ST MARY'S
OLD SWINFORD
Parish Church
MONTHLY NEWS
OCTOBER 2018
ONLINE EDITION

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD Parish Church MONTHLY NEWS OCTOBER 2018



50p

CURATE:

The Revd Alex French 58 Arlington Court Old Swinford Stourbridge, DY8 1NN Tel 01384 622400

E-mail:

st.mary.os.curate@btconnect.com

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 (Monday to Thursday)
Daily: 5.00 pm - Evening Prayer (Monday to Thursday)

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

Curate Day Off Friday

OTHER REGULAR EVENTS

Tel:

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

CONTACTS

Reader:		Mr Roger King	379800	
Church Wardens:		Mrs Judy Hall	377349	
		Mr Antony Tatford	822661	
Director of Music	:	Mr Graham Davies	07845 968025	
		st.mary.os.dom@btconnect.cor	n	
PCC Secretary:		Miss Katey Fletcher	378182	
Monthly News Editor:		Mr Alec Beevers	444229	
Safeguarding Officer:		Mrs Liz Fourness	394359	
Church Hall and				
Coach House: - Bookings:		Parish Office	441003	
Parish Administrator and				
Publicity Officer:		Mr John Sutton	441003	
Parish Office:	Open 9.00	am -1.00 pm Tuesday to Thursda	ay, 441003	
	9.00 am to	12.00 noon Friday	•	
Closed Saturday, Sunday and Monday				

Church website address: www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk E-mail: st.mary.os@btconnect.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmaryschurcholdswinford

Magazine e-mail address: stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk

ENQUIRIES ABOUT WEDDINGS, BANNS OF MARRIAGE, BAPTISMS.

Please come to the Church on Saturday morning between 10.00 am and 11.00 am for Vestry Hour. You will be warmly welcomed. Tea and coffee will be available.

PARISH REGISTER

19.8.18 Harry John Bradford 26.8.18 Jono William Reece 2.9.18 Esma Eugenie Walker Alexander Bradbury-Barrett Peggy Florence MacLeod 9.9.18 Benjamin Thomas Harewood

Weddings

18.8.18	Steven Marsh and Amy Beddoe
8.9.18	Christopher Dewaine and Nikki Wilkinson
	•

Funerals

16.8.18	Leonard Philip SaintJohn	Aged 91
20.8.18	Valerie Young	Aged 75
10.9.18	Michael Palmer	Aged 79

DIARY - OCTOBER 2018 Monday 1 7.30 pm Christmas Market Planning Meeting in narthex Tuesday 2 9.30 am Open the Book visit to Oldswinford Primary School 1.30 pm St Mary's Toddlers Group in Church Hall Wednesday 3 Thursday 4 10.30 am Holy Communion Friday 5 Clergy day off Harvest Service at Oldswinford Primary School 9.00 pm Decorate church for Harvest Saturday 6 10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour 7.30 pm Harvest Supper in Church Hall **NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY SUNDAY 7** 10.00 am Harvest Festival Service Tuesday 9 10.00 am Assembly at Oldswinford Primary School 11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 2.15 pm Mothers' Union meet in Coach House Wednesday 10 1.30 pm St Mary's Toddlers Group in Church Hall Thursday 11 10.30 am Holy Communion Friday 12 Clergy day off 10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour Saturday 13 **SUNDAY 14** TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 4.00 pm Dog Walker's Service in church Tuesday 16 9.30 am Open the Book visit to Oldswinford Primary School 2.00-4.00 pm Tea in the Coach House Wednesday 17 1.30 pm St Mary's Toddlers Group in Church Hall 7.30 pm Magazine Committee Meeting Thursday 18 10.30 am Holy Communion Friday 19 Clergy day off Saturday 20 10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour 3.00 pm Wedding 7.30 pm Concert – Friends of the Music TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY **SUNDAY 21** 3.00 pm Baptisms Monday 22 Parish Office closed this week Wednesday 24 11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge 1.30 pm St Mary's Toddlers Group in Church Hall Thursday 25 10.30 am Holy Communion 7.30 pm Churches Together in Stourbridge meeting in narthex Friday 26 Clergy day off 2.00 pm OSH Founder's Day Service Saturday 27 9.30 am St Mary's Walking Group 10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour 1.00 pm Wedding TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY **SUNDAY 28** End of British Summer time. Clocks go back one hour 6.30 pm Service of All Saints and All Souls

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Dudley Schools' half term holiday week

2.00 – 4.00 pm Tuesday Tea in narthex

Monday 29

Tuesday 30

LETTER FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

First and foremost, as this issue of the Parish News goes to press we will be about to say our farewells and thank you to Stephen and Jean, collectively at the Bring and Share lunch, and perhaps more privately in conversation with them and also in our prayers. May we all recognise and be grateful for all they have brought to and shared with our lives at St Mary's during the past six years. A great deal has been achieved in this time. We wish them both God's blessing for long, healthy, contented and rewarding retirements.

In recent weeks many meetings have been held through which real progress has been made with the preparations for our forthcoming vacancy. On 25 September, at the Final Vacancy Meeting, the PCC will formally agree the Parish Profile and appoint the two lay representatives to act on our behalf with the selection of a new incumbent, so setting in motion the process of advertising and subsequent identification of a new leader for the parish.

A draft profile has been on display in church for some weeks, a document that has been built on the history and ambitions of the parish, the views shared by many members of congregations who dropped their notes into the box left in the narthex and the discussions and refinements proposed as the PCC has considered the drafts. Thank you to everyone who has helped in so many ways.

In parallel with the work that has provided for the process of finding a new Rector for St Mary's many people have been busy ensuring that the day to day life of the parish will both continue and flourish. Service rotas, plans for our Harvest Festival, for Advent and Christmas and much in between are in place. The next few months will be busy and it will be for us all to share and contribute as we are able if we are to achieve what needs to be done. Thanks are especially due to Revd Alex French and to Roger King for their commitment to leading our acts of worship. Thanks also to visiting clergy who have offered to lead services. The Social Committee has responded marvellously to a demanding schedule and so we take this opportunity to say a public thank you to all who help with the preparations for our social events.

Alongside the more regular elements of parish life other matters arise which cannot be left unattended. In October we will launch a Parish Funding programme in response to our need to address a funding shortfall and to pursue the priorities identified as part of our Vision for St Mary's. Again, the participation of all those who have helped develop our vision and contributed to the development of a plan for the future needs to be recognised. Without such collaborative activity St Mary's would be poorly equipped to serve God's purpose in Oldswinford and to provide for those in need of support, encouragement, reassurance and comfort. We will do our very best to ensure that through our various means of communication, including via notices in church, we will keep you informed of progress with the busy programme that lies ahead. Please feel free to approach us with ideas, hopes and offers of help.

Judy Hall and Tony Tatford

SOUNDS APPEALING!!

Church bells are rung for a number of reasons; as a call to worship or indeed part of worship, as a method of congratulating as at a wedding, as a way of marking the end of a life or celebrating a life as at a funeral , as a mark of remembrance as on Remembrance Sunday and as a way of celebrating or marking significant events. This was the reason for ringing the peal this week at St Mary's as we welcomed the ringers of the Vale of Evesham Society who rang a full peal to mark Stephen's retirement and his 39 years of ministry in the church. Ringing a peal is a significant achievement because of both the physical and mental effort involved by all members of the band. Each ringer must learn by heart the method that is to be rung and the conductor guides the ringers through a minimum of 5000 consecutive different changes of the order of the bells which usually takes just under 3 hours to complete.

I always think of the sound of the bells as a method of communicating with the parish and making people pause for a moment to listen and hopefully ponder on a sound that is quite unique in many ways. To some people it is a form of prayer and to others it is just a method of reaching out to remind people of God's presence.

What was slightly unusual about the peal that was rung at St Mary's this week was the fact that it was broadcast through a facility called 'Facebook Live'. This meant that anybody who logged in could listen anywhere in the world and hear the sound of the bells. What amazed me was the number of very positive and complimentary comments that came through as the bells rang out not only from people local to the church who had windows open and were enjoying the music but also people further afield who commented on how it reminded them of their wedding day or how important St Mary's had been in their life and how beautiful the church is. We even had a comment from a lady in Spain who commented "I'm watching from my home in Spain, love the church bells," and from Margaret Ager in America, "It's wonderful to hear the bells ringing all the way from Illinois! "In all 35 comments came through Facebook paying compliment to the ringers and the sound of the bells. A huge thank you to the Vale of Evesham Society for their efforts and helping to communicate the message of St Mary's far and wide.

Vale of Evesham Society
Tuesday, 11 September 2018 in 2h 56 (10–3–12 in F♯)
5088 Xerophilous Surprise Major
Composed by Donald F Morrison (No.6333)

1 Geoffrey M Brewin
2 Andrew F Alldrick
3 John P Bidley
3 John P Bidley
4 Simon P Bogon

3 John R Ridley 7 Simon P Rogers (C)

4 Raymon A Sheasby 8 David Jenkins

Rung as a compliment to the Revd Stephen Agnew on the occasion of his retirement and to celebrate his 39 years of ministry.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

We're pleased to announce that the new CCTV system is installed and running, adding a new layer of security to the church building. This means that we will be able to leave the building open for more hours during the week in the knowledge that we can welcome those who wish to use the building for private prayer and reflection but deter those who might visit for the wrong reasons. Thank you once again to everybody who helped towards the cost of this.

Congratulations to all those people who, under the guidance of Anne Bachelor and Emma Pettifer, organised a memorable 'Messy Church' on Wednesday 22 August. It was truly messy and many children and parents who attended really enjoyed it (and so did the helpers!). A big thank you also to the Open the Book team who led the theme for the day.

Dog Walking Service 14 October at 4pm We will be running a 40 minute Thanksgiving Service for dogs and their walkers which will include a 'blessing of the dogs'. Please publicise this event amongst the dog walking community and anyone else who would be interested in coming. Keep your eyes peeled for further publicity.

Our **Harvest Festival** this year will be on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 October. The church will be decorated on the Saturday morning and there will be a Harvest Supper in the church hall at 7.30 pm. There is a booking list for this event in the narthex or contact the parish office.

On Sunday 7 October our services will focus on thanksgiving for God's gift of food and crops. Do come and join us as we celebrate this harvest-time.



THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSIC AT ST MARY'S

Michael Jones and Friends

Michael Jones, Stella Seaton-Sims, Tony Bridgewater present a programme of music for voice, piano and organ.

Including Midland Dances for piano duet by Tony Bridgewater.

St. Mary's Church, Old Swinford. Saturday 20th October – 7.30 p.m.

Free admission – Interval refreshments

Retiring collection for The Friends of the Music at St. Mary's.

ST CRISPIN & ST CRISPIAN

He that shall live this day, and see old age, Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours, And say, To-morrow is Saint Crispian: Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars, And say, These wounds I had on Crispin's day.

William Shakespeare



The words of Henry V, spoken on St Crispin's morn 1415, as he rallied his men prior to engaging the French at Agincourt.

The feast day of St Crispin and St Crispian, sometimes Crispinian, falls on 25th October every year. They were said to be twins of noble Roman birth, and lived in the third century AD. There is more than one account of where they lived. The most likely version is that they fled persecution for their faith, ending up at Soissons in France. They took up the trade of shoemaking to support themselves, whilst preaching Christianity to the Gauls. This displeased the governor of Gaul who had them martyred for their faith.

Another version has them growing up in England, in Canterbury. They set out for London to avoid persecution at home, but got only as far as Faversham in Kent. Here they came across a shoemaker's workshop, and decided to cut short their journey and stay in Faversham. The place believed to be the site of the workshop became a place of pilgrimage up until the seventeenth century, and there is an altar dedicated to them in Faversham parish church.

St Crispin and St Crispian have long been regarded as the patron saints of shoemakers. At one time, in some places, it was customary for shoe shops to close for business on 25th October. This would be accompanied by much merrymaking such as grand processions of the brethren of the craft, accompanied by all manner of revelry and noise.

Effigies seem to have played a large part of some celebrations. In Tenby, for example, on St Crispin's eve it was customary to make an effigy of the saint and suspend it from the church steeple. In the morning it would be cut down and carried in procession throughout the town. The procession would call at each dwelling place of those associated with the trade, where some small ceremony would take place.

It is heartening to know that these old customs have been resurrected in some places. In Northampton, famous for its shoemaking heritage, a funfair has been held on St Crispin's day every year since 1990. There have also been instances of bonfires and fireworks celebrations in some parts of Northamptonshire on the day.

Stephen Howard

CHRISTMAS EVENTS 2018

It may seem early but it is just 61 days until the Christmas Market on Saturday 1 December. After that date we will be well into the many events that will take place at St Mary's to mark the festival of Christmas.

Despite the popularity of last year's Christmas Tree Festival and the hopes of many that it might happen again this year, reluctantly, the decision has been taken to stick to our original plan for this to be a biennial event. In the face of everything else it would seem a step too far to attempt to include this display of Christmas trees without an already established team and leader able to commit the necessary time.

However there is much still to become involved with and opportunities for new ideas to be delivered. Please look out for details of events and requests for help and try to offer your support as you are able. Katey Fletcher will be especially delighted with offers of help and ideas for new and exciting attractions to help make the Christmas Market the success it deserves to be.

Our Annual Toy Service will be held at 10.00 am on Sunday 9 December, the gifts being donated to the Dudley Women's Refuge in support of those families who would otherwise see little of the Christmas joy. A very special event will take place on Sunday 23 December at 4.00 pm when we anticipate Wendy Tranter will guide us in the 50th Christingle Service to be held at St Mary's, one every year since the inception of this event in support of the Children's Society. Do please share this date with others as we recognise both the importance of Christingle and the contributions made by Wendy to this event over so many years.

Many local schools plan to hold their annual Carol Services at St Mary's so we are hoping to avoid the snowfall that led to the cancellation of these in 2017. Dates of all events will be published soon. A very warm St Mary's welcome will be waiting for you and your families.

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

Our Mothers' Union produce white baptism teddy bears to be given as a token of our love and commitment in prayer for all young children who are baptised at St Mary's. The Rector blessed a basketful during communion on Thursday 6 September and Benjamin Harewood received the first one during the morning service on the following Sunday as he was dedicated, named and welcomed into the church.

At our meeting on Tuesday 11 September Pat Whalley led the service and said how much families valued and appreciated these tokens. Names identify us to others and we are also assured in scripture that each one of us is known, by name, to God. So whether we are known by other titles, nicknames or alternatives to our first names, God's care never wavers throughout our lives.

The speaker at the meeting, Dr David Clarke, told us about the Kerala Partnership in India, organised by his wife Jane and him. Help is given through volunteers who are unpaid but for the last 20 years have applied funds directly to relieve poverty, hardship, provide employment and improve education to

anyone regardless of religion or creed who live below the poverty line. The aim is to meet **their** needs using **their** solution. Once they can manage, then the help can be given to others.

David gave several examples such as a wheel chair for a paralysed woman and a fan to stay cool; the provision of a meeting place for an independent but lonely lady; gifts of 200 rupees (£2.00) per month to buy basic food, and aid to repair houses especially following devastating floods. About 200 people a year are helped – all living away from any tourist centres. This direct giving avoids the danger of corruption and bribes to reach the needy.

We all appreciated David's talk and the work undertaken with a voluntary collection towards the Kerala Partnership.

Dates for your diary.

Next meeting
Tuesday 9 October at 2.15 pm in the Coach House
Special Project Coordinator from Chad – Karen Turnock
Diocesan Festival
Deanery Festival
Tuesday 16 October at 2.30 pm in Worcester Cathedral
Tuesday 16 October at 2.30 pm at Clent Church

All are welcome.

Dawn Nex

BELL RINGERS CORNER

Hopes for International Ringing on Armistice Day

The British and German governments are hoping that ringers around the world will join in with the armistice commemorations on 11th November. It is proposed that church, military and other bells will ring out in unison to mark the centenary of the end of the Great War, and the cessation of hostilities.

The Culture Secretary, Jeremy Wright, has said that the Anglo-German initiative would be a good way to mark the peace and friendship we now enjoy between nations, and to bring to an end more than four years of commemorative events.

The US Centennial Commission has issued a similar appeal to Americans to take part. Bells in countries that observe GMT or Central European time, are invited to ring at 12.30pm GMT. Countries in other time zones are invited to ring either at 12.30pm GMT or 12.30pm in their local time.

During the Great War the ringing of church bells was severely curtailed by the Defence of the Realm Act. In addition many ringers had been away on active service. This meant that the bells were rarely heard. The great outpouring of ringing that took place on 11th November 1918 was something that many people remembered about the day. It was also the way that many people learned that cessation of hostilities had occurred.

It is pleasing to report that the number of new ringers registered on the Ringing Remembers database has now grown to 1700. This exceeds the target of 1400 originally set at the start of the campaign. That being the number of ringers that perished on active service during the Great War.

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF DUDLEY

The hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind' is a favourite of many. I love the calming sense of the hymn as it progresses from verse to verse. The third verse speaks of the Sabbath rest by Galilee, recalling Jesus taking himself off into the hills in prayer to enter into communion with his Father in "the silence of eternity interpreted by love".



Wthin Judaism, as we see from many stories in the gospels, the Sabbath has a central place in the rhythm of the week and in the makeup of life. In fact, it has a central place in the Ten Commandments, as the commandment to keep the seventh day unlike all other days is found between those commandments that talk about people's relationship with God and those that speak about relationships with other human beings. This Sabbath commandment, then, is the hinge point. It brings together God and the human world, the loving of God and loving of neighbour, in a unique way.

The Sabbath day is a place-marking gift. A day on which to stop toiling and to *rest*. It is also a day of *joy* to unwrap again all of the blessings we have been given and to be re-thankful for them. *Rest and joy* lead into *freedom* and we read of the sabbatical year when land is allowed to breath, debts are cancelled, and slaves are released from that which binds them. In turn, this brings this leads back to rest and joy.

In our own lives, there are various rhythms that are played out. We find we need to snatch periods of Sabbath time amidst pressing other responsibilities. Carers speak of the crucial need for *rest*, and whilst respite care often carries a sense of guilt, it allows the carer to go on caring. After a traumatic or difficult period, we begin to see small signs of *joy* again and count our blessings. *Freedom* comes in many forms and I recall talking to a prisoner in HMP Hewell about his sense of freedom when he sang hymns of praise.

During the autumn, with the agreement of Bishop John and the support of the Archdeacons, I will be on sabbatical. I hope this extended Sabbath time will offer some *rest* which, to my mind, isn't loafing but is about doing things that bring me spiritual, intellectual and physical replenishment. I'm going to spend time writing which always brings me much *joy*. *Freedom* will come from having a break from some of the ministerial responsibilities which come with my role!

I am hoping to learn more about Orthodox Christianity which will resource my involvement with the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue. I will be spending time on pilgrimage to Mount Athos in Greece and taking part in a week-long painting retreat at the Bethlehem Icon School. In both places, as well as in the creativity of writing, I hope to encounter the silence of eternity interpreted by love.

I am delighted that sabbaticals are taken seriously in this Diocese and hope that the fact that I am taking one will encourage other clergy, who have

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not done so for seven years or more, to consider doing so. Do encourage them! My one previous experience of a sabbatical was personally very enriching and parishioners were kind enough to say that it was, in turn, beneficial for them - though they lacked clarity whether that was during or after the sabbatical!

I'm enormously grateful for this gift, and especially the generosity of colleagues in making it possible, so that I can go deeper into Sabbath life at the hinge point of serving God and my neighbour.

Bishop Graham

OUR READERS AT THE CATHEDRAL Roy Peacock



Congratulations to Roy Peacock whose long service as a Reader in the Church of England was recognised during a service in Worcester Cathedral on Saturday 15 September. In the presence of Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) from throughout the diocese Roy was presented with a certificate by the Bishop of Worcester that recorded his fifty years of service. Alongside those of us from St Mary's (who were unaware of this pending award), everyone in the congregation applauded Roy in warm appreciation of his ministry.

Thank you.

Roger King

After years of prayer, study and dedicated application to a course of

training, Roger King has been licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister to serve at St Mary's, Old Swinford. Several members of St Mary's congregations travelled to Worcester Cathedral on Saturday 15 September to support Roger and to join in a promise to uphold and encourage him in his ministry. Led by the Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Revd Dr John Inge, with some members of St Mary's choir assisting to lead the singing, it was a great pleasure to share in this celebration of Licensed Lay Ministry and to recognise Roger's achievement and commitment. Alongside five other candidates Roger made his promises and was



assisted to put on his blue scarf of a Reader by Revd Stephen Agnew, his formal sponsor. The warmest of congratulations are shared with Roger from all at St Mary's as we welcome him in the full authority of his ministry and as we look forward to his pastoral leadership.

Tony Tatford

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