

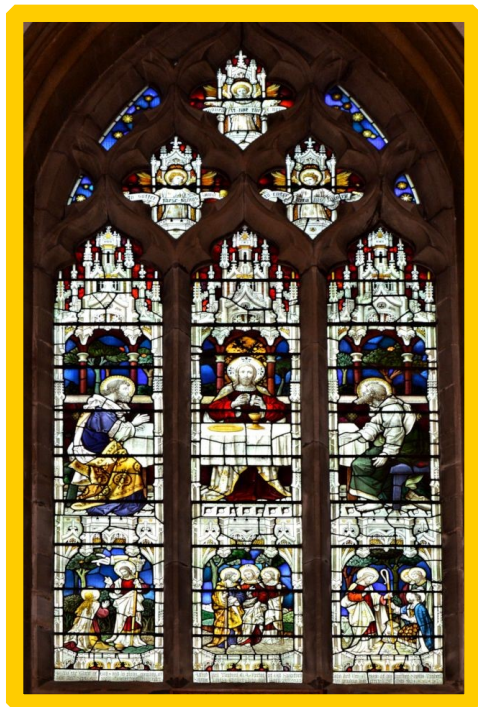
**ST MARY'S  
OLD SWINFORD**  
Parish Church Magazine

**MARCH 2017**  
Online edition



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

## Parish Church Magazine



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**MARCH 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
<b>Priest in Charge Day Off:</b>	Friday
<b>Curate's Day Off</b>	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	

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

**Magazine e-mail address:** [stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk)

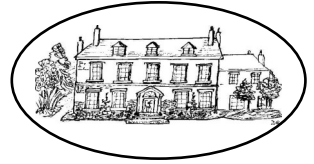
## ENQUIRIES ABOUT WEDDINGS, BANNS OF MARRIAGE, BAPTISMS.

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 MARCH 2017

Wednesday 1	7.30 pm Eucharist for Ash Wednesday
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
<b>SUNDAY 5</b>	<b>FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
Tuesday 7	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 April magazine
Saturday 11	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 12</b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
	10.00 am All Age Worship The Fair Trade stall will be available after the 10.00 am service
Tuesday 14	Open the Book Team visit to OCEPS 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	Parish Quiet Day at Holland House 7.30 pm Magazine Committee 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
<b>SUNDAY 19</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
	3.00 pm Baptism
Monday 20	7.30 pm PCC Meeting
Tuesday 21	2.00pm Easter Experience launch at Ham Dingle 2.15 pm Tea in the Coach house. 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course 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 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 26</b>	<b>MOTHERING SUNDAY</b>
	10.00 am All Age Worship
Monday 27	10.00 am and 1.30 pm Easter Experience events in church
Tuesday 28	Open the Book Team visit to OCEPS 2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the narthex 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course in the Coach House
Thursday 30	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 7.30 pm Coach House Annual General Meeting
Friday 31	1.30 pm Easter Experience launch at OCEPS

**Details of Lent Course activities, dates, times and locations are available on the noticeboard in the narthex and by the main gate. If you cannot get to read these please contact the parish office, 01384 441003 for the information you require.**



Dear Friends

Have you made a Lent commitment yet? Perhaps you are struggling to make up your mind. Maybe you have identified a change of behaviour to commit to, but it hasn't been easy to keep up. Possibly you can't see the point, questioning why anyone would want to try and change their behaviour anyway.

Last week I was having a chat with a friend over coffee. By chance a song that we both liked started to play in the cafe which, like a piece of bait, caught our attention drawing us into a conversation about pieces of music which stirred our hearts. The discussion continued for some time as we reminisced over what we were doing when certain songs were in the charts. Unexpectedly our nostalgia became slightly more personal as we started quoting lyrics from songs which had become almost like totem poles in our lives; words that had held a deep spiritual significance at key times in our existence.

My friend explained that there was a line in Leonard Cohen's song Anthem which he had returned to too many times over the years. These words, held a special significance as a reminder to him to pay attention to those places in his being where dissatisfaction and hurt lurked. These are the sites of wounds, the voids which we aren't approach in case we slip and tumble into who knows where. The collection of words drawn from the chorus simply say 'There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in'.

The more I have thought about those words, the more I have come to realise that we all have cracks in us and that these cracks are a good thing. Whether they are caused by the discomfort from living in the wrong way, the ache of guilt hanging on from the past or the self-imposed suffering from viewing ourselves negatively (I am sure that you can name a lot more causes of cracks), most of us are held back from living life to the full. But cracks are necessary because they act as a conduit for light. Without a crack we would be sealed off, immune to the growth that light facilitates.

Lent is a time of seriousness and restraint, a period of preparation before we enter the movement from death to life during Holy Week. It is the season where we turn inward to our own hearts, seeking out those spaces of emptiness in us, those cracks in our wholeness which we so often ignore. This may involve giving up a habit which in some way restricts our sense of wholeness or it may mean making a determined effort to cultivate a new way of being which will make us feel more alive.

Lent gives us the opportunity to follow Jesus out into the wilderness, to recognise and struggle with our inner demons, to name and feel the sorrow that comes with a deepening awareness of the cracks which are in all of us. I hope and pray that this Lent we all have the courage and strength to find our cracks, turning them gentle to the source of light which is Christ. For it is only by allowing the light to penetrate through our fractures that we will discover the healing and new life gifted to us through the Resurrection at Easter.

*Alex*

## SERVICES IN MARCH 2017

<b>5 March First Sunday of Lent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Romans 5. 12-19	Matthew 4. 1-11
	6.30 pm Evensong	Deuteronomy 6. 4-9, 16-end	Luke 15. 1-10
<b>12 March Second Sunday of Lent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	WORSHIP TOGETHER	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Numbers 21. 4-9	Luke 14. 27-33
<b>19 March Third Sunday of Lent</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Romans 5. 1-11	John 4. 5-42
	6.30 pm Evensong	Joshua 1. 1-19	Ephesians 6. 10-20
<b>26 March Mothering Sunday</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am	ALL AGE WORSHIP FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY	
	6.30 pm Evensong	Micah 7.	James 5.

### 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.

## LENT COURSE

This years' Lent course will focus on five remarkable women (two first testament and three second testament) from the bible and will be delivered through home groups which will meet at the same time during the five weeks of Lent. The course is designed to be a relaxed and informal discussion on a passage of Holy Scripture, to help us draw closer to God during Lent. All that is needed to join a group is a willingness to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, to enter into a discussion and to be open to how the Holy Spirit might move you.

Groups will run at the following times:

Leader	Host	Time	Start date
Sally Frost	Malcolm Frost	Monday 2pm	6th March
Alex French	Joan Barwick	Tuesday 11am	14th March
Kanthi Ariaraj	Alex French	Wednesday 7pm	8th March
Roger King	Janet Beevers	Thursday 7pm	9th March

As each session is designed to be a stand alone discussion, it doesn't really matter if you can't make each of the five sessions during Lent. Sign up sheets are available at the back of Church or alternatively contact Alex or Stephen to reserve a place for yourself.

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## MESSY CHURCH

The first Messy Church of 2017 will have taken place on 22 February by the time you are reading this edition of the Parish magazine. In a response to what has been perceived as a preference for timing, our Messy Church events are, for this year, being arranged so they fall during school holiday times. Please note in your diaries April 12, May 31 and August 16, dates for future Messy Church meetings. And please note also the time..... from 11.00 am until 1.00 pm.



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## A SPECIAL EVENING SERVICE

The Evening Service on Sunday 29 January retained some of the Liturgy of Evensong and celebrated the end of Epiphany with a series of specially selected readings and choral items and music. The readings, presented by Tina Timms, Angela Price and Marjorie Ferguson focussed on three elements of the Epiphany season, the Visit of the Magi, (Matthew, Chapter 2); the baptism of Jesus by John, (Matthew, Chapter 3); and, (Matthew, Chapter 10), Jesus sending out his disciples to begin their work. Each of these readings were reflected in the anthems sung by the choir which contributed much enjoyment and ambience to the service. Thank you to all who helped to make this a special occasion.

## NEW HYMN BOOKS

'Music Notes' in our January issue announced the introduction of new hymn books for our services at St Mary's. Graham Davies, our Director of Music, observed that the latest edition of 'Ancient and Modern' contains 'a good selection of best hymns composed in recent years' and the subtitle of the book is 'Hymns and songs for refreshing worship'. While it is perhaps too early to assess the effects of the new hymn book on our worship we are already singing new hymns in our Parish Communion and Evensong services.

Statistically the new edition offers 847 hymns compared with 533 in the earlier edition so there is clearly a much wider choice. During January 2017 we have had 9 'new' hymns (including the hymn of the month) so the wider selection is providing change. As I am not particularly musical, adaptation to new tunes is often difficult and, like many conservative 'traditionalists', I prefer some of the more familiar hymns. However it is pleasing to note that most of our popular favourites are still in the new edition and are being included in our services.

I made a brief check on one of my own favourites, 'All people that on Earth do dwell' during Evensong on Sunday 15 January. This hymn is popularly known as 'The Old Hundredth' because the words are drawn from Psalm 100. It was also hymn number 100 in the old edition of Ancient and Modern and I presumed that this also contributed to its common title. I was pleased to find it in the new edition but now at number 357, suggesting that its numbering in the old edition was coincidental! It is of course the words as much as the tune which contribute to the enjoyment of hymns and 'The Old Hundredth' is full of joy and rejoicing. The melody is also very memorable and the arrangement by Vaughan Williams which was composed for Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation is so majestic. \*

Another happy coincidence during my brief search at Evensong on 15 January was that hymn number 100 in the new edition of the hymn book is 'How brightly gleams the morning star' which happened to be the anthem for that service and having the words at hand enhanced the enjoyment of the choir's performance.

Acknowledgement of the bequest by Wilf Lewis for the provision of the new hymn books has been made during services and in the magazine, and we look forward to their continuing contribution to our worship.

**Alec Beevers**

*\*The familiar original tune is attributed to Louis Bourgeois (1510 - 1559) who was a French composer and one of the main compilers of Calvinistic hymn tunes in the middle of the 16th century. References quote the Old Hundredth as 'one of the most famous melodies in all Christendom'.*



## FLOWER GUILD



For Lent Revd Alex French has organised an Experience Easter event similar to the Experience Harvest of a few years ago. Members of the Flower Guild will create displays at different points around the Church to represent the events of Holy Week leading up to the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Children from Ham Dingle Primary and Oldswinford Primary schools will visit Church and take part in activities relating to each display. The visits will be on Monday 27 March and during the week beginning 3 April. On Friday 7 April parents will be invited to bring their children to Church after school to see what has been created during the week.

Volunteers will be needed to help with the children's visits. Anyone wishing to help with this event please sign the sheet at the back of Church or contact Alex or Sally (377146).



## EASTER LILIES



The Church will be decorated for Easter on Saturday 15 April from 9.00am. Anyone wishing to contribute towards the cost of the lilies in memory of loved ones can do so by putting donations in an envelope with the name of the person to be remembered and giving it to one of the Church Wardens or to Sally Frost. Donations can also be put in yellow gift aid envelopes. Please mark these "For Flower Guild". Thank you very much.

**Sally Frost**  
**01384 377146**

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## CAN YOU HELP?

There are always opportunities for people to become more involved in any of the activities and duties that help the church to work smoothly. From dusting and cleaning the brass, helping with refreshments after services or on Saturday mornings, supporting work with children's groups, as sidespersons, Eucharistic Assistants, readers, members of the PCC, helping to care for the churchyard, contributing to the magazine, all these tasks need a team of people who are available to share the duties as they are able and available. If you might be interested please ask a member of the clergy or a warden....or anyone else you may feel happy to approach for further details. Whatever help you may feel able to offer will be very much appreciated.

## **A PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG DISCIPLES**

At the start of April, the first three Mission Enablers will be starting work as part of the calling Young Disciples project.

Calling Young Disciples (CYD) is about working with churches across the Diocese to help them strengthen their engagement with children, young people and their families so that more have the opportunity to respond to God's call to be Jesus' disciples and to grow in their love for him.

Mission Enablers will be an important part of this team. They will spend some time offering support and advice to all parishes across the diocese, working with the Children's and Youth Officers to identify parish needs. They will also each be placed with an individual parish, working with the leadership team to look at developing the relationships with children, young people and families which are already in place.

CYD Project Director, Ruth Walker said: "The Mission Enablers are not there to do the youth and children's work for the church, but to help them develop and resource it, seeking out new and sustainable ways to engage with families. Each placement will last around a year, at the end of which the Mission Enabler will move on to another church, but will continue to keep in touch with the church they've left to help consolidate the progress made."

The first three Mission Enablers to be recruited are Anne Batchelor, Helen Laird and Adam Legge. It is hoped that further Enablers will begin in September.

Stourbridge Deanery is fortunate to be in the forefront of this project where one of the Mission Enablers will be concentrating their work. Initially focusing on development work at St Thomas', the allocated Mission Enabler will spend the second year of their work based at St Mary's, Oldswinford. We look forward to extending a warm welcome and to developing enlightening and productive ideas in support of our valued team of committed parishioners who contribute to our mission at Youth Club, Children Together, St Mary's Toddlers and in local schools.

As an introduction to the development of this project Revd Ruth Walker is to speak to the PCC at the next meeting on 20 March.

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

..... To Jean Norman, 86 from St. Wulstan's Church in Worcester, who was recently presented with the Wulfstan Cross by Bishop John, an award which pays tribute to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the life of the Church in the Diocese of Worcester.

..... And welcome to Anne Batchelor, Adam Legge and Helen Laird, the newly appointed Mission Enablers, part of the *Calling Young Disciples* Team.

## FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

# PREPARING FOR EASTER

### "As mad as a March Hare"

This saying comes from the idea that, during the month of March, as the hares recognise the coming of warmer times, they behave oddly, racing around, jumping and 'boxing' other hares.



### March 1st is St David's Day.

**St David is the Patron Saint of Wales.**

David founded a large monastery in West Wales where the monks lived a simple life, prayed for many hours each day and worked very hard in the fields. David was very active in spreading the Christian faith amongst the pagan tribes of the region.

On St David's Day Welsh people often wear a daffodil or a leek, both symbols of Wales and many people



celebrate at events called an Eisteddfod that include much singing by choirs, dancing and the reciting of poems.

### WORDSEARCH 3

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

### CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS?

ASH, LENT, FASTING, MOTHER,  
SPRING, CHICKS, STDAVID,  
LAMBS, FLOWERS, HARE,  
DAFFODIL, WINDS

### CROSS WORD 3

B  
E I P L N  
R  
T  
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



Mothering Sunday is a day when mothers are honoured by their children, often with greetings cards, gifts of flowers or chocolates and perhaps the treat of household tasks being done for them on that day.

The origins of this day come, perhaps, from several different sources...

Mothering Sunday was a day in Lent when the fasting rules were relaxed in honour of the Bible story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

Mothering Sunday was the day each year when people would visit their 'mother church', the main local church where each person would have been baptised.

Mothering Sunday was the one day a year when young boys and girls 'in service' were allowed the day off and were able to walk home to visit their mothers.

Whatever the origins of the day, Mothering Sunday is a special occasion when we should celebrate all that our mothers do for us.....and then to remember this throughout the year.



## STATISTICS FOR MISSION

Every year, each parish is required to make a data return to the church authorities. The questions asked seek information about the number of regular church attenders, the numbers that attend at Easter and Christmas, and, in more detail, attendance during the month of October. Details of special services, baptisms, weddings and funerals are requested along with details of new developments (known as Fresh Expressions) such as Messy Church.

The purpose of the statistical survey is to pursue the aim of the Church of England, “to facilitate the growth of the church in numbers and in depth of discipleship.” This is part of the overall Church of England project of Renewal and Reform which may be best served by starting from a firm foundation of knowledge of local and national trends. The data is presented in a publication Statistics for Mission 2015. \*

The annual return of data relating to services and attendances at St Mary’s in 2016 has recently been completed and this has been filed with the church authorities. It is difficult to draw accurate conclusions from a small amount of data but there may be patterns in our local and national data that may need to influence how we respond in the coming months and years.

Overall, throughout the country, just under 1,000,000 attend a church service each week. This number has shown a steady decline in the past 10 years of between 10% and 15%. According to the survey, in 53% of churches attendance numbers have not varied by any significant amount. In 37% of churches a decrease in attendance has been recorded whilst in 10% of churches there has been an increased attendance. At St Mary’s the numbers reflect the Worcester Diocese pattern of a decrease in attendance, something that probably reflects, in part, the age distribution of the population and associated difficulties of getting to church. Of course, we are constantly working to address this trend, to attract new and more people to our services and to consider the range of activities offered at St Mary’s for the people of Oldswinford.

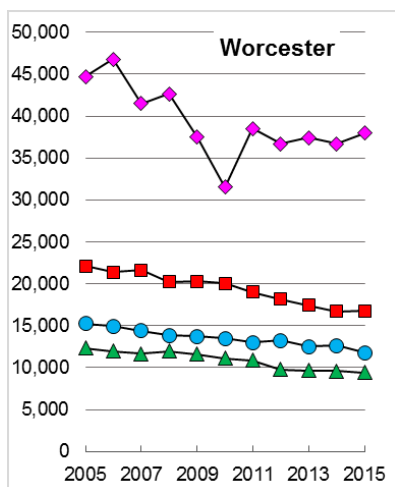
One of the positive messages in the data for St Mary’s is the steadily increasing participation in Messy Church. This combination of activities, fellowship, food and worship has a special appeal for some and provides a multi-faceted approach to introducing younger children to the Christian faith. If you have never experienced Messy Church do look out for the next one and come along to share the experience. It can be a very rewarding and a refreshing experience of sharing our faith with others.

The ‘Open the Book’ initiative that operates regularly at Oldswinford Church of England Primary School is also a very substantial and successful example of work with young people by a committed number of parishioners.

The Mothers' Union members who help at such occasions would be able to support the obvious evidence of the high number of baptism services held at St Mary's - 33 in 2016. This is obviously an important rite of passage for local people who bring their children to be formally named and welcomed into the Christian Faith. One of the challenges we seek to address is how to retain these families as regular members of our congregation and to encourage them further with their participation in the church family.

The various events organised for reflection and worship during Lent and the Easter Experience, which is significantly, but not exclusively, directed at local children, provide some exciting opportunities for new and long-standing members of our church to meet and investigate ideas together. Again, do try to take note of when these events are scheduled and to come along if you can. I am sure there will be offers of assistance should you need help with transport.

**Attendance trends for Worcester Diocese**



From top to bottom these graphs illustrate :-  
 Christmas attendance  
 Easter Attendance  
 Usual Sunday attendance  
 Average adult weekly plus Child attendance

Of the 44 Church of England Dioceses, 26 have a higher percentage participation in services figure than Worcester. We have to ask why? And we have to ask why just 2.4% of 'Christians' in the Worcester diocese regularly attend a Church of England service, a figure well below the national average.

Of course, statistics can often be interpreted in several ways. The report seeks to identify the facts as presented by the data but very limited interpretation is attempted. It may be difficult for parishes to glean much of significance that may help to direct their actions in response to identified trends.

One area of future importance will be the work that is being initiated through the appointment of Mission Enablers to address the issue of involving more young people and families in church activities. More information about this can be found on page 9.

In due course a financial report has to be prepared and, alongside the financial accounts which are now ready for the auditors; this will, no doubt, present a further challenge for us all to consider.

\* The full report can be viewed at .....  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3331683/2015statisticsformission.pdf>

## THIRTY YEARS AGO

An article in the parish magazine for March 1987 described how, on the first Sunday of February, the cadets of the Air Training Corps paraded and attended a service at St Mary's in celebration of the anniversary of its formation on 5 February 1941. There was much encouragement and praise for the smart turn-out of the cadets and for their commitment to a training programme that will benefit them individually and society as a whole.

The cadets were addressed in a sermon on the theme of citizenship, a theme drawn from one of the three aims of the ATC as set out in its Royal Warrant...."to develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship."

In 1987 there were many concerns that challenged the concept of good citizenship....racial unrest towards Asian communities, litter issues in St Mary's churchyard, 'Aids' was being presented as an international fear and Wapping featured a serious industrial dispute. The concept of a good citizen was presented as someone who recognises what is good about their country but is always seeking how to make it better through a passionate, thoughtful, loving and critical practice of caring for one another.

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## FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

During Fairtrade Fortnight (27 February to 12 March) campaigners, businesses, schools and places of worship show their support for the farmers and workers who grow our food in developing countries.

However hard farmers work to provide the things we depend on, millions in developing countries still aren't paid what they deserve. When we come together we can change the way people think about trade and the products on our shelves - the Fairtrade movement is made up of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in their communities for Fairtrade. Their actions help shoppers to make choices that change the lives of farmers and workers.

This year, the Fairtrade Foundation is encouraging people to take a Fairtrade break and take a moment over tea or coffee to think about whether they are feeding exploitation and how they can take action.

Edson Maotchedwe, from Malawi, is a Fairtrade tea farmer and father of seven. Edson's co-operative has invested Fairtrade Premium in building a maternity wing and school, a new bridge, clean water and an ambulance.

This was life-saving when two of Edson's children suffered from malaria. "I believe Fairtrade has already started playing a role in helping me realise the future for my children and children of our area," he says.

But there is more to do. "My thoughts almost every night are preoccupied by worries of how I can improve the welfare of my family. I have children and a wife to look after and it is difficult to raise proper income in our country. So I always ponder how or what I can do to improve our lives as a family."

Find out more about Fairtrade fortnight at: <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

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

Seventeen members attended our meeting on St Valentine's Day — a day when love and flowers are specially celebrated.

Our opening hymn was "For the beauty of the Earth" and the service was led by Sally who spoke about evocation of memories of flowers in her family.

During Lent the church is bare of flowers, but when we celebrate Easter and the resurrection, festival and memorial flowers will be placed in church which bring joy to us.

Our speaker, Maureen Baker, spoke on her "Passion for Flowers." When she was seven years old she was a bridesmaid and carried a posy of anemones. After the wedding she dismantled it and floated the flowerheads on water and decided at that moment to work with flowers.

At 16 she obtained a scholarship to train as a florist in Birmingham with Margaret Tregoning. She became her chief decorator and assistant and fulfilled many special assignments like providing a huge arrangement when Rackhams store opened. During the Queen Mother's visit she arranged a special floral basket for her and at that time designed a special posy which was sent to Princess Margaret on the birth of her son David.

After her marriage Maureen had a gap when her children were young but refreshed her skills and knowledge with a City and Guilds qualification at Halesowen College. She became a freelance florist with commissions for weddings, funerals and many special assignments.

Her beautiful and inspirational work are a great feature in St Mary's, especially at festival times. Her passion for flowers continues.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th March at 2.15pm in the Coach House and will focus on the Wave of Prayer.

A further date for your diary is Friday 3rd March 10.30 at St Thomas' Church when we join with others to celebrate the "Women's World day of Prayer."

All are welcome

**Dawn Nex**

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### Answers to Cross Word 3

BLIP, **BLUEPRINT**, BURP, ERUPT, INEPT, INPUT, LUPIN, LUPINE, PELT, PENT, PENULT, PERI, PERIL, PERT, PIER, PILE, PINE, PINT, PLEB, PLIER, PRINT, PRUNE, PUNIER, PUNT, PUNTER, PURE, PURINE, PURL, RIPE, RIPEN, TRIP, TRIPE, TRIPLE, TULIP, TURNIP, UNRIP, UNRIPE

**CONGRATULATIONS IF YOU FOUND MORE**



## **THIS MONTH'S RECIPE**

### **ROAST RADISHES**

Very little work is needed for these roasted vegetables. Unlike some vegetables that take a while to roast, these roast in 10-15 mins.

Serves 6-8

600g radishes  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1-2 tablespoons chopped chives  
Sea salt  
Garlic crushed

Pre-heat the oven to Gas 7/220 C. Slice the radishes in half from top to tail.

Put the oil, garlic and salt into a bowl. Toss the radishes so they are coated evenly. Tip onto a baking tray, turn all the radishes cut side down. Roast in the hot oven for 10-15 minutes. Sprinkle with the chives before serving hot. Any left can be added to salads

Sometimes I sprinkle sesame seeds over them in place of the chives.

### **ROASTED BEETROOT**

Beetroot has become very trendy in the last year or so. In our house it's always been on trend. Pomegranate molasses similarly is another food fashion and one I have embraced. If you don't have it you can substitute Balsamic vinegar but watch them carefully to stop them overbrowning.

Scrub beetroot really well. Trim off roots and leaves. Cut into smaller segments. In a bowl pour over olive oil, rub well into the beetroot. Put them on a baking tray, cover with foil and bake for approximately 40 minutes at 190 C/Gas 5 until just tender. Remove the foil and pour over a little pomegranate molasses, season with salt and continue roasting until crispy and fully cooked.

**Ann Jennings**

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

Hmm.....this is a strong contender for a most difficult wine match! Perhaps we are enjoying our roasted vegetables as an accompaniment to a roast meat - maybe new season lamb as spring approaches. However, for vegetarians and lovers of creative dishes, let us examine the ingredients as presented and see if we can find a decent wine pairing.

The acidity of the beetroot suggests something white; whilst the molasses will invite a note of sweetness in our liquid selection. A fortified wine such as a Verdelho Madeira is often our destination when we have bolder flavours to contend with. However, a little sipper is not always what we want with our meal. So, let's revisit one country, whose white wines we often dismiss and on this occasion delve further. Italy produces many whites which are light in body and flavour. Soave, Orvieto and Cortese all match that description. They may work well as an aperitif or with light fish and creamy pasta dishes, but can be easily overpowered.

In southern Italy, reds hold sway generally, but there are a few white wines which defy the national characteristic. The Greco grape certainly has much greater body and in Sicily we find two more candidates. The fortified wine Marsala has declined in popularity in recent decades. It is produced from three grapes: Catarratto, Inzolia and Grillo. As Marsala's star fades, these varieties are being systematically reduced in planting acreage. Catarratto is of only modest quality. However, good varietal unfortified wines are still made from Inzolia and more especially Grillo. These wines possess character, body and enough fruit to contend with even the bold flavours present here. Give it a try!

Enjoy your wine-sipping .



**Richard W. B. Ryan**

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

The Parish walk in January started from the Swan Hotel in the old Roman town of Alcester when 18 walkers set out in the dry after a rainy early morning.

We left the free public car park and wandered along the High Street passing the gold painted post box with a plaque commemorating the gold medal achieved by Nick Skelton at the 2012 London Olympics. Bearing right past St Nicholas's church we turned right at the corner of the road to go down Malt Mill Lane.

Malt Mill Lane which leads from the market square down towards the River Arrow, is notable for the survival of numerous medieval timber framed buildings. Whilst their demolition and replacement were called for in some quarters,

the owners Stratford-upon-Avon District Council had a vision of retaining and converting the existing buildings for use as sheltered housing for the elderly. They now form a very picturesque example of what can be achieved with sensitive renovation of older buildings to create a provision fit for the twenty-first century.

At the bottom of Malt Mill Lane, we turned left through public gardens along the footpath by the side of the River Arrow. Reaching the Old Stratford Road, we crossed and proceeded along the lane opposite into Oversley Green Village, before crossing over the River Arrow.

At the road junction we took the hedged footpath behind a row of houses, football field and driving range before turning right passing near Oversley Hill Farm.



Turning right we went under the A46, then turned right again into Oversley Wood. Following the path for about 400 yards we turned left to follow the main track. It was soon coffee time and we stopped for the now traditional January hot mulled wine.

Continuing along the track we eventually turned left to arrive at the edge of the wood. Walking along this boundary to the corner of the wood we continued ahead along a hedged track to reach Farm Lane with Oversley Castle on a hillock to the left. Turning right along the lane we joined the Heart of England Way, passing grain silos at Lower Oversley Lodge Farm. Crossing the A46 again by footbridge we continued down Primrose Lane before turning left at the T junction with Mill Lane. A right turn between mobile homes, (one of which looked very precariously supported by columns of breeze blocks) led to a footbridge over the River Arrow where the road then continued back to the car park.

Lunch was at the Swan Hotel where we were made very welcome and were joined by Katey Fletcher. Food was excellent, both for value and quality and we were thanked for not going into the pub with our very muddy boots on.

During lunch, the sun was beaming through the window making a perfect ending to a good walk.

**Malcolm Frost**

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**PARISH REGISTER**

**Baptisms**

15 January	Scarlett May Taylor Jack Thomas Westwood
5 February	Joseph Henry Douglas Clifton

**Weddings**

4 February	David Eeles and Amanda Skelding
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**Funerals**

26 January	Geoffrey Payton	Aged 88
28 January	Dennis Guider – interment of ashes	
6 February	Jack Richards	Aged 97
8 February	Frederick Rubery	Aged 75

## LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF DUDLEY

Judging by various conversations that I've been having, I'm not alone in feeling increasingly concerned by the rhetoric of building walls, putting those we describe as 'us' first, segregating people by religion, and the damning of journalists and judges that we have seen in aspects of world affairs in recent months. None of this chimes with the values of the Kingdom.



News events tend to draw out different aspects of the liturgy for me. It might be a verse in a psalm, or words in a Collect, that have a particular resonance. At present, a prayer at the heart of the Eucharist has taken on a yearning desire:

*Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.*

What the prayer does is allow me to hold before God's presence all that troubles me on the world stage. However, it soon reminds me of my own human preponderance to divide and protect, exclude and judge. Its penitential words hollow out my own culpabilities so that I might see myself more truly.

This is what Lent does on a larger canvas. Penitence is a theme that runs through this season and it enables us to be changed as we see love, compassion, justice and freedom as they should be. Lenten penitence brings us back to the way of Jesus, to his disturbing yet comforting teaching, and our faltering ways of responding. It helps us see things as they truly are and live deeply again.

As we are drawn to live more closely within Jesus' shadow, we are led into all types of situations and places as we attempt to respond to his call, 'Come, follow me'. For many that will lead to being scorned and thought of as barmy or uncool. For many others around the world it is a deliberate positioning of themselves in a place of grave danger where imprisonment, torture and death stalk the streets.

We who worship in comparative safety will keep wanting to respond to the news headlines in ways that put flesh and blood onto the words "thy Kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven".

**+Graham**

### IN BRIEF

The new noticeboard is due to be delivered in the latter part of February and will be put in place as soon as possible. Do look out for this addition to our means of sharing the good news of all that is available at St Mary's.

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**FAIR TRADE**

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Items will also be available at the  
Thursday morning service.  
Look out for details.