exploring re-orientation when we lose something which has given our lives meaning and value.

The day will include morning and afternoon refreshment, lunch and Holy Communion and will cost £25 per person (excluding transport). The cost and location of the day shouldn't prevent anyone from attending. If you anticipate problems with either of these or would like further information then please don't hesitate to speak to either Stephen or Alex. A sign up sheet will be available at the back of church in due course.

Revd Alex French

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

The clock strikes three, the low notes of the organ rumble and then fade away. In red and white robes the choir stand together in front of their conductor who, after a pause, raises his arms and points to one of the young boy choristers. He steps forward and begins to sing, his lone voice echoing the words of 'Once in Royal David's city, stood a lowly cattle shed'.

It is estimated that some 30 million people tune in to the BBC's broadcast of Nine Readings and Carols from King's College, Cambridge every year. It is as if this service alone, for many, stands for all that is Christmas; the history, the music, the words, the setting. In this magnificent building, its founder, King Henry VI decreed in 1441 that 16 'poor and needy boys, of sound condition and honest conversation', along with six professional 'singing men' should raise their voices to the glory of God inside his new chapel.

But this service does not date back to such times, and is, in fact, a much more recent introduction with interesting associations.

Most of us are familiar with the story from the Western Front when, in 1914, German and British troops, together, sung the melody and their own words of '*Silent Night, Heilige Nacht*'. Amongst those who lived through the horror, the indescribable, unimaginable brutality and squalor of life in the trenches was a young army padre, Eric Milner-White, in civilian life the chaplain of King's College. When he returned to Cambridge in 1918, this imaginative, sensitive and tremendously kind man set about reforms at King's. Facing the reality of the reactions of the men who had fought alongside each other, Milner-White did away with enforced religious worship for his students, recognizing what he regarded as the 'inevitable under present circumstances'.

Instead, Milner-White set about making the chapel's special occasions, at Easter, Advent and, above all, Christmas - a feast of colour, beauty, warmth and simplicity that would appeal to a grieving generation, disillusioned with faith and hardened by war.

And so the service of Nine Lessons and Carols was born. With no sermon, no psalms, no Latin, it took its inspiration from a format devised by the Bishop of Truro and was open to anyone who wanted to attend. Central to the event was the College's choir who led the simple re-telling of the Nativity story through readings and song.

The college authorities were horrified at the radical departure from tradition but the new service, held just six weeks after the guns in Europe had fallen silent, was an instant success. At its core is Milner-White's 'bidding prayer' of welcome, in which his fallen comrades were movingly commemorated. 'Let us remember before God', says the prayer, 'all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore - that multitude which no man can number.'

And to return to that lone boy chorister..... No one knows until the conductor's arms are raised to beckon forward his chosen one, who will sing that solo verse. Several boys will have been coached in the preceding days but the final decision is last minute...it helps to avoid the worst of nerves so often the product, not so much of the musical responsibility but, of the excitement and encouragement loaded on the boys by their families.

With thanks to Margaret and Mike Woodall.

CHRISTINGLE 2016

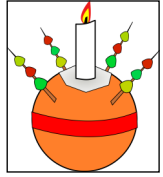
Our service celebrating 48 years of Christingle was a joyful family occasion. What a delight to see so many children in church.

All the young instrumentalists excelled themselves, and sincere thanks are due to all who contributed on this special day.

The total raised was over £250.00 including Gift Aid.

Funds collected from Christingle celebrations make a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable children who have nowhere else to turn.

I hope that our event at St Mary's was an enjoyable and memorable one for all who took part.



Wendy Tranter

A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM LIZ GALE

I am fortunate to be able to use our Parish magazine as a means of sharing with you all a collective thank you for your help and support during the past weeks following my fall and consequent hospitalisation due to a broken hip. Thank you can seem such simple and easy words to use but I hope my thank you expresses the gratitude I have for all that has been provided for me.

So many people have kindly enquired of my well-being, sent me cards or made contact by telephone. Several managed to visit me whilst I was in hospital and many have continued to offer help and assistance since I have been at home. It has been an unusual experience to welcome a visitor but to have to leave them to make the tea for us. I really have appreciated these visits and the opportunities to maintain my contact with my church community.

Moving around has become easier, and I am walking with less discomfort than when I first began the steps towards recovering my mobility. Progress towards a fuller recovery is slow and sometimes uncomfortable but I realise the importance of perseverance despite the challenges, if the outcome is to be as good as it can be.

I have been particularly moved by the welcome I have received when I have been able to get to church. The warmth of the welcome given to me and the thoughtful actions and care shown has been very sincere and has made me realise how fortunate I am to have so many people care for and about me.

With my very best wishes and thanks to you all.

Liz Gale

2017 Subscriptions

We hope you have enjoyed the past year of your subscription to this Parish Church Magazine. Subscriptions for the 2017 editions, which remain at £5.00 for eleven issues, are now due and will be collected by the person who delivers your magazine in the next few weeks. Thank you for your support. Contributions of articles for inclusion or ideas for articles are always welcome.



CHRISTMAS CRYPTIC QUIZ



The London Underground Station Challenge

Thank you to all who purchased our quiz sheets at the Christmas market and through other club and group outlets; and special thanks to those who submitted completed answer sheets. It was evident from the returns and discussions with competitors that the puzzle had posed a fascinating, if not frustrating, challenge which was enjoyed by families and individuals during December.

We received sixteen completed answer sheets and we were impressed with the overall achievements. Although there were no totally correct entries, several came in with only one or two wrong answers and some of these could have almost been acceptable. For example the answer to 'Colourful construction' was Redbridge but Crystal Palace was offered as a clever alternative. Several entries suggested Whitechapel as an answer to 'Pale Place' where the correct solution was White City. We also liked Kensington as a solution to the clue 'Perform in the middle' and Maida Vale for 'Needle woman' – the answers we were looking for were Acton Central and Pinner.

Congratulations to the four entrants who had only one incorrect answer - they were Marion Thompson, Anne Crooks, Elizabeth Fourness and Jane Beale / Eleanor Fussell duo. We awarded the prize to Liz as her only incorrect answer was Whitechapel instead of White City and this was deemed to be the nearest acceptable alternative. Corrected answer sheets are being returned to entrants or may be collected from the message / letter board in the church porch.

For readers who would like to sample the challenge here are a few clues with answers below.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Rabbits would feel at home here | 7. The vicar's jealous |
| 2. Capital card game | 8. University troupe |
| 3. King of trees | 9. A power cut in a chip shop |
| 4. Girl's toy in a tin | 10. Letters to the Corinthians |
| 5. Tools of a farrier | 11. Agricultural crayons |
| 6. Fowl lager | 12. Miners will |

*1. Warren Street, 2. London Bridge, 3. Royal Oak, 4. Barbican, 5. Hammersmith
6. Cockfosters, 7. Parson's Green, 8. Oxford Circus, 9. Blackfriars, 10. St Paul's
11. Chalk Farm 12. Colliers' Wood*

The quiz was designed by Linda Upton for St Andrew's Parish Church, Farlington, Portsmouth where my sister worships – and also coincidentally where Tony and Sue Tatford were married! We acknowledge Linda's willingness for us to use it at St Mary's.

Alec Beevers

FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

WINTER MONTHS



On February 14 we celebrate Saint Valentine's Day. Although not a lot is known about St Valentine on this day many people exchange greetings cards and ladies often receive red roses or sweets as a token of love.



SAINTS FUN FACTS

by John Sheppard

A kind hearted Roman priest, he aided young Christians being persecuted by Claudius II and was imprisoned. While in custody, he converted 46 members of a guards family to Christianity! Upon discovering this, Claudius sentenced him to death. He is the patron of love, young people and happy marriage.



St. Valentine

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CAN YOU FIND THE 'PAN' WORDS?

1. Pan- - - A food store
2. Pan- - A flower
3. Pan- - A bear
4. Pan- - - - A wild cat
5. - - - -pan You cook in it.
6. - - -pan- - - A friend
7. Pan- - - - - A fun show
8. -pan- - - A dog
9. - - pan- get bigger
10. Pan- - - - a Shrove Tuesday treat.

Later in February we begin to think about Lent. During the 40 days of Lent, Christians remember the time when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning his work for God. During this time Jesus was tempted several times by Satan, but he was able to resist.

Often, during Lent, people give up a favourite food or something else they enjoy a lot as an example of sharing and going without, just as Jesus did.

Try to give up some of your break-time tuck at school and give the money you save to charity.

CROSS WORD 3

Y
D E H G N
O
R
U

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

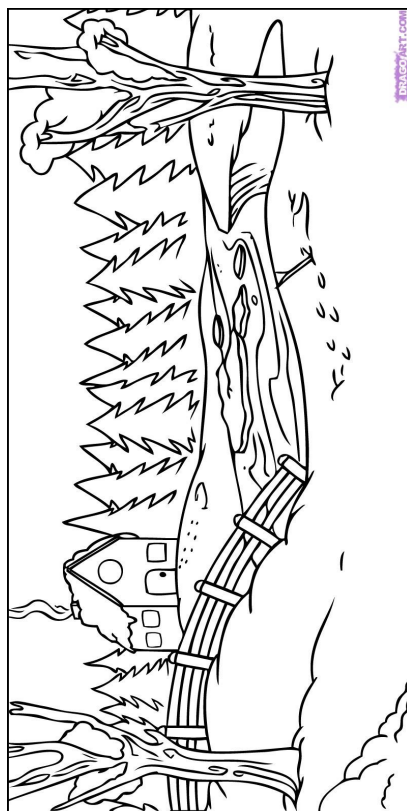
WORDSEARCH 3

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

CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS?

SNOWBALL, HOARFROST, ICE, SKIER,
SLIDE, SKATER, ROBIN, ICICLES,
FREEZE, VALENTINE, HEART, LOVE

COLOUR ME NEATLY



A NEW STEWARDSHIP OFFICER FOR THE DIOCESE

At the end of January, the Revd Alison Maddocks will begin her new role as Stewardship Officer for the Diocese of Worcester. Alison will work with parishes to help them think about and review their financial giving as part of their Christian discipleship.

Revd Maddocks comes to Worcester from the Diocese of Derby where for the past five years she has been a Leadership Development Officer in the diocesan office and vicar of Breadsall, a village two miles outside of Derby city centre. Prior to this Alison was a workplace chaplain in Nottingham and Birmingham and before ordination had 18 years experience working in the head office of Boots in Marketing and Personnel.

Alison said: "I'm really excited about this new post and further exploring the theology behind good stewardship. Discipleship in the everyday has been a strong part of my ministry to date and I'm looking forward to building on this. The Church has been slow to realise the changing nature of the world and the need to re-engage with the material as part of our worship. I'm looking forward to getting out and meeting people, finding out where they are and hearing their stories."

Stewardship is an important part of the Kingdom People vision. Christian discipleship entails not only commitment to the life of prayer, to study of the scriptures and to receiving the sacrament in public worship, it also shapes what we do with our time, talents and money.

Alison has moved to the Diocese with her two relatively grown-up daughters, husband and aged dog! The family love messing about in boats, as well as walking and are looking forward to having a whole new area to explore.

BISHOP JOHN TO LEAD VISIT TO PERU

Bishop John last visited Peru in early 2012, and there have been major changes since then and since the last group visited in 2014, with three Peruvian bishops consecrated in July 2015 and an indigenous diocesan bishop in place since April last year. The aim of this visit is to strengthen relationships with the new diocesan leadership and to discuss the direction the partnership might take in the future.

The group will travel around the Diocese, hopefully visiting at least three of the five areas of work: Lima, Arequipa and Chiclayo. Recent months have been a period of transition and although the Diocese of Peru is still struggling financially, real efforts are being made to encourage sustainability.

Those in the group who have visited before will be renewing old friendships, and will hopefully provide support and encouragement to the

people of the Diocese and the projects they support. As always, there will also be many things to learn from the Peruvian hosts.

Bishop John said: "I'm very much looking forward to going to Peru again to visit our Christian sisters and brothers there. Our link is a precious one which I value greatly."

Please pray for the trip and for our brothers and sisters in Peru.

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY

This year the theme of Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 26 February, is 'poor church, transfigured church'. On Transfiguration Sunday, Church Action on Poverty is asking: if our churches are to be communities that put the poorest first, how must we change? What must we let go of? What sacrifices are we called to make? How can we allow God to transform us into what Pope Francis has called a "poor Church for the poor"?

Why not hold a collection or soup lunch – your donations can transform more churches through listening and engaging with people in poverty. Or perhaps you could use the worship materials on the website (www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday) to reflect and pray for change.

There is a special prayer for Church Action on Poverty Sunday:

You call us, God
You call us out of a harsh land and into freedom
You call us out of despair and apathy
You call us into a vision of another way of living
You call us, Jesus
You call us into hope and friendship
You call us to build your kingdom
You call us to break bread with you and with the hungry
You call us, Holy Spirit
You call us to transformation
You call us to shine into the darkness
You call us into the world to change it
Give us the strength to follow where you call.

Amen

(Marie Pattison, Katherine House)

Church Action on Poverty Sunday takes place each year on the last Sunday before Lent. It was part of Poverty & Homelessness Action Week until 2014.

MUSIC NOTES

The new hymn books have been introduced into church and are being used for services. Alongside the words edition, there are copies with the musical melody notation available and some large print copies for those who may find these useful. Please ask those people on sides duty for the version you prefer.

Graham Davies
Director of Music

A NEW CHAPLAIN TO THE QUEEN

Buckingham Palace has announced that the Revd Georgina Byrne, Residentiary Canon at Worcester Cathedral, has been appointed as a Chaplain to the Queen.

This honorary role will be in addition to Georgina's duties at the Cathedral. Chaplains to the Queen preach occasionally in the Chapel Royal in St James' Palace, London. They wear a scarlet cassock and special bronze badge. There are currently 34 honorary chaplains to the Queen; when appointed, Georgina will be the youngest.

Georgina said:

"I feel extremely privileged to have been honoured in this way. The letter from Buckingham Palace arrived, like a very special gift, just before Christmas and I've been smiling ever since."

The Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge, said:

"Canon Georgina Byrne is an outstanding priest and I am delighted that this has been recognised by Her Majesty the Queen. The great honour bestowed on her is good news for us at the Cathedral and in the Diocese: we can all bask in reflected glory."

The Dean of Worcester, the Very Revd Peter Atkinson, said:

"All at Worcester Cathedral will be delighted by the news of this honour for a popular and respected member of the cathedral community."

The appointment as a Chaplain to the Queen is made by Her Majesty herself following a nomination, generally from the candidate's diocesan bishop and the Bishop of Carlisle, the Rt Revd James Newcome, currently Clerk of the Closet and as such head of the College of Chaplains of the Ecclesiastical Household. The last Chaplain to the Queen in the Diocese of Worcester was the former Archdeacon of Worcester, the Venerable Frank Bentley.



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

We were pleased to welcome seventeen members to our first meeting of the year, although there were several notable absences due to ill health.

Unfortunately our speaker was unwell and unable to attend. Our Branch leader Anne May was also unwell, so Brenda Selby and Sally Frost stepped in at the last minute to "fill the breach" with help from Marjorie Ferguson.

In our service we heard a reading and prayers that were appropriate to the season of Epiphany and the New Year, and sang a favourite hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness".

We then proceeded to our Annual General Meeting.

Anne's report of the previous year was read, which detailed our activities. Thanks were expressed to everyone who had a part in keeping our Branch running smoothly, whether it was knitting teddies for all children baptised at St Mary's; helping at a coffee morning to raise funds for Mothers' Union projects; collecting monthly and annual subscriptions; providing toiletry bags for the Women's Refuge; paying bills or sending cards and emails.

We again remembered the passing of our dear friend and fellow member Janet Blaxland in the summer. We gave thanks for her life and service to Mothers' Union and remembered Mike and family in our prayers.

The Financial Statement was approved and donations were acknowledged. We learned that through our fund raising we were able to make donations to 'Away from it All Holidays', which provides a welcome break away for families who otherwise would not be able to afford one, The Women's Refuge, a safe place for abused women and their children, and Wheels for Africa which helps towards the cost of providing transport to Community Development Co-Ordinators in very remote regions of Africa.

There was no other business and our meeting concluded with tea and biscuits kindly provided by Audrey Tranter and Janet Shaw.

The members would like to thank Anne May for her lovely gift of scented sachets which were in all our New Year packs, received at our last meeting.

Our next meeting will be on 14th February when our speaker will be Maureen Baker whose topic will be "My passion for flowers".

We wish all our members who are unwell, a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing them in February.

Margaret Ager

PAN answers....

Pantry, Pansy, Panda, Panther, Saucepan, Companion, Pantomime, Spaniel, Expand, Pancake.

Answers to Cross Word 3

DOUGH, DOUGHY, ENOUGH, GREYHOUND, HERD, HERO, HERON, HOED, HOER, HONE, HONED, HONEY, HORDE, HORN, HORNED, HORNY, HOUND, HOUR, HOYDEN, HUED, HUGE, HUGER, HUNG, HUNGER, HUNGRY, HYDRO, HYDROGEN, REHUNG, ROUGH, ROUGHED, ROUGHEN

CONGRATULATIONS IF YOU FOUND MORE

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

EASY TOMATO SOUP

Almost a store cupboard recipe as I always have these ingredients in my cupboard. It does taste and look very much like the most popular tomato soup. I make it for my grandchildren instead as it's a healthier option and cheaper. Feel free to add salt if you must but I find a stock cube takes care of the seasoning.

500g carton passata
1 potato peeled and chopped
1 onion peeled and chopped
1 vegetable stock cube and water
Milk
Olive oil

Fry the onion gently in the oil without browning until soft. Add the potato and passata, crumble in a stock cube, add boiling water; enough to cover the vegetables. Simmer for 30 minutes until the potato is soft. Cool slightly before blending in a food processor until smooth. Gradually add enough milk until you have the correct consistency. Re-heat and serve.

Ann Jennings

AND FOR THE WINE...

Tomato, onion, olive oil, potato : farmhouse fare, which sounds like a candidate for a rustic red doesn't it ? Except here we are making a soup and significantly, we are using passata. Tomatoes, freshly plucked from the plant match wonderfully with a cool climate Sauvignon Blanc - indeed "tomato plant aroma" occurs periodically as a tasting note for this grape. However, the passata brings a rather different dimension. We may not be talking rich intense sun-dried tomato, but we are certainly contending with a note of sweetness which we should reflect in our wine selection.

The other factor here is the quantity of milk you choose to add. If you only add a little and retain much of the richness of the passata, perhaps an Amontillado sherry might be just right - an ideal sipper at the start of the meal.

However, if you increase the milk/passata balance, then an off-dry white wine might suit better. Sparkling ? Riesling Sekt is difficult to beat as an off-dry bubbler, but its clean fruits are not the answer here. Instead, an off-dry English wine could be a sound choice. Avoid anything too light-bodied and low in alcohol as it will be overwhelmed unless you go for a really milky soup - which doesn't sound a good sell to me! However, there are some promising options. The Bacchus grape is always described as Sauvignon-like. Steer clear of anything leaning too much to citrus and lime-blossom flavours. Plump instead for a Madeleine Angevine from a good producer: Sharpham Estate on the banks of the Dart valley in Devon still wins for me.

Enjoy your wine-sipping

Richard W. B. Ryan

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

There was no walk in December

A reminder 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.

CHRISTMAS AT ST MARY'S

We hope you enjoyed a joyous Christmas with the opportunity to share with family and friends, to celebrate this great festival and to take part in some of the many services at which the real story of Christmas was retold.

On Sunday 4 December our 48th Christingle service was held, organised by Wendy Tranter and led by Revd Stephen Agnew. With the musical contributions of several young people and the flickering light of symbolic Christingles, the message of support for children throughout the world was shared. Over £250 will have been donated to the Children's Society as the outcome of this service.

The Christmas tree was fully decorated in time for Old Swinford Hospital staff and students to hold their Carol Service on 9 December. It was a great pleasure to once again host the school, friends and visitors and to see the church so full. Congratulations to all who took part and worked so hard to present such a moving service at the end of the Autumn term.

The following day saw the church equally filled and busy all day as members of the local 'Got to Sing' choir practised and, later, performed at their evening Christmas Concert. The church was busy from early morning as furniture was moved and technicians placed speakers and laid cables to provide the acoustic support needed for such an event. In the evening there was barely an empty seat as supporters of the choir members enjoyed the musical outcome of months of training. And, of course, the volume of sound rose even higher with the congregational songs and the always competitively performed 'Twelve Days of Christmas'. The busiest hour of the day, however, was reserved for the end of the concert as a small team cleared the debris, removed the speakers and cables, replaced the furniture, vacuumed the carpets and readied the church for the 8.00 am service, by then, just nine hours away.

The Toy Service has, for many years, proved to be a very well-supported and meaningful occasion. Often with the help of Father Christmas, who pops in to show his support, gifts of toys donated by members of the congregation are assembled around the Christmas tree. These are donated to the local Women's Refuge where they help to provide a Christmas experience for children who, with their mothers, might otherwise face a very bleak time. Your gifts were received with great thanks and much appreciation.

The Crib Service at 4.00 pm on Christmas Eve has become an increasingly popular service and opportunity for families to share the Christmas story with the active involvement of children of all ages as the figures are added to the crib. Many children came dressed as characters in the story, something we hope to encourage further in future years.

The First Communion of Christmas, two services on Christmas Day and another on Boxing Day continued to keep our clergy busy whilst many of us were already enjoying an extended break with families and friends. Thank you Stephen and Alex, Kanthi and Roger and our musicians and choir members who carry and fulfil such a responsibility for our collective worship. Enjoy the opportunity for your own relaxation when it comes along.

It has been very encouraging and worthwhile to have been able to welcome so many people to services throughout the Christmas Season. This warm welcome is extended to you to services throughout the week at all times of the year. Please feel able to come along to St Mary's and to join in with our services whenever you wish. The church is also open each day for personal visits and prayer.

PARISH REGISTER

Weddings

17 December	Thomas Webb and Leanne Pardoe Larry Cartwright and Sarah Houlston
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Funerals

2016

17 December	John Bayley	Interment of ashes
20 December	William Geoffrey Smith	Aged 86
22 December	Anne Veronica Harris	Aged 65

2017

5 January	Jean Shillingford	Aged 87
9 January	Joan Moreton Holdcroft	Aged 88
11 January	Barbara Joan Sutherland	Aged 91

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER

Andreas Whittam Smith is best known as the man who started the Independent newspaper. Equally significantly, as First Estates Commissioner, he has effectively 'run' the Church Commissioners for quite a few years – and done so brilliantly. He's stepping down soon and late last year he addressed the House of Bishops. I was struck by what he said – that he feels more hopeful about the Church of England now than he has done for a long time.



That's quite something coming from a seasoned old hack like Andreas and I found it very encouraging. Why did he feel so hopeful? He felt the Church is at long last waking up to the fact that 'business as usual' is no longer an option and, more than that, is taking bold and innovative steps to reform and renew.

The scale of the challenge is enormous: The proportion of people in our country who have much understanding of the Christian faith, let alone practise it, is declining fast. What is needed is nothing less than the re-evangelisation of England. That's not an invitation to despair though, but a challenge to which, in the power of the living God, we can rise.

One exciting development in our diocese is the *Calling Young Disciples* project. Ruth Walker, its director, has already begun her ministry here and three Mission Enablers have already been appointed and will be taking up their posts soon. I hope and pray that their ministry will bear much fruit – not just to reverse the 'institutional decline' of the Church but bring people to a vibrant faith in the living God revealed in Jesus.

The renewal of the Church is not just up to them though; responsibility for it lies with us all. Please pray that we may all, as Kingdom People, fulfil our vocation to witness effectively to God's great love for everyone in Christ. May He make us instruments of His love, His compassion, His justice and His freedom.

+John

REVD ALEX FRENCH

Many thanks for all the Christmas cards and gifts which you gave me over our Christmas festivities. The warmth of your spirit and generosity is very touching and much appreciated.

Many thanks,
Alex

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