

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

**MAY 2017  
Online edition**



# ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

## Parish Church Magazine



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**MAY 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
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	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
<b>Director of Music:</b>	Mr Graham Davies	01905 353939
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<b>Safeguarding Officer:</b>	Mrs Liz Fourness	394359
<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
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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 MAY 2017

Monday 1	Early Spring Bank Holiday
Tuesday 2	Archdeacon's Visitation in church all day Open the Book Team to visit Oldswinford Primary School 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course
Thursday 4	Church Hall in use all day as Polling Station, 06.15 - 22.15 10.30 am Holy Communion in Church 5.00 pm King Edward's Charter Day Service in Church
Friday 5	Stephen's day off
Saturday 6	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 7</b>	<b>FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b> 3.00 pm Baptisms
Monday 8	Quinquennial inspection of the church building. Parish Office Closed this week
Tuesday 9	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 2.15 pm Mothers' Union Meeting in the Coach House 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course
Wednesday 10	Copy date for June magazine
Thursday 11	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 12	Stephen's day off
Saturday 13	10.00 am Mission Coffee Morning 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 14</b>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b> The Fair Trade stall will be available after the 10.00 service
Monday 15	7.30 pm Standing Committee meeting
Tuesday 16	Open the Book Team to visit Oldswinford Primary School 2.15 pm Tea in the Coach House. 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course
Wednesday 17	Prayer Group meeting
Thursday 18	10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 19	Stephen's day off
Saturday 20	10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour 12.00 noon Wedding
<b>SUNDAY 21</b>	<b>SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b> 3.00 pm Baptisms
Tuesday 23	2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex 7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate course
Wednesday 24	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge 7.30 pm Parochial Church Council Meeting
Thursday 25	ASCENSION DAY 10.30 am Holy Communion in Church
Friday 26	Stephen's Day Off
Saturday 27	9.30 am Walking Group to Himley 10.00 am Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 28</b>	<b>SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b> 11.15 am Meeting of the Friends of the Music
Monday 29	Spring Bank holiday - School half term holiday week.
Tuesday 30	7.30 pm Bishop's Certificate Course
Wednesday 31	11.00 am - 1.00 pm Messy Church

## FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends

As I write this letter we are just coming to the end of Lent and Holy Week and are about to celebrate Easter. It is a busy time, and as I look out of my study window I can see members of the flower guild going into church to decorate St Mary's for Easter.

I am also starting to think about our Annual Church Meeting, a time when we look back at what we have achieved in the past year and what our hopes are for the year to come.

So perhaps it is not surprising that I am taking stock of the past few months and looking forward to the months to come. This year our Lent has been busier than ever, with our Lenten Study Groups, focussing on five women of the Bible, and encouraging us to think of the lessons we can learn from them and apply in our own lives. I know that many of you have enjoyed the House Groups, and there has been some talk of wanting to keep them going – why not? There is plenty of material available to us which is suitable for House Groups, and if you find them encouraging in your faith journey then they are a very good thing.

Over the last few weeks St Mary's has welcomed many young people to different events. Experience Easter, where pupils from three schools took part in a series of presentations which encouraged them to engage, in an interactive way with the story of Jesus during Holy Week and Easter. Many members of the congregation led the activities and thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the process. And thinking of enjoyment who can fail to have been moved by the Easter Messy Church where we welcomed 48 young people and their parents and grandparents on the Wednesday of Holy Week. The Church Hall buzzed with activity and excitement (and the children were also carried along on this wave of enthusiasm!)

On a different note, earlier in Lent a group of us travelled to Holland House for a 'Quiet Day' where we enjoyed the peace of the Diocesan Retreat Centre beside the River Avon on a beautiful March day and reflected on 'partings'.

In all of these activities and the many other activities which I can't fit into this letter many people were involved. But one person I would like to mention in particular, because he is still fairly new to the parish, is Alex French. He has been instrumental in so many activities over the past months that I would like to thank him publicly on your behalf. We look forward to Alex's ordination as priest in June, and to his ministry amongst us in the years to come.

As a postscript, and continuing the theme of looking forward, a number of people have asked me about preparing for Confirmation. It is therefore my intention to hold some meetings for people who are fairly new to the Church and possibly to the Christian faith, starting very soon after Easter – this will be open to young people and adults. So if you would like to join in please contact Alex or myself in the very near future.

As I mentioned in my letter for the April magazine, this is an exciting time for St Mary's. God alone knows what will happen next – and I am quite content to leave it in his hands.

*Stephen Agnew*

## SERVICES IN MAY 2017

<b>7 May Fourth Sunday after Easter</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Acts 2. 42-end	John 10. 1-10
	6.30 pm Evensong	Ezra 3. 1-13	Ephesians 2. 11-end
<b>14 May Fifth Sunday after Easter</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	All Age Worship	
	6.30 pm Choral Evensong	Zechariah 8. 1-10	Revelation 21. 1-14
<b>21 May Sixth Sunday after Easter</b>	8.00 am		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Acts 17. 22-31	John 14. 15-21
	6.30 pm Evensong	Zechariah 8. 1-13	Revelation 21.22-22.5
<b>28 May Seventh Sunday after Easter</b>	8.00 am Holy Communion		
	10.00 am Parish Communion	Acts 1. 6-14	John 17. 1-11
	6.30 pm Evensong	2 Samuel 23. 1-5	Ephesians 1. 15-end

### THANK YOU

On behalf of us all a letter of thanks has been sent to Alex to express appreciation of all his much-valued work, leadership and organisation during past months and especially his work with many of our Lent and Easter activities.

**A date for your diary; Alex's ordination as Priest - 2.00 pm, Saturday, June 24 at Worcester Cathedral.**

Similar letters of thanks have been sent to Stephen, Kanthi and Roger in recognition of their work, care, support and leadership. Also thanks have been sent to John Sutton, The Flower Guild, Graham Davies and all members of St Mary's choir.

This month's cover picture shows the cross of stones created in the churchyard with the stones painted by children who took part in the Easter Experience.

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Please join us for a  
**Mission Coffee Morning**  
**Saturday, 13 May 2017**



10.00 am – 12.00 noon

in the Narthex

Raising funds for Mission Giving

Coffee/tea and delicious cakes

£2.00

**CHRISTIAN AID BIG BREAKFAST**



**Saturday 29 April,**  
**10.00 am to 12.30 pm**

**at**

**St Thomas's Church Hall,**  
**Market Street**

Please Come Along!

60 years ago, in 1957, Jesus' passion for justice inspired the first Christian Aid Week collectors to come together to raise money for refugees.

So..... Christian Aid is celebrating 60 years of Christian Aid Week this year and is hoping that the "Big Brekkie" will become an annual time of fellowship, fundraising and publicity for its work around the world. Our Big Brekkie in Stourbridge will offer refreshments, food and an opportunity to be inspired ready for Christian Aid Week in May.

**Please Come Along.....** and bring your friends and families! There will also be some fun activities for children.

**CHURCHYARD CARE TEAM**

Already members of our volunteer team have begun the schedule of grass cutting and general grounds maintenance needed to care for the churchyard throughout the growing season.

Recently we have had to fell a tree that had been partially blown over by strong winds and have taken action to address other concerns. Please be aware of uneven ground and the possibility of falling branches when you visit the churchyard, especially in inclement weather.

As soon as the threat of frost has passed we will plant the beds to provide colour throughout the summer.

For the next six months there will be much to do and any help you may be able to offer will be much appreciated. Please contact John in the office.

## NEJEBAR'S STORY

### **Nejebbar doesn't have a safe place to call home.**

Nejebbar fled Afghanistan with her family after the Taliban threatened to kill her husband, Noor, who was a teacher. It wasn't an idle threat - the Taliban first blinded, then murdered, another member of their family.

'The last days and weeks in Afghanistan were the hardest,' says Noor. 'When I went to work, my heart was beating harder. I didn't know if my family were going to be alive when I got back.'

### **Nejebbar's family are stuck in Greece**

When the family arrived at the refugee camp in Greece, they thought they would only stay for 10 days. But they've been there six months now and there's no end in sight.

The only protection they have against the wind and rain is their tent. There's no school for their children. Five-year-old Sudai, their youngest, is ill, but Nejebbar and Noor don't know what's wrong with him because they can't communicate with the camp's doctor, who is Greek.

### **Nejebbar's hope for the future**

Nejebbar is the rock at the centre of her family, holding them together throughout all this uncertainty. She has even welcomed Faraidoon and Farzad into the family, two brothers who don't know where their parents are, or if they're even alive.

'We still have some hope for our children's future,' says Nejebbar. 'We only want a peaceful life. We want our children to go to school. The most important thing is our children.'

*It's better to die in a refugee camp than to die in a war. To risk your children's lives in a plastic dinghy. And to leave everything you know behind. When the alternative is terror, bombs and bullets, almost anything is better.*

*This is the terrible choice facing tens of millions of people worldwide - fleeing conflict and disaster, making dangerous journeys in search of safety.*

*Christian Aid Week was set up 60 years ago to support our work with refugees in Europe following the Second World War.*

*Let's act again now, to help relieve suffering and build a world where everyone has a safe place to call home.*

**Please do what you can to support Christian Aid Week this year. Please contact Helen Fowler if you are able to help with the delivery and collection of envelopes in the local area. Helen's email address is [hfowler252@aol.com](mailto:hfowler252@aol.com)**

***HELPING A PERSON WILL NOT NECESSARILY CHANGE THE WORLD  
BUT IT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THAT PERSON.***



## BISHOP OF WORCESTER'S APPEAL FOR PERU

In late March Bishop John shared with all parishes in the diocese information he had received from Bishop Jorge of Peru, of the terrible impact of exceptionally severe weather, heavy rain and flooding in the Andes that had destroyed 12,000 homes and threatened untold hardship for many thousands of local people. We were asked to remember these people and their needs in our prayers.

In the light of a growing understanding of this disaster and of the help that is needed and how it may be provided, on 5 April, Bishop John again wrote to all parishes and invited them to encourage donations in support of a fund to assist the Diocese of Peru to implement its programme of aid, relief and support.

In response, we have included the Peru situation in our pew sheet and in prayers at services during past days. We have also provided for a quick and easy means by which you might contribute to Bishop John's appeal with a bucket collection. Contributions made to the appeal via the collection will be forwarded to Bishop John for onward transmission to the very place where the help is needed.

Please, if you are able, give whatever you can afford.

Thank you

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## BISHOP JOHN'S EASTER MESSAGE 2017

From the beginning, what happened in the garden, early in the morning on the first Easter day, has been associated with joy.

St Luke only records two resurrection appearances and joy is characteristic of both. At the end of his gospel we read that 'they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy'.

The joy of the disciples recorded in St Luke's gospel went on to become the hallmark of the Christian life when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples. Joy is a fruit of the spirit listed by Paul, and unlike the other ones – love, peace, forbearance etc which require an effort of will, even if it is spirit-filled, joy is different. You can't work at being joyful, it's a gift, it's sheer grace.

How can we possibly be filled with joy in the face of some of the terrible things that life throws at us? Joy certainly can't be the only thing we experience as Christians. It's no accident that the joy of the disciples came after the desolation of the passion. That teaches us that death and resurrection are the pattern of things as we understand them as Christians. Joy and sorrow are bound to be mingled in our life.

As William Blake wrote memorably:

*"Man was made for joy and woe  
Then when this we rightly know  
Through the world we safely go.  
Joy and woe are woven fine  
A clothing for the soul divine.  
Under every grief & pine  
Runs a joy with silken twine."*

Joy and woe have been much on my mind since my wife Denise died on Easter day, three years ago, leaving me and my two daughters, then aged 8 and 14, bereft. Since her death, sorrow has often prevailed, but joy has crept up on me

unawares, as it can do, even in times of desperate sadness.

It did so especially when my 17 year old daughter gave birth to her daughter last year. It wasn't what she'd planned or I'd expected. But Lily, now aged one, has brought untold joy and laughter in the midst of sadness. It is indeed true that 'under every grief and pine runs a joy with silken twine'.

Flashes of joy are intimations of the profound truth, that though joy and woe are woven fine in this world, it will not be so in God's future. The Christian hope, the resurrection hope, tells us that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus, our Lord. Love will prevail. God will prevail, joy will prevail.

Happy Easter!

## **CHRISM EUCHARIST AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL**

The Chrism Eucharist service took place at Worcester Cathedral on Monday 10 April, in part, because on Maundy Thursday, Bishop John, as Lord High Almoner was in attendance upon Her Majesty The Queen at the Maundy Service at Leicester Cathedral.

During the Chrism service the oils for use in ordination, initiation and healing are blessed and all those involved in ministry are invited to renew their commitment to it. It is a particularly special occasion for clergy as they renew their ministerial vows as deacons, priests and bishops.

In the preface to the order of service Bishop John wrote:

At the heart of this morning's service lie two special elements. First, the rededication of all those in ministry to their calling, and the reaffirmation of their ordination vows by the three orders of clergy - deacons, priests and bishops. On Maundy Thursday, Jesus offered what we often call his 'high priestly prayer' and, like a deacon, washed his disciples feet. As we prepare for Maundy Thursday, we renew our commitment to ministry. Second, we bless the holy oils. We do it on this day so that their first use may be with candidates for baptism and confirmation at Easter. The three oils blessed today are

- ♦ The oil for use at the signing with the cross before baptism, sometimes called the oil of catechumens, which is pure olive oil, reflecting the practice of athletes preparing for a contest.
- ♦ The oil of healing, olive oil for use at an anointing at a key moment in illness or in the process of restoring wholeness.
- ♦ The oil of chrism, which is oil mixed with fragrant spices, expressing the blessings of Christ and the richness of the Holy Spirit, used to accompany the prayer after baptism, or with the laying on of hands at confirmation, in ordination and in commissioning new ministry.

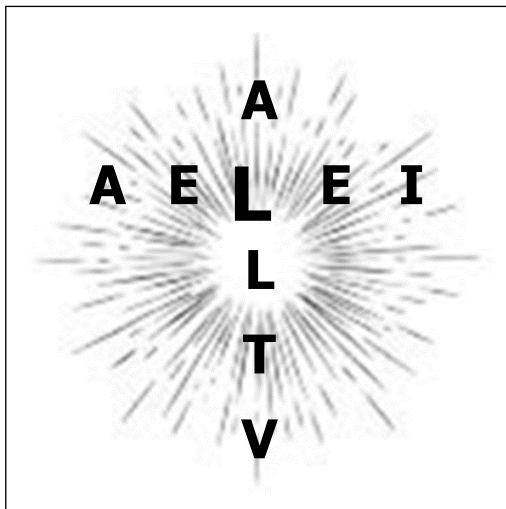
Clergy, readers, ALMs and wardens from St Mary's attended and shared a special service at which Alex shared in the presentation of the oil for baptism.



## FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

# DISCIPLES = FOLLOWERS

### CROSS WORD 6



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 19 for answers

### THANK YOU

A special thank you from all children, regardless of their age, to Wendy Tranter and her helpers for the preparation of flower sprays for Mothering Sunday.

Thank you Wendy.



### SPECIAL DAYS THIS MONTH

Ascension day is on 25 May. This day celebrates Jesus' ascension to heaven following his resurrection on Easter Day.

Jesus had told his disciples, *"Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."*

Jesus also promised his disciples that he would always be with them.

The good news of the Bible and the stories of how Jesus lived and died for us helps us to lead a life that is full of goodness and kindness to others.

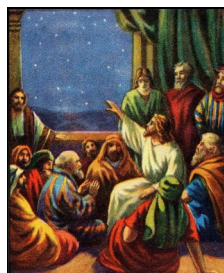


Jesus's disciples were people who listened to his teachings and followed him wherever he went to help him.

Can you remember how many disciples there were?

Can you name them all?

All Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ, that includes you and me. A disciple is a follower. Christians follow the teachings of Christ — that makes you a disciple.



Seven of the disciples named in the Bible stories used to work as fishermen. Many of the stories about Jesus's life occurred around the Sea of Galilee.

Do you know the story about how Jesus calmed the stormy waters? You can read it in Matthew 8.23-27 or Mark 4.35-41.



## CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS?

BOAT CHOSEN CROWD DISCIPLE FISHERMEN FOLLOW  
FRIENDS GALILEE HEAL JAMES LEARN LEFT LIFE  
LOVE MIRACLES NETS PREACH SIMON TEACHING  
TWELVE

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



## LENT COURSE - 2017

### Five remarkable women from the Bible

Our Lent Course this year took on a different format from previous years. Our curate, Alex, had arranged a series of small group meetings on the theme of “Five remarkable women in the Bible”. Four groups followed the course and each week during Lent, the groups, meeting at different places and at different times, discussed the same subject under the guidance of their respective group leaders.

Our Thursday evening group was led by Roger King and at our first meeting we were given a beautifully produced ‘participants’ booklet covering the five ‘remarkable women’ who we would ‘meet’ during the course. Some preparatory information had also been provided by the sermons from the preceding Sundays’ evensong services so that when we met Hagar in our first session we had some prior knowledge of her story. The course booklet



contained appropriate passages from the Bible together with an artistic depiction of the subjects, notes for interpretation and discussion questions.

Each week we were invited to study the picture for a few minutes before reading the text and sharing our thoughts on interpretation and understanding. In our group Roger helped us by setting the story into its historic context and unpicking the key elements of the passage of scripture.



The five remarkable women and the Bible passages were

Hagar - Genesis 16. 1 – 6. The birth of Ishmael.

Hannah - Samuel 1. Samuel's birth and dedication.

Elizabeth - Luke 1. 5 – 13, 24 – 25, 39 – 45, 57 – 60.

The Syrophenician woman – Mark 7. 24 – 30. The Syrophenician woman's faith.

The Samaritan woman -John 4. 4 – 42. Jesus meets a wounded woman.

We enjoyed the quiet, relaxed fellowship of the meetings which started and ended with a prayer to complement our Lent worship.

Alex's notes observed that the overarching theme which joins up the five sessions revolves around the question “What is the reality and rule of God?” By exploring the stories of five women we should be able to detect some answers to this question which can support us as we journey together through Lent. We have not had an opportunity to compare our experiences with other groups but we found the course most interesting, informative and provided much food for thought. Perhaps the most challenging detail was the interpretation of the images provided for the last two subjects – but that's what modern art is supposed to do! We would welcome Alex's comments on his choice of pictures.



Thank you to Roger for leading our group and to Alex for developing the course and supporting material.

**Alec Beevers**

## NEWS OF SASI AND MARK

It has been a while since I wrote on Sasi and Mark. So, to refresh us, Sasi and Mark are the mum and son from Sri Lanka to whom we, as a church, provide support. St Mary's has continued to do so for over a decade. This year too, £300 was allocated, which was very gratefully received by Sasi. Sasi draws £25 a month for Mark's college needs. It is a fair sum in SL rupees, generously given by St Mary's and a most welcome gift to them.

Both Sasi and Mark have written thank you letters and these have been included below. Copies of their original letters written in Tamil, together with translations are displayed on the Mission noticeboard.

Mark will be 13 years old on 22 April. It seems only yesterday that I first met him as a toddler whose dad had just died. I felt for this young mother very much when I met her and, since then, fund-raising events by our mission committee and PCC have supported her.

Mark is in Grade 8 at Vaddu Hindu College, in the north of Sri Lanka. Children are taught in the English and Tamil medium. He reads maths and science in English and the other subjects in Tamil medium. He finds it difficult to understand English and was given tuition to catch up last year. There are about 40 students in each class.

Mark attends church services with his mum once a fortnight as it is a long way away.

He likes football and gardening and handicraft. His pet dog is called Lucky which has a habit of pulling neighbours' washing from their lines.

Educating her son has given Sasi confidence. Recently, she from lower caste, attended 'Meet the teachers' before end of school term on 5 April. She was on a par with other parents who were socially better off. That is a great act of courage and confidence on her part, all in the cause of his education.

I am sure Mark will be a credit to his mum and to St Mary's who have seen him grow and nurtured him since childhood.

On behalf of Sasi and Mark, a huge thank you.

**Kanthi Ariaraj**

Sasi wrote.....

*Dear Kanthi*

*We are keeping very well. We pray to the Almighty that all members of your church keep well. For each year's help I am very grateful. Thank you for helping us this year too. Me and my son will always be grateful to you all. I will remember your kindness till I die.*

*Thank you for our home and the security it gives without which I often wonder what we would have done. Would we live at all? I wonder.*

*With much thanks,*

*V.Sasi*

And Mark wrote.....

*Dear Kanthi*

*I am well. I pray to God that you are well too. Thank you very much for the help that members of your congregation give to me. My humble thanks to them.*

*I am in Grade 8. I have not got good marks at the end of term tests just gone. Next term I will endeavour to do better. It was due to games and football practices. I have a dog, Ilkie a cat and I like gardening. I like to play football very much. For your church's help I am truly grateful.*

*Yours,*

*V. Lesley Mark*



**THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSIC  
AT ST MARY'S  
INAUGURAL FESTIVAL WEEKEND**



Please make a note of these dates and the welcome extended to all  
to these events to be held in St Mary's Church, Oldswinford

**SATURDAY 17th JUNE  
at 7.30pm**

**A CONCERT OF MUSIC FOR VOICES AND STRINGS**

Featuring the Choir of St Mary's,  
plus a special choral group and a String Trio led by Will Croft  
with conductor Jack Apperley  
and organist Graham Davies.

**SUNDAY - 18th June  
at 6.30 p.m.**

**FESTIVAL EVENSONG**

In church there will be special displays  
of choir memorabilia and flowers.

**Graham Davies,  
Director of Music**

**FAIRTRADE**

Many thanks to everyone supporting the Fairtrade stall in church. Since Christmas we have had a very steady trade.

We are endeavouring to have Fairtrade products for sale on Worship Together Sundays and at one of the Thursday am communion services - depending on when Gaynor or I are available.

We now keep a variety of items in stock and I am hoping to get some up to date copies of the Traidcraft magazine to keep in church, so if there is anything in particular people would like to see on the stall, you can give me a ring or leave a message in church and I will order it. Also, if you are not able to be in church on sale days and you need items please leave a message or give me a ring and I will do my best to get them to you as soon as I can.

I have asked about diabetic-suitable or sugar-free products but Traidcraft do not stock them as a great deal of their work is taken up supporting sugar farmers across the world!!

Thankyou again for your support

**Maggie Abbotts (01384 371247) & Gaynor Hill**



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

Anne May, our branch leader, welcomed Revd Alex French who led our Lent Meditation in Holy Week.

The theme was based on nails and Alex led four reflections as we each held a 6 inch(15 cm) heavy nail in our hands.

1. During the gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion we have the process of His death but only in the post-resurrection event of doubting Thomas are nails specifically mentioned {John 20 v24-29}. In silence, we reflected on the agony and suffering of Christ. Then we sang the hymn "How deep the Father's love for us."

2. Next, Alex reflected on the local history of nailing from the 12th century part-time manufacture in homes to the 17th century development by Richard Foley to an industrial level. Rioting occurred in the 1840's in Dudley when employees were on starvation wages. We wondered what story might have been behind the nails used by the Romans.

3. We thought of the functions of nails. Alex had found 197 nail products which have horizontal strength. At the crucifixion they fulfilled their function to show Christ fixed on the cross for all to see.

4. Holy Week - Christ on the Cross shows pain, suffering, sacrifice, God's forgiveness of sin and , above all, His deep love for humanity. It opens people to love God by word and example for there is no greater love than His and for us to love and serve others {John 15 v13}.

We then sang our final hymn, "In Christ alone my hope is found" and closed our meeting in prayer.

Alex was thanked for his thoughtful and challenging meditation.

Next meeting: 2.15 pm Tuesday 9 May in the Coach House. "Loaves and Fishes"

**Open Garden Event** Saturday 13 May - at Bishop Graham and Mrs Usher's home, Bishops Walk, Cradley Heath. Admission £3.00. Children under 12 free.

**Dawn Nex**

### A FLOWER GUILD THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who made donations to the Easter Lily fund in memory of loved ones which enabled members of the Flower Guild to decorate the church for Easter so beautifully.



A really big thank you to all the ladies of the Flower Guild who decorated the church and to those who contributed to the displays which enhanced the Experience Easter during the first week of April. Your hard work and support is, as always, very much appreciated. Thank you.

**Sally Frost**



## THIS MONTH'S RECIPE

### PEA, LETTUCE AND MINT SOUP

Great simple soup for Spring, and almost a store cupboard dish. Don't overcook this soup as you lose the lovely green colour.

1 tablespoon olive oil  
Large onion chopped  
1 garlic clove crushed  
850 ml stock or less  
250g potato, peeled and diced  
200g frozen peas  
1 romaine lettuce sliced or whatever lettuce you have  
2 tablespoon chopped mint  
1 teaspoon caster sugar  
Salt and pepper

Heat the oil and gently fry the onion until soft. Add the garlic and cook for one minute.

Next add the potatoes, enough stock to cover, and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes until the potatoes are just cooked. Add the peas and cook for a further 4 minutes. Add the lettuce and mint and cook until the lettuce has just wilted.

Stir in the sugar, puree until smooth, and adjust the thickness with stock or milk. I often use milk at the end in place of the stock for a creamier version.

Season with salt and pepper.

Serve with warm crusty bread and butter.

**Ann Jennings**

\*\*\*\*\*

### AND FOR THE WINE...

Verdant green ingredients to the fore - freshly harvested from the kitchen garden! And accompanied by a bright young wine made from just-picked grapes at your local vineyard? Well not necessarily so. It is the same rationale which lies behind the frozen peas which we are cooking and then converting into a puree. Supermarket packaging is always telling us how the contents have been frozen promptly after harvesting in order to retain their freshness. So too with the grapes. Whether picked a few miles down the road or several thousand miles away, the grapes undergo many processes before we arrive at our bottle of wine. The key is the freshness with which the grapes reach the winery. Ideal is small batch / container harvesting in cool conditions - maybe at night time - and rapid transfer to the temperature controlled environment at the winery.

This can be achieved just as well in New Zealand as it can at Halfpenny Green. So, if the world is our oyster, what might suit here? Certainly a brisk

clean young white, preferably from a region with a well-developed wine industry, which can deliver fresh grapes as described. Sauvignon Blanc leads the field. The Rueda wines of Spain are a good bet also. Interestingly, it is only in the past 30-40 years that these wines have begun to shine as modern techniques and practices have been developed to preserve the freshness. Wines from the Verdelho grape, successful in Australia, score well too. Nearer to home, a fino or manzanilla sherry is a candidate but the advice really is go fresh.....no matter how many 'food/wine miles' are involved.

Enjoy your wine-sipping.....

**Richard W. B. Ryan**

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

On a gloriously sunny Saturday morning seven ramblers set off from Kinver High Street for a six and a half mile circular walk along the Staffs and Worcester canal and back over Kinver Edge. The route took us along Anchor Lane to the canal by the Horsebridge and then along the canal to Steel Wheels at Cookley.

A concerted effort was made to ensure no member of the group had such a close encounter with the canal as happened the previous month. After two and a half miles of happily waving to boaters and committed anglers accompanied by their attractive bowls of maggots, the group reached Steel Wheels for a coffee break. After that a scenic route was taken up via a series of steep steps onto the southern end of Kinver Edge.

The views back over Cookley and the Clent Hills beyond were outstanding and provided an excellent excuse for a rest or two. On arrival at the Edge the views westwards were well worth the climb with both Clee Hills and Abberley Hill clearly visible. About half way along the Edge the group took a right turn downhill toward the farm shop with more stunning views toward the Clent hills. Unfortunately, the ice cream van had disappeared from the car park at the bottom which did cause some mild distress to one of the group - possibly the leader! However this temporary gloom soon evaporated as we walked along the lane toward Kinver church. At the church there is always a temptation to take the short cut down the Coffin Trail to the village below. However on this occasion safety came first and we all descended a much broader track back to the centre of Kinver. A carvery lunch followed at the Island Pool which was enjoyed by all including another five members who joined us after prior commitments at the church. A thoroughly enjoyable walk for all concerned, with the weather playing ball, was the overall verdict.

**Sue and Tony Wakeley**

**Next month's walk will be on the 28th May, starting at Himley Hall. It will be a picnic lunch. The cost for car parking is now £1.90 for the day.**

**Toni Evans**

## **PARISH REGISTER**

### **Baptisms**

19 March	Edie Rose Evans
2 April	Oscar Phillip Andrew Macdonald Finley Philip Aries Teagan Jayne Louise Green

### **Weddings**

No weddings this month

### **Funerals**

16 March	Jason Pearson	Aged 32
21 March	Vera Darby	Aged 97

## **EXPERIENCE EASTER**

Over the last couple of weeks nearly 200 pupils, drawn from three schools (two primary and one secondary school) visited St Mary's to take part in Experience Easter. This is a project where six areas are set up in church which represent the key episodes in the Easter story. Pupils in small groups 'journey' from station to station, exploring what Jesus said and did. Starting at Palm Sunday the pupils considered their hopes and dreams for the future. At the foot washing station they explored what it might mean to serve people today. At the Last Supper, pupils thought about how we remember others and what we remember Jesus for. In the Garden of Gethsemane pupils reflected on what it feels like to be alone and afraid. At the Crucifixion station pupils held a ribbon, prayed for groups who this world overlooks e.g. refugees and the lonely: then they tied their ribbon to the cross. The empty tomb challenged pupils to think about how the women who found the tomb empty felt.

Working with young people is always uplifting, but this project surprised all who were involved in it (and it shouldn't have) about how much the young people knew about the Bible and Jesus. It's hard to escape the narrative in our news media which says that Christianity is withering away, that the younger generations have little knowledge or time for the Bible any more. Well if the last couple of weeks is anything to go by, this is simply not the case. God is firmly at work in the hearts and minds of young people, securing the future of his Church. For that we can all say 'praise the Lord' this Easter.

**Alex French**

## LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER THY KINGDOM COME

From Ascension Day on 25 May to Pentecost on 4 June, parishes across the Diocese will be joining with Christians worldwide in a ten-day wave of prayer for the coming of God's Kingdom. This is the second year of the initiative from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and this year it's become a global movement with Christians of several denominations around the world praying together for more people to come to know Jesus. It hardly needs saying that this fits well with our Kingdom People Vision.



Throughout our own diocese, many of us will be getting involved with prayer events planned in deaneries and parishes. We hope lots of people will also join us in pilgrimage – walking from the four compass points to form the shape of a cross as we converge at Worcester Cathedral for a service of praise and celebration at 7pm on Pentecost Eve.

Christians in the north of our diocese will have their own event as well - at 2.30pm on Pentecost itself. People from all denominations will be gathering in Priory Ruins to pray particularly for Dudley Borough.

At the centre of this is prayer. Together we'd like to cover the ten days in a wave of 24/7 prayer and hope as many people as possible will join in and 'pledge to pray'.

As Archbishop Justin says: "In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities... I cannot remember in my life anything that I've been involved in where I have sensed so clearly the work of the Spirit."

I pray that the evidence of this being a great work of the Spirit will be very clear to us in this Diocese.

**+John**

### Answers to Cross Word 6

ALEE, ALIT, ALIVE, **ALLEVIATE**, AVAIL, ELATE, ELATIVE, ELITE, EVIL, LATE, LAVA, LAVE, LEAL, LEAVE, LEVEL, LILT, LIVE, TAEI, TALL, TALA, TALE, TAIL, TEAL, TELL, TILE, TILL, VAIL, VALE, VALET, VEAL, VEIL, VIAL, VILE, VILLA, VITAL

**CONGRATULATIONS IF YOU FOUND MORE!**

**DISCIPLES** There were twelve disciples. Their names were....Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James - son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus - aka Judas Simon and Judas Iscariot who was replaced by Matthias

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**FAIR TRADE**  
St Mary's fair trade stall will be  
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Items will also be available at the  
Thursday morning service.  
Look out for details.